



February 12/13, 2011
1 John 1 - 2
"Love and Truth" Part 1
Pastor Gary Hamrick

It is widely accepted that the Apostle John, the brother of James, is the writer of this epistle. Although John doesn't specifically identify himself as the writer, there is good evidence for this position. 1 John, 2 John and 3 John are similar to the Gospel of John in style,¹ substance² and sources.³ This letter was written circa 85-90AD, and by this time John⁴ would be about 80 years old.

A prominent word in 1 John is *"love."* In fact, *"love"* is used forty-five times, which is more than any other book of the Bible, except Psalms.⁵ Every time *"love"* is mentioned in 1 John the word used in the original Greek is *"agape."* This word means supreme love and is much different than the three other Greek words for love.⁶ We can see how extremely limited the English language is when it comes to words like love. There is no way to distinguish between love for a person and love for anyone or anything else. It's important to recognize that John uses the word for supreme love, because this letter is all about relationships, both with God and one another.

In this study we'll learn about the first two of four erroneous claims - four false claims - that people make about a relationship with God and with one another: 1.) We can have fellowship with God regardless of our actions. 2.) We are not really sinners.

¹ There are at least ten identical phrases between 1 John and the Gospel of John.

² John was the oldest and last surviving of the apostles, so he was an *"eyewitness."* (1 John 1:1)

³ Early church fathers, including Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen agree that John is the writer.

⁴ John was the youngest of Jesus' apostles, and was probably in his late teens or early 20s when he was with the Lord.

⁵ *"Love"* is used 141 times in the 150 chapters of the book of Psalms.

⁶ *"Storge"* is family love; *"eros"* is romantic love; and *"philos"* is brotherly love.

False Claim #1 - We Can Have Fellowship With God Regardless Of Our Actions

1. **1 John 1:5-6** - *"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth."*
2. When John writes about the difference between light and darkness, he indicates that:
 - a. God is light and he has no beginning or ending.
 - b. God is outside of the time-space continuum.
 - c. God stepped into time when he entered our world, the world he created, to take on skin and come as Jesus.
3. Jesus made a similar assertion about being light when he said, in **John 8:12**, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*
4. It's interesting to note that there's something true, pure, right, clean, unashamed and good about light, while there is something sinister, evil, wicked, shameful, fearful and secretive about darkness.
 - a. It's true that most crimes are committed under the cover of darkness, and the setting for every scary movie is nighttime, so you'd think that most people would want to come into the light where things are pure, true, good and right, but this isn't true of everyone.
5. **John 3:19-21** - *"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."*
6. When John says, *"If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth,"* he's saying that Christians can't have a real fellowship (Greek - koinonia) with God if they are living dark, sinful, secretive lives. (**1 John 1:6**)
7. John makes a truth claim in **1 John 1:7** when he says, *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."*
8. If we expose the dark, sinful part of our lives to the Lord's light; if we say, "Enough!" to the shameful, secret stuff in our lives and open ourselves to the

purity and cleansing work of his light, then *“the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.”*

9. There’s nothing worse than being in bondage to some dark thing that has taken our hearts captive, which is why the Lord wants us to be free and to come into the light.
10. People are held back from the freeing work the Lord wants to do because they love the darkness more than the light, and at the same time they are afraid of being exposed to the shame that would come from others knowing about their struggles.
11. If people don’t have the assurance that you will treat them in a Christ-like way, they will never want to risk being vulnerable enough to step into the light.

False Claim #2 - We Are Not Really Sinners

12. **1 John 1:8-10** – *“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”*
13. “Sinners” isn’t a word that’s typically used in everyday conversation, unless you’re around the church.
14. **Romans 3:23** – *“... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”*
15. **Romans 3:10** – *“As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one...”*
16. Even the average “man on the street” that doesn’t understand sin or what it means to be a sinner, will at least recognize they are not a perfect person, although they would say they’ve made some mistakes or they’ve got some issues.
 - a. Sometimes those who are outside of a real and vital relationship with Lord will emphatically declare that “I’m no Hitler” or “I’m not an axe murderer!”
17. Every human being was born into sin and has inherited a sin nature because Adam sinned.

18. The counter truth to this false claim is found in [1 John 1:9](#): *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*
19. The Greek word for confess is *homologeō*, which means “to say the same thing” or “to agree together.”

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [1 John 1:1-4](#) and [1 John 4:7-12](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. You may want to get your study time started by asking one of these icebreaker questions.
 - a. When you were a child, did you have a night-light?
 - b. Do you have a funny story about an experience you had when you were a child?
4. Read and discuss [1 John 1:5-6](#).
 - a. Do you know people who “buy into” the false claim that you can do whatever you want if you’ve “prayed a prayer”?
 - b. Have you at some point in your life believed this false claim?
5. Read and discuss [John 3:19-21](#).
6. When you came to Christ was there a distinct difference in your life that demonstrated that you moved from darkness into the light?
 - a. How did you feel when you brought your sin out into the light?
 - b. Did you have the sense that you’d been made clean? ([1 John 1:9](#))
 - c. You may want to allow one or two people to share their salvation testimony. (A personal testimony should be brief and include before Christ, when you were saved, and life since you’ve become a Christian. A testimony should not focus on what the Lord has done, not what you did before you came to Christ.)
7. Read and discuss the Scriptures in “The Romans Road,” focusing on the fact that the Bible is *very* clear about the fact that every single man, woman, boy and girl has sinned and desperately needs a Savior.
 - a. [Romans 3:10](#)

- b. [Romans 3:23](#)
- c. [Romans 5:8](#)
- d. [Romans 5:12](#)
- e. [Romans 6:23](#)
- f. [Romans 10:9-10](#)

8. Would someone you love who wants to come into the light to be clean be comfortable coming to you to confide in you concerning his or her deepest, darkest sin?
 - a. Would you receive them with Christ-like love and grace?
 - b. Would they trust you enough to be able to fully disclose everything as a matter of accountability between friends?
 - c. Would they be able to trust that you would not tell others what you know about them?
9. Do you think Cornerstone is a place where people can step into the light and know they're surrounded by people who will love them, help them, and not shame them?
10. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: remember that their relationship with the Lord will be damaged by their actions; recognize there is cleansing and forgiveness from the Lord when they bring their sin into the light; purpose in their heart to be people who will be Christ-like in their relationships with others who've sinned and want to disclose their sin for the purpose of accountability between friends; (have someone ready to read [1 John 1:9](#) as you pray the Scripture, asking each person to remember that the Lord is in the business, so to speak, of forgiveness and relationship restoration.

Note: Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV).