*Series: The Composition of Confidence – 1 John*

**Confidence in Fellowship – Walking in the Light**

*1 John 1:1-2:2*

**Introduction**

1. The Composition of Confidence – **1 John**
   1. ***“confidence”*** – parrēsia (4x) (“boldness”)
   2. ***“know”*** – eidō (17x) – **1 John 5:13** – written that you may know you have eternal life.
2. Confidence is extremely important in the life of a Christian. So much, that it is spart of the armor of God with which we are equipped to defeat Satan – **Ephesians 6:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8** – ***“hope”*** – *elpis* – “the looking forward to someth. with some reason for confidence respecting fulfillment” (BDAG); “joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation” (THAYER)
3. “There is perhaps no portion of the New Testament which one could study to more advantage who is desirous of ascertaining whether he himself is a true Christian. An anxious inquirer, a man who wishes to know what true religion is, could be directed to no portion of the New Testament where he would more readily find the instruction that he needs, than to this portion of the writings of the aged and experienced disciple whom Jesus loved. Nowhere else can a true Christian find a more clear statement of the nature of his religion, and of the evidences of real piety, than in this Epistle.” (Albert Barnes)
   1. For this reason, it is an epistle of great contrast.
   2. How you can know you HAVE, inverted, is how you can know you HAVE NOT.
4. John begins this epistle with a consideration of the essence of salvation, which is fellowship with God. Of what does fellowship with God consist? What would give us confidence that we have fellowship with God?
5. The Foundation of Fellowship **(vv. 1-5)**
6. The Incarnate Word
   1. The aim – **(v. 3)** – fellowship with the Father – **John 17:3** – eternal life.
   2. The challenge – ***“No one has seen God at any time.” (John 1:18a)***
   3. The channel – **5:11-12** – eternal life (in fellowship) with the Son.
      1. **Cf. John 14:6** – Jesus’ description – concerning fellowship with the Father (dwelling)
      2. ***“The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:18b)***
   4. **(v. 1)** – **cf. John 1:1-4, 14** – this is what John is saying he witnessed.
      1. The epistle is polemical – i.e. it is refuting error.
      2. Incipient Gnosticism – the false teachers troubling John’s readers believed (1) in the inherent sinfulness of the flesh, and (2) therefore, that Jesus Christ did not actually come in the flesh (**4:3).**
      3. God is a personal being and chose to reveal Himself in a personal way in the person of Jesus – the theanthropic (*theos*, God; *Anthropos*, man) person, the incarnate eternal Word.
7. The Apostolic Witness
   1. John’s description of his experience speaks directly to the truth that Jesus is the incarnate Word:
      1. **Initial perception** – ***“heard…seen”*** – He was a true and known man – **cf. Mark 6:2-3** – who was doing and saying wondrous things.
      2. **Investigative and contemplative perception:**
         1. ***“looked upon”*** – *theaomai* – in advance of mere sight mentioned before (not redundant) – “(1) to have an intent look at someth., to take someth. in with one’s eyes, with implication that one is esp. impressed; (3) to perceive someth. above and beyond what is merely seen with the eye” (BDAG)
            1. **Cf. John 6:68-69** – their intent and continued look at Jesus led to the perception of what was beyond mere physical sight.
            2. **cf. Matthew 16:13-16; Acts 4:20** – they reached conclusions after considering what they had seen and heard.
         2. ***“our hands have handled”*** **– cf. Luke 24:39-40** (also, Thomas’ case) – this is clearly what he refers to.
            1. **Significance** – what they perceived in Jesus beyond mere physical sight is shattered at His death if He is not raised – **cf. 1 Corinthians 15:12-19**
            2. They stand in for what is impossible for us – **John 20:30-31**
   2. Their eyewitness testimony of Jesus is the key to the claim that God became flesh in the person of Jesus – **John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32**
      1. **(vv. 2-3)** – They have witnessed, and bear witness of Jesus through declaration – reason to believe? Their declaration is not theoretical, nor philosophical, but a PERSONAL ENCOUNTER. (**cf. 2 Peter 1:16** – eyewitnesses)
      2. Result:
         1. **(v. 3)** – fellowship with the Father and the Son.
            1. ***“fellowship with us”*** – those eyewitnesses, apostles.

Why is that important? 🡪

* + - * 1. ***“and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (ASV)***

This verse is polemical – answering against the proponents of error.

Contrast – **4:5-6** – the apostolic witness and word is what leads to fellowship with God, not that of those in error.

* + - 1. **(v. 4)** – the joy of those who “look upon” their testimony as they have “looked upon” the Word of Life. **(cf. John 20:30-31; Ephesians 3:4**)

1. The Apostolic Declaration
   1. **The message heard and declared** – **(v. 5)** – encapsulates the totality of what John and the others learned through Jesus about God, and therefore about eternal life.
      1. Light = holiness, righteousness, truth.
      2. Darkness = sin, unrighteousness, error.
         1. ***“at all”*** – entirely separate from it.
      3. The message heard – **Cf. Psalm 119:105** – the word is light because it reveals God and His will.
   2. **Fellowship** – **(v. 3)** – this is declared so that we may have fellowship with Christ and God and have confidence that we do have fellowship.
      1. The concept of God being light and completely separate from darkness directly affects how we view our fellowship with Him.
      2. *koinōnia* – “a having in common (*koinos*), partnership, fellowship” (VINE)
2. The Fundamentals of Fellowship **(vv. 7, 9; 2:1-2)**
3. Faithfulness **(v. 7a, 2:1a)**
   1. Fellowship with one another (apostles), which is fellowship with God – **(v. 3)**.
   2. ***“If we walk in the light”*** – For God is light **(v. 5),** so walking in the light is walking with God, participating with God, having fellowship with God.
   3. **What is walking in the light?**
      1. Intellectual? – Merely knowing truth, or seeking truth?
         1. That’s what the Gnostics would say.
      2. Theoretical? – Merely having the right idea or intentions, but failing to live them out? Having the right intentions?
      3. Practical? – Having the right information (truth), and applying it daily? – YES!
   4. Example in Isaiah’s ideal Israel versus real Israel – **Isaiah 2:2-9**
      1. The Israel (spiritual) of prophecy – **(vv. 2-4)**
         1. **(v. 3)** – He will teach us (knowledge of truth) and we will walk in His paths (application of truth).
         2. **(v. 4)** – rather than fight each other, they will band together to do His work.
      2. The Israel of reality (Isaiah’s day) – **(vv. 5-9)**
         1. **(v. 5)** – plea to walk in the light.
         2. What are they actually doing? – **(vv. 6-9)** – idolatry, materialism, immorality.
      3. His plea – (**v. 5**) – is to not just know or study the will of God, BUT DO IT – FAITHFULNESS.
   5. John makes certain what He meant – **2:1a** – everything he has written thus far was to deter them from sin, and the opposite, to encourage them to faithfulness!
4. Cleansing Blood and Confession **(vv. 7b, 9, 2:1-2)**
   1. Based on what we know of God in **verse 5, 2:1a** is certainly the foundational point – sin is never a viable option – **cf. Romans 8:12-13** – you will die, fellowship severed.
   2. **Might we sin again?** – See Simon, Peter, Barnabas, Corinthians, Galatians, etc.
   3. **False confidence:**
      1. **Verse 7** uses the present, active tense of “cleanses” which indicates a continual cleansing of our sins by Jesus’ blood.
      2. As long as we’re trying, and generally walking in the light our sins are being cleansed, even when we are unaware of them.
      3. This is error, and in direct conflict with the very context.
   4. **Where is our confidence then?** – **2:1b-2** – Christ is our advocate and remains our propitiation (**cf. Romans 3:25** – by blood).
      1. **NOTE: His blood must be accessed just like it did initially. What is the access to His cleansing blood as children of God?**
   5. **Verse 7** is further explained by **verse 9**
      1. ***“the blood…cleanses us from all sin” (v. 7)*** = ***“forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (v. 9)***
         1. **Faithful** – you can trust that He will do it.
         2. **Just** – because of Jesus’ blood (2:2 – propitiation).
      2. ***“if we walk in the light” (v. 7)*** = ***“If we confess our sins” (v. 9)***
         1. Included in walking in the light is making confession of sins when we commit them.
         2. Sin is not light, but the confession of sin is. (**cf. Proverbs 28:13)**
      3. Therefore, we can have confidence in fellowship though we might sin again because we can still be forgiven by confessing them to God and asking for forgiveness.
5. False Fellowship **(vv. 6, 8, 10)**
6. Fellowship Despite Darkness **(v. 6)**
   1. This is a general conclusion (as well as **verse 7**) based on the proven premise of **verse 5** – if this **(v. 5),** then this **(vv. 6-7).**
   2. What is fellowship? – Commonality, joint participation, partnership.
   3. What is the character/nature of the one we are claiming fellowship with? – **(v. 5)** – light, no darkness at all.
   4. What is the claim? – **(v. 6)** – Fellowship with God even though you walk in darkness.
   5. Proper conclusion – **(v. 6b)**
      1. Lie – a false statement, an untruth.
         1. **Amos 3:1-3** – Amos pronouncing judgment, then showing it is not His word, but God’s.
            1. **(v. 3)** – the two are Jehovah and Amos – what he pronounces is from God – he has been sent by God.
            2. **(vv. 7-8)** – His walk is with God, his prophecy agrees with God as it is from Him.
         2. To utter words which meaning conflicts **(v. 6)** with God’s revelation of Himself **(v. 5)** is to lie – it is illogical – your statement is not with God or from God.
      2. Do not practice the truth – the claim to have the truth and be in the truth is invalidated by your actions – walking in darkness.
         1. **Cf. Isaiah 2:5** – practicing truth is walking in light of Lord, not darkness.
         2. **Psalm 50:16-21** – your actions do not line up with the truth, which is why the statement of 1 John 1:6 is not accurate.
         3. **1 John 2:20-21** – opponents claiming truth while walking in darkness – YOUR ACTIONS INVALIDATE YOUR STATEMENTS.
7. My Sinful Activity Does Not Make Me Sinful **(v. 8)**
   1. This is a nuance of **verse 6** – how could anyone possibly say they have fellowship with God while they are currently walking in the darkness of sin and error.
   2. **Gnostic heresy** – since the flesh is inherently sinful, the activities of the flesh do not affect my spiritual standing with God – i.e. my flesh is sinful, but my soul is spotless.
   3. **Example** – **Romans 6:1; Jude 4** – suggesting that God’s grace somehow nullifies any negative consequence of sinful action. (IMPUTATION DOCTRINE)
      1. What I did was sin, but it did not affect my standing with God because of His grace.
   4. **Reality** – **(v. 8b**) – self-deception, and separation from the truth!
      1. **Galatians 6:7-8** – this is true in the judgment, but also NOW – you reap what you sow.
      2. **Ezekiel 18:20** – the soul that sins dies, ALWAYS!
      3. Truth in us – **John 15:4, 7** – bearing fruit by abiding in Jesus, and His word abiding in us – through doing it.
8. What You Call Sin is Not Sin **(v. 10)**
   1. It may be that one does not simply imply their sin is inconsequential, but disputes the claim that the action is sinful at all.
   2. Consequence – **(v. 10b)** – God is made a liar by this statement.
      1. Ultimately, an arrogant claim to know better than God.
      2. He calls “A” a sin, but I know better, “A” is not a sin.
   3. EX: **Isaiah 5:20-21** – changing the standard.
      1. Rejecting certain aspects of the pattern as if they were merely cultural – gender roles, etc.
      2. Suggesting there is something more involved to the prohibition than the prohibition itself – MDR, homosexuality, social drinking, etc.
   4. Rather – **Romans 3:3-4** – let God be true and repent of your sin.

**Conclusion**

1. Rather than seeking another way to be right with God than following His word, we should accept His revelation with joy and walk with Him in it.
2. God has been clear in His revelation of Himself in His Son, and if we wish to have fellowship with Him, we must go through Jesus.
3. Jesus showed that we need to be fully devoted to God in faith, keeping His word, abstaining from sin, and walking in the light.