

MISCONCEPTION 1: MAN CAN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND STILL WALK IN SIN 1 JOHN 01:06–07

Introduction: Man's Unbelief

The Son of God has come to earth. This is the great testimony of John the Apostle. He came to earth so that man can *have fellowship with God and with His Son Jesus Christ*.

“But wait,” man shouts. “We already have fellowship with God. We already worship God and feel safe and acceptable in our religion. We do not need someone else to show us how to become acceptable to God. We can reach God on our own; we can secure His approval by ourselves. We don’t need someone else telling us how to approach God and how we should worship God and secure His approval.”

This is the great subject of this particular section (1 Jn. 1:6-2:2). Man objects to the idea that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He is truly God’s very own Son. Man objects to the idea...

- that the way he worships is wrong.
- that he has no merit with God.
- that he is unacceptable to God.

This is the reason many reject John’s declaration: “the Son of God has come to earth.” Jesus Christ came so that man can have *true* fellowship with God. But man objects to the idea that he needs help in reaching God. He feels sufficient within himself. He objects to the idea that he cannot reach God on his own. This passage strikes at these objections and exposes their fallacies. There are basically three misconceptions of man.

1. Misconception 1: man can fellowship with God and still walk in sin (1:6-7).
2. Misconception 2: man is not totally sinful and depraved (1:8-9).
3. Misconception 3: man can become righteous and sinless on his own (1:10-2:2).

The first misconception is the subject of the present passage. The other two misconceptions are discussed in the next two studies. Note that the first misconception strikes at the belief that is held by most people on earth. Most people believe that they can *fellowship with God even while they walk in darkness and sin*.

- I. We can fellowship with God and walk in darkness (v. 6).
 - a. This is a lie.
 - b. This is not the truth.
 - II. The truth: we must walk in the light (v. 7).
 - a. Then we have fellowship.
 - b. Then we are cleansed from sin.
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I. 1 John 01:06 Fellowship with God while Walking in Darkness

First, why does man object to the deity of Jesus Christ? To the Son of God coming to earth? That it was *necessary* for Him to come? Because they believe that man can fellowship with God and walk in darkness at the same time. What does it mean to walk in darkness?

=> It means that the world is in the dark about God. Man cannot see God nor talk face to face with God. Man cannot hear God nor touch God. How then can man know that God really exists? Man and his world are in the dark about God.

=> It means that man does not know exactly how God wants him to live: how moral and pure, how righteous and just. Man cannot talk with God; he has no way to communicate with God, for he cannot see God and he does not know where God is so that he can set up communication with Him. Therefore, man has no way to discover God nor to find out how God wants him to live.

Note four significant facts.

1. First, the world is in the dark about God. When it comes to God, man is in darkness, for he cannot see God nor talk with God. He cannot even be sure that God exists, not absolutely sure. Why? Because man's physical senses and flesh (sinful nature) can know only the things of the physical and material world. If there is a God, if there is a spiritual world, man has absolutely no way to penetrate it. Man can take all his technology and science, all his intellectual and creative reasoning, and he will never be able to penetrate the spiritual world, not with his physical and material nature. The physical and material world cannot and never will be able to penetrate and cross over into the spiritual world. Man and his world are completely in the dark about God. No matter what any person claims, no matter how religious or how much a spiritist the person may be, no person from the physical world can cross over and enter into the spiritual world to find out if God exists, much less fellowship with God.
2. Second, how then can man ever know God and fellowship with God? There is only one way: God has to leave the spiritual world and dimension and enter the physical world and dimension. God has to come to earth and reveal Himself to us. This is the only conceivable way man could ever fellowship with God. This is the glorious gospel: this is exactly what John declares: that the Son of God has come to earth. He came to reveal God to us (see notes, 1 Jn. 1:1-5).
3. Third, note the foolishness of man: man rejects the Son of God and declares...
"We [can] have fellowship with God yet walk in darkness."
 - Man declares that he can find God on his own, that he can relate to God and be good enough to fellowship with God and to secure God's approval by himself.

- Man believes that he can use his own mind and reasoning and find out enough about God to become acceptable to Him and to fellowship with Him.
- Man believes that he can use his own hands and energy and do enough to please God and to receive His approval.

Man thinks this: if he believes in God and does halfway right, then his belief and good deeds will put God in debt to him. God will never reject him; God will accept him. Therefore, man concludes that he can reject Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He concludes that he can fellowship and become acceptable to God by believing that God exists and by doing enough good to please God.

4. Fourth, note what the Scripture says to any of us who say this: we lie and do not live by the truth. No matter how great our minds and thoughts imagine God to be — no matter how many good works we do — we are not living by the truth. And note: a thinking and honest person knows this, for no person can cross over into the spiritual world. If we are ever to know God, God Himself has to come to us. It would not even be enough for some lesser spiritual being to come, for he would not be God. The only way we can ever hope to *know God* and to *know Him accurately* is for God Himself to come to earth. Therefore, to profess that “we can fellowship with God yet walk in darkness” is a lie. Whatever we do — all the approaches to God that men use — they are not the truth. By taking any approach to God other than by the Son of God, we do not take the true approach; we take a false approach.

Thought 1. The Word of God is strong. It says this: if a person says that he is saved, and then lives in the darkness of this world, he lies. God is light; therefore, if a person walks in darkness, he does not know God. He is not fellowshiping with God. Light and darkness cannot dwell together. A person has to choose in which he wants to live: he has to choose to live in either the light of God or in the darkness of the world.

Acts 17:23 *For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.*

John 1:5 *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

John 1:10-11 *He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.*

John 3:19 *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.*

John 4:10 *Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”*

John 8:19 Then they asked him, “Where is your father?” “You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

John 9:30 The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.”

John 14:9 Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

1 John 1:6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

Psa 82:5 They know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

Prov 4:19 But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

Jer 4:22 “My people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good.”

Jer. 23:12 “Therefore their path will become slippery; they will be banished to darkness and there they will fall. I will bring disaster [judgment] on them in the year they are punished,” declares the LORD.

II. **1 John 01:07 Walk in the Light and Fellowship with God**

Man cannot fellowship with God and walk in darkness. The truth is that man must walk in the light if he is to fellowship with God. What is the light of God?

=> The light of God is the revelation of God Himself. The Lord Jesus Christ came to earth to reveal God. Jesus Christ has the very nature of God; therefore, He was able to show us exactly what God is like.

=> The light of God is the revelation of just how God wants us to live while upon earth. When the Son of God came to earth He told us and showed us exactly how to live, exactly what God expects of us.

Therefore, to walk in the light means to believe in the Son of God who came to earth and to follow Him. If we walk upon earth believing in Jesus Christ and doing exactly what He said to do, then we are in the light just “as he is in the light.” Note: this is exactly what this verse says: we are to “walk in the light, as he is in the light.” This means two most wonderful things.

1. If we walk in the light of Christ, then we have fellowship with Christ and with God and with all other believers. Jesus Christ is the Son of God; therefore, when He was

upon earth, He was in constant fellowship with God. He is the One who shows us how to relate to and fellowship with God. Therefore, when we walk in the light of Christ, we do what Christ did. We approach God through Christ and fellowship with God just as Christ showed us. The result is glorious. It means that we have true fellowship — that we actually know God and fellowship with God, that we actually know and fellowship with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and with all who believe and walk in His light.

Thought 1. Note: God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Few if any persons would deny this. But note this: it is impossible to walk in both light and darkness at the same time. Therefore, if we walk in darkness, we are not walking and fellowshiping with God. As stated, it is totally impossible.

John 14:6 *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

John 17:3 *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

1 John 1:3 *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

1 John 1:7 *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.*

Rev 3:20 *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

Psa 119:63 *I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts.*

Mal 3:16 *Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name.*

2. If we walk in the light of Christ, then the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses us from all sin. This is a critical point to note. It was not enough for God’s Son to come to earth and reveal God to man. Man is sinful; he has transgressed God’s law. Man has chosen to live like he wants to live upon earth, to do his own thing. Man has...

- ignored God
- cursed God
- neglected God
- disbelieved God
- rejected God
- disobeyed God
- rebelled against God

Man is guilty of offending God and of transgressing God’s law. Therefore, just as with any law, when the law is broken, the penalty has to be paid. The lawbreaker has to pay or else someone has to step forward to pay the penalty for him. This is just what Jesus

Christ did. He not only came to reveal God to us, He came to take our sins and transgressions upon Himself — all the guilt of them. Jesus Christ died for our sins.

=> He faced the judgment for us.

=> and He suffered the punishment for us.

=> He bore the condemnation for us.

The blood of Jesus Christ was shed upon the cross for us. Therefore, to walk in the light of Christ means that we walk believing that Christ died for us. It means that we believe His blood cleanses us; it “purifies us” from sin, that He actually paid the penalty for our sins, that we are thereby freed from the guilt of sin. When we walk in the light of Christ, God sees our sins covered by the blood of Christ. He accepts us in Christ. Our sins are forgiven by the blood of God’s Son.

But note: the word “purifies” is in the present tense. This means...

- that the blood of Christ *continually purifies* us from sin.
- that if we are walking in the light of Jesus Christ, then His blood is *always purifying* us from our sins.
- that if we walk in fellowship with Jesus Christ we are *constantly confessing* our sins, we are living in *open confession* before Him.

The believer is to walk in fellowship with Christ *all day long every day*. He is to walk acknowledging God in *all His ways*, praying, praising and confessing his shortcomings and sins *all day long*. The believer who walks in fellowship with Jesus Christ like this is being *constantly cleansed, constantly purified* by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Thought 1. This is the point so often missed by man: he cannot erase the sins of his past. He has no way to pay the penalty and judgment of his sins, and they have already been committed. Therefore, the penalty has to be paid. And note: the payment has to be made by Someone who is perfect, for God is perfect. Only perfect sacrifices can be acceptable to God. And this is the terrible problem that man faces, for who is perfect other than God? No man is; only the Son of God is perfect. This is the reason the Son of God had to come to earth. He had to come to sacrifice Himself for man. He had to take man’s sins upon Himself and become man’s substitute in death. He had to die for man. It is His death, the sacrifice of the blood of God’s Son, that covers our sins. No person is ever acceptable to God unless he is free of sin, unless his sins are purified and forgiven by the blood of Christ.

Mat 26:28 “*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*”

Rom 5:8-9 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!*

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

Col 1:14 *In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Heb 9:14 *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

1 Pet 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

1 John 1:7 *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.*

Rev 1:5 *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. ■*