

1 John 1:4, 2:1, 2:26, 5:13

**“The Objectives of Fellowship”**

I. Intro

II. 1:4 The **character** of the Christian life: **JOY**

III. 2:1 The **course** of the Christian life: **VICTORIOUS**

I. Intro

As mentioned the apostle John’s first letter doesn’t follow the normal format for New Testament letters. John never introduced himself or his readers and offered no greeting towards them. What John does is to immediately launch into what even at close to 100 years’ old is still the master passion of his life: **The Person and Work of Jesus Christ!** Though John doesn’t follow the normal format this letter is simple when it comes to understanding what’s on John heart and mind as the theme of this letter is, “**Fellowship**”. John’s first objective was to reveal to his readers the “**Basis Fellowship**” and he does so by reminding the readers on his unique perspective from his own investigation as well as a teacher of what he discovered in Jesus which John taught for close to 70 years in his life. Finally, it is **the longevity of that life** that John points towards as it relates to his first experiences with Jesus as in **all those years of life’s experiences** **NOTHING EVER dislodged the TRUTH that he witnessed as a young man even though such testimony WAS constantly under attack and came at a huge cost of suffering!** John’s fixed and certain testimony is that **Jesus is THE BASIS of FELLOWSHIP** based upon **WHO HE IS** as John declares that his discovery proved that Jesus is:

1. Vs. 1 “***That which was from the beginning***”: John’s experience from the beginning conferred the truth to his heart that Jesus was first **Eternal** and second **Divine!**
2. Vs. 1a “***Concerning the Word of Life***”: Second John recognized Jesus alone is life

giving and unique. He is the “Life giver” as well as the “eternal life giver”!

3. Vs. 2 “*The life was manifested*”: Finally, John says that this Jesus whom he describes as the Word of Life Giver was made visible on this earth and John had to reconcile this reality.

That takes us to the second part of the letter that is extremely practical which is what are “The Objectives of Fellowship”? Or perhaps put another way what changes are made if the “Basis of my Fellowship” has changed? This section is the reason why John has written the letter as through the letter he gives “FOUR DIFFERENCES OR BENEFITS OF THE BELIEVERS FWLLOWSHIP WITH GOD”! I’ll state them at first before we examine each one briefly this morning as we will be looking at them in far more detail as we come upon them in the text as they are scattered throughout the letter. We know right where they are as each time one of them appears John introduces them to us by saying the same phrase: “These things I write to you”. John states that because of Jesus our fellowship with God has changed FOUR THINGS about LIFE:

1. 1:4 The character of the Christian life: JOY
2. 2:1 The course of the Christian life: VICTORIOUS
3. 2:26 The clarity of the Christian life: TRUTH
4. 5:13 The confidence of the Christian life: ASSURANCE

## II. 1:4 The character of the Christian life: JOY

1:4 What we learn from John’s experience is that John realized a truth that “Fellowship with God through Jesus is the antidote to human loneliness”. You will note that our text uses the word, “YOUR”, in reference to the JOY but in the Greek John uses the word “OUR” as John’s testimony is that ALL believers of ALL time will share in this characteristic! Furthermore, the

phrase “may be full” in the Greek means, “that OUR joy, having been filled completely full in times past, will persist in that state of fullness in present times.” The nature of Joy is in view as it comes from our fellowship with God through Jesus and remains full for three reasons:

1. **It is with the Father:** Since it is with the Father is associated with our pardon, provision, protection, and power all of which comes from Him and is based upon His goodness and not our own! It is because of this that the character of the Christian life can only be JOY!
2. **It is with the Son:** Since it is with the Son it is associated with His sacrifice which was made in full understanding of our failings and sin! This fellowship with Jesus is in full understanding of His divine nature , redemptive work, resurrected life, blessed indwelling Spirit, glorious certainty of His coming again for us. As such the Christian life can only be JOY.
3. **It is with other believers:** Because of the fact of the above two we have fellowship with other believers which ought to produce JOY because we have far more in common than we have differences. Fellowship with God has broken the walls that separate people and because of His forgiveness of our sin we can forgive others who have a far less debt than we did towards God. Unity and oneness creates JOY with those that belong to Jesus.

JOY is a wonderful by-product of our fellowship with God. It isn't something that we can manufacture ourselves as it is the opposite of what the world offers. The world offers “HAPPINESS” which is based upon favorable “HAPPENINGS”. That's why so many in the world that are chasing “HAPPENINGS” for “HAPPINESS” are miserable. The author of Heb described Moses' battle as the prince of Egypt that let go of the temporary pleasures of sin (Heb 11:25). Where Ps 16:11 tells us that “In Your presence is fullness of JOY; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” The Christian life is JOY to which Jesus promised in 16:22 “Your

**JOY no one will take from you**". And in 15:11 promised that "**That our JOY may remain in us, and that our JOY may be full**". Both of which Jesus said only hours before His death! These two truths with regards to HIS JOY are facts:

- **Jesus would have His JOY be ours**
- **Jesus would have His JOY remain with us**

John writes NOT only that the reader may HAVE JOY but that they would have the FULNESS of JOY! The phrase "joy may be full" is found 6 times in John's writing's, four times in the gospel and twice in his letters.

### III. 2:1 The course of the Christian life: **VICTORIOUS**

2:1 We now look at the **second thing that changed because we now enjoy fellowship with God through Jesus Christ**, and it is found in 2:1 where we read that John wrote "***So that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.***"

Now we will look at this verse in full detail in a few weeks but this morning we will just take a peek at it as John proclaims **two very powerful truths about the change in our Christian life when compared to our former life apart from fellowship with God**. Our path or course in life has changed from "DEATH" to "LIFE". Jesus NOT ONLY dealt with the penalty of our sin, but He rose from the dead and now is at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us.

According to Luke 22:32 on the very night that Peter would reject Jesus, He told Peter that He knew that Peter would do so and that "**But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.**" Then in Roman's 8:34

Right before Paul reminds his readers that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ in

verse 35 tells them that it is Jesus who is at the right hand of the Father who makes intercession for us.

1. **“These things I write to you, THAT YOU MAY NOT SIN: ”Jesus’ work of the cross is available to KEEP me from sinning!** He not only has paid the penalty for my sins, past present and future but He alone has removed the POWER that sin had over me in my fallen state. I have a New Nature by which old things have passed away and I’m a new creation in Christ Jesus. As wonderful as that truth is what happens when I choose to disobey and sin? What if in a moment of weakness and stupidity I choose the flesh instead of the Spirit?
2. **“These things I wrote to you, if anyone sins, WE HAVE AN AVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS”**. Jesus’ work on the cross NOT only can keep me from sin He can and does also forgive me when I sin. Jesus defends us at the throne against our accuser Satan. Jesus is our advocate our defense lawyer whose credentials are listed right here **JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS!**

Because of this change of fellowship, **the Christian life not only has the characteristic of Joy it has the guarantee of Victory.** Both the course we are on has changed and even if we get off course Jesus will get back on course and forgive our getting off course. We will look at how Jesus does this soon enough, but it will require us admitting that we have gotten off course!

Next week we will take up both:

1. 2:26 The **clarity** of the Christian life: **TRUTH**
2. 5:13 The **confidence** of the Christian life: **ASSURANCE**