

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today at the PUNLA Coffee Table. So, get comfortable, get your coffee or tea or water. And let's settle in for a quick talk.

Today we are beginning our study of 1<sup>st</sup> John. These letters of John opened my eyes to the importance of service to others. In fact, PUNLA Christian Ministries uses 1 John 3:18 on our T-shirts to convey our purpose. I'll paraphrase like this. Stop talking about it and start do something.

I hope everyone is doing well.

Let's start with a quick introduction to 1<sup>st</sup> John. This study is based on several bible studies I've done of 1<sup>st</sup> John, I'll be using a study by Max Lucado and supplemented with several other sources for this study.

The author of 1, 2 and 3 John is the Apostle John. Most scholars believe it was written in AD85-90. The main themes in 1 John are,

- Encourage Christian who are being persecuted
- We can Trust "who Jesus is"
- Jesus is both man & God - ignore false teachers who deny
- Correct the wrong ideas about Jesus
- Correct idea about what is good and evil which lead to the lack of morality in the church
- True Teaching, True Living, True Loving

1st John Chapter 1: What is a True Christian Fellowship?

John is going to be talking about True Teaching, True Living and True Loving throughout this letter. So think about it as we begin our study of 1st John.

People talk about "knowing" this or "believing" that or being "convinced" of something. What is required in order for you to be 100% sure about something?

For example, how sure are you that sun will come up tomorrow? Did humans really land on the moon?

Did Jesus really live and claim to be God in the flesh?

The apostle John was one of Jesus' closest friends and most faithful followers. He was able to speak with authority about Jesus. He understood the life-changing power of Christ's gospel message because He had seen it. He touch Jesus. He was there with Jesus, that's why He knows it was true.

Let's Read 1 John 1:1-3. I'm reading from the NKJV. *<sup>1</sup>That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- <sup>2</sup>the life was*

*manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- <sup>3</sup>that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

How does John establish his authority or credentials to write about Christ and his gospel message? John states he has seen. He lived with Jesus so he witnessed what Jesus said and did. He saw it. He touch Jesus. He was there with Jesus, that why He knows it was true.

Why do you think it matters that John heard and saw and touched Jesus? You know yourself. Does it matter to you? I'm not naturally trusting. If someone is telling me a story about a person. It is important that they have spent time with the person. They know the person, they have lived with that person. Now,

Let's Read 1 John 1:4.<sup>4</sup>And these things we write to you that **your joy may be full.**

What does John mean about "your joy is made full"?

I like the way, Phil Vischer, creator of Veggie Tails puts this in his new series. The Mr. Phil Show. He explains that Joy is a kind of Happy. Not like I'm happy to have cookie but more like the happy you feel when you get a hug from someone you love. So, John wrote this letter so we can find the best kind of happy. Which is the joy of fellowship with God and other Christians

Let's continue reading 1 John 1:5-6. <sup>5</sup>*This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that **God is light** and in Him is no **darkness** at all. <sup>6</sup>*If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in **darkness**, we lie and do not practice the truth.**

What does John mean when He uses Light and Darkness? So living in the light are all those good things like kindness, love, generous etc. John is saying God is Light which means God is everything Good. Darkness here refers to things we do or say that are not what Jesus would want us to do. Living in the darkness is like selfishness, mean, hurting other people. Darkness are things against God and outside of His plan for our lives.

Let's continue reading 1 John 1:7 <sup>7</sup>*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Fellowship. Christians use this word a lot. Most think it's just about going to church and church functions. But the biblical term means so much more. True fellowship (or community) means that which is shared in common. It is about sharing life together, not just on Sundays.

What does John mean by the term fellowship? John is really talking about sharing life together. True living and True loving, together with the people God and even more importantly with God. We need to have a focus on Christ, living as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. How we Fellowship is a light that points toward Jesus to the Dark world we live in.

Let's continue reading 1 John 1:8-10 *<sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

This might be a little confusing. Here is v.10 John says *"if we say that we have not sinned, we make Jesus a liar."* And earlier in v.5 John says if we walk in darkness we lie do not practice truth. These two verses are not really in conflict. Jesus told us *"no one is good except God"* Mark 10:18. So if anyone boasts that they are without sin, then they lie. *"Everyone sins and falls short of the glory of God"* Romans 3:23. But just because we sin does not mean we are walking in darkness. To be Christian is to follow Jesus, that's what it means. FOLLOW is an action word. We actively try to be like Jesus. And when we fail and we all fail or sin. But as followers of Christ we repent and ask forgiveness and keep trying to follow Jesus.

As soon as trust in Christ to as our Savior and Lord. We become spiritually alive. The Holy Spirit lives in us. We have become God's children. We are brothers and sisters together in God's eternal family. With God and with one another we then share this eternal connection, and profound oneness. We are partners in Christ's gospel. We are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Our eternal life starts now. Let's start living like we know it every day, not just on Sundays.

Here are some other scriptures that talk about fellowship. I encourage you to read them, Luke 24:15; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 1:12; Philippians 1:3,5

If you are Journaling during this study. Consider this question. What can we as Christians do to strengthen our fellowship (our community) with one another?

**Let's Pray. Father God. Thank you for this letter from John. Help us to seek and practice true fellowship with you and the people you have placed in our lives.**

**You know it is not natural for us to trust, so we will rely on you Lord to help us and guide us as we grow and mature to become more and more like you Jesus.**

**I am so thankful for everyone listening. Use this study to open hearts to you Lord.**

**I want to pray for all those listening. You know them and their struggles Lord. Help them Jesus to surrender to you. And accept the peace and assurances which can only come through true fellowship with you.**

**We trust you and love you Lord Jesus. And we pray in your name, Jesus. Amen.**

Next week we will continue with our study of 1st John with Part 2: 1 John 2.

Thank you for joining me at the PUNLA Coffee Table. If you liked the message, please select like. And Please Subscribe to our channel. Leave comments here, or our website or mail me at [kip@punla.org](mailto:kip@punla.org). Your feedback is appreciated.

See you next time at the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.