

Get Connected. Enjoy LIFE! Scripture: 1 John 1:1-10, 4:7-12

“Get connected” probably sounds like a commercial for Comcast Xfinity.

We live in a connected world - more connected than at any time in the history of the world. We have smartphones, facebook, linkedin, Skype, Whatsapp, Wechat, Line, email, texting, tweeting, chirping, and 100 other ways to connect.

The WWW has connected everyone in a way that can be used for good or evil. The GOOD is easier and instant communication.

BAD: Total control by governments and Google.

BAD: IAD = Internet Addiction Disorder.

BAD: Loss of face-to-face fellowship. Screens are not human faces. When I say “Get Connected” I mean face-to-face connection, so we can look into each other’s eyes and see what’s inside - if there’s fear or worry inside or courage or confidence.

1 John is a letter about fellowship. The GR word for fellowship is *koinonia* (GR - κοινωνία) and it means a close mutual relationship. It comes from the verb to share, to share life together. It was also used as the favorite expression for the marriage relationship as the most intimate between people. It took on a broader meaning of participation or partnership.

Fellowship is with the Tri-Personal God (1:1-4)

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed **our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.** ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

2 Corinthians 13:14: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the **fellowship of the Holy Spirit** be with you all.

First, the Father and his Son Jesus Christ (and the HS) have fellowship with each other. Love requires more than one person. One God exists as three persons. (You must love yourself *rightly* works in combination with love God *supremely* and

others *unconditionally*. Loving yourself without loving God and others would be boring selfishness. Love is all three working together.)

Only Christians can say “God is love.” 1 John 4:16: *So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. **God is love**, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.* Our triune God is a “love triangle.” We can say God is love because God exists as three persons. (Allah is not a god of love because he is a single being. Who did Allah love before he created people?) In eternity past, before Genesis 1:1, the three persons of the Godhead existed in loving fellowship with each other.

Second, the Tri-Personal God is bringing people into fellowship with himself.

Genesis 1:26: Then God said, “Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness.” God said US and OUR because he is three holy persons loving each other.

[Image and likeness refer to the same qualities. It is mankind’s reason, free-will, self-consciousness, but primarily the capacity to enjoy a personal relationship with God. It means people are God’s representatives on earth and God can make covenants with people. We are made in the image of God as are angels. We are lower than the angels now but will one day be higher than angels (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:7-9). Fallen angels are not redeemable. Fallen people are redeemable because Christ became fully human.]

We are made in the image of God and therefore have the capacity to give and receive love. We were made to enjoy *koinonia* with the triune God. We lost our *koinonia* with God when A & E were tempted by Satan and sinned.

If we are byproducts of survival of the fittest and natural selection, then where did love come from? Love is a divine quality built into us; it’s in the image of God.

We have an undeserved and amazing invitation to rejoin the eternal fellowship of God. We are invited into the love triangle of the triune God. God does this through the “word of life” who is Jesus Christ and the gospel he preached. John provides strong eyewitness testimony to the fully human nature of Christ who remains fully divine at the same time in the same person.

Refer to 1 John 1:1-4. (John refers to Jesus Christ as the Word in his gospel: John 1:1-2, 14: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ¹⁴And the Word became*

flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.)

When we receive the Word of Life we join the eternal fellowship of the tri-personal God. If we believe John's testimony about the Word of Life, Jesus Christ, then we have fellowship with John and anyone else who has been accepted into the family of God by faith in Christ alone.

Fellowship is in the light (1:5-10)

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 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 cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Five conditional clauses: 3 clauses describe no fellowship in the dark and 2 describe real fellowship in the light.

Walking in darkness is hypocrisy.

- V6: **If** we say we have fellowship with him (God who is light) while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.
- V8: **If** we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- V10: **If** we say we have not sinned, we make him (God) a liar, and his word is not in us.

Walking in the light is honesty.

- V7: 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 cleanses us from all sin.
- V9: **If** we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Light and darkness are metaphors for holiness and sin. God is light means God is holy. Light cannot have fellowship with darkness. Turn on a light and darkness leaves. Light and darkness cannot coexist.

No partnership/fellowship with darkness: [OT lesson: Godly King Jehoshaphat of Judah had one fault - he kept trying to partner with the evil kings of Israel. God warned him to stop his fellowship with darkness. He partnered with evil King Ahaziah to create a fleet of trading ships. God sunk all the ships and sent a prophet to warn Jehoshaphat to cancel his alliances with evil Israel. Light and darkness cannot have fellowship.]

There are dark unholy sinful fellowships of people. They are allied with Satan and plot wicked schemes against God and his faith children... North Korea, Iran, China's Communist government persecuting Christians, India's Hindu government persecuting Christians, Myanmar's Buddhist government persecuting Christians, every Islamic government persecuting Christians.

Fellowship in the light is a choice between honesty or hypocrisy. **Koinonia is choosing honesty over hypocrisy.**

Walking in darkness while claiming to live in the light is dangerous hypocrisy. If we say we have fellowship with God who is light while practicing darkness (a sinful lifestyle), then we are liars and hypocrites. Hypocrisy destroys Christian fellowship, but humility and honesty produce genuine, soul-satisfying fellowship. We all need to be in honest relationships because hypocritical relationships based on lies don't satisfy and eventually self-destruct. (It's the reason for many divorces.)

Walking in darkness is practicing sin without a guilty conscience from the Holy Spirit. Christians still sin, but they do not practice sin; they do not live sinful lifestyles. The HS is in us working holiness from the inside out. Conviction of sin is holiness from the inside out.

Walking in the light is honesty. It is practicing truth. Walking in the light is living honestly before God and others. Ephesians 4:25: *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*

Walking in the light is humble acceptance of our forgiven sins. It is living a life of conviction, confession, and cleansing. We need daily confession and cleansing by the blood of Christ. This attitude before God and others produces genuine fellowship with each other as we walk in the light.

Walking in the light with honesty and humility engenders genuine fellowship with one another.

VIPs of 1:5-10:

- ✓ We were created for koinonia with God.
- ✓ We lost koinonia when we sinned.
- ✓ We can rejoin koinonia by receiving the righteousness of Christ.
- ✓ We stay in the light of koinonia by humble and honest confession.

Fellowship is a one-another love (4:7-12)

Koinonia among believers is a “one-another” love. This is the other important word in the Epistles - one another.

Hebrews 10:24-25: *And let us consider how to **stir up one another** to love and good works, **not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

We don't appreciate fellowship until we live without it. Do not carelessly neglect meeting together for worship on Sunday. Do not take fellowship in Christ for granted.

Wang Mingdao (Mingdao = understanding the Word): Imprisoned for 25 years for refusing to join the TSPM - 1965-1980. He spent much of that time in solitary confinement. He confessed his crime, was released, and then recanted and went back to prison.

VOM worker Petr Jasek was imprisoned in Sudan for 14 months. He was put in a prison cell with 5 ISIS terrorists. When they finally planned to kill him by waterboarding, he was miraculously moved to another cell. In the new cell he was three Sudanese pastors. What a blessing! What an encouragement to have fellowship with brothers in Christ! Darkness to light!

1 Peter 4:7-11: ***The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.***

Galatians 6:1-2: *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. **Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.***

What is the LAW of Christ? It's the law of love. John 13:34: *I am giving you a new commandment (law): Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.*

This burden bearing reminds me of *The Fellowship of the Ring* - the fellowship consists of nine members: 4 hobbits (Frodo, Samwise, Merry, Pippin), 2 men (Aragorn & Boromir), one elf (Legolas), one dwarf (Gimli) and one wizard (Gandalf). Frodo Baggins bears the burden of the one ring. The burden is the temptation to wear the ring and have its power. Samwise Gamgee is Frodo's best friend and helps him to bear the burden of the one ring.

We all have burdens to bear in this life:

- Temptation burden (the context of Galatians 6:1-2)
- General burdens - the trials of living in a world under the curse of sin: sickness, disease, divorce, death, taxes, tests, job loss, car accidents, crime victim, scammers, rebellious teenagers.
- Psychological burdens - anxiety, worry, fear, depression, rejection, confusion, burnout, fatigue, PTSD (soldiers), and other mental stresses.
- This verse is used by Christian medical bill-sharing programs: Medi-Share and Samaritan Ministries.

We are called to bear each other's burdens, but we are just people with our own limitations. Jesus Christ is the ultimate burden bearer. Matthew 11:28-30: *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

Story: Driving the Alcan Highway and being "hugged." We all need to be hugged by Jesus and in fellowship with one another.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus and give Him your burdens.