

1ST JOHN: FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IS THE ESSENCE OF ETERNAL LIFE

Written A.D. 90 in Ephesus by John the Apostle to believers, the purpose of this epistle is to set forth the criteria and characteristics of communing with God. Having authentic fellowship with God means having the privilege of understanding His true nature (e.g., God is light; God is love; God is life). By appropriating these teachings believers would experience *authentic spirituality* (1:3), *maturing joy* (1:4), *restraint from sin* (2:1), & *assurance of salvation* (5:13). Believers would be able to discern true spirituality from false teaching because correct doctrine *could* be identified by a righteous life & wholehearted love for others. In essence, John is providing the best evidence available for the spiritual life of the believer (abundant life). *Fellowship with God is the essence of eternal life.*

The evidence or extent of communing with God is measured by the genuineness of our Christian lifestyle:

(1) the knowledge that God is light is tested by whether we walk in that light and obey God's commands; (2) the knowledge that God is righteous is tested by whether we live righteously as befits one born of God; (3) the knowledge that is love is tested by whether we loves fellow believers as one loves God. Fellowship with God is not a vague, nebulous experience. Rather, it can be an objective moment by moment reality. John sets forth at least three tests which can act as a "fellowship barometer" for his spiritual children in their detailed walk with God: (1) Have I confessed all known sins to God (1:9)? (2) Am I walking in obedience to the light of God's Word? (3) Am I demonstrating a love for the brethren? We have been bought with a price... *We are not told what God is simply that we may know, but that in knowing we may do and be. We are mandated by apostolic authority to walk in the knowledge of God.*

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