**Lesson 3: True Fellowship (1st John 1 - 2:2)**

John begins his writings with “the basics”. In fact, so foundational (so core) are the principles he lays out in the first four verses, that denying them, short circuits the gospel.

1st Jn. 1:1-4 is the introduction. It is here where he lays out his credentials. He “introduces” Jesus, elevates him, and identifies him (Jesus), as the conduit to true fellowship with God.

1st Jn. 1”5- 2nd Jn2:2 John provides five (5) keys (essentials) to having fellowship with God. All religions claim some sort of a connection or fellowship with God…or a god. Here John tells us right out of the gates what’s involved with having communion with the only true God. Spend some time studying the term fellowship and what it means in the bible.

**1 John 1:1-4 – The introduction:**

* **Who is john speaking about? What approach does he take in describing his understanding of Him? Again, why might he use this approach under the circumstances in which he writes?**
* **What other books (New and Old Testament) begin in this way?**
* **What do you think choosing the expression “the Word of Life” emphasizes? He could have more simply said “Jesus”, “The Christ”, “the Son of God”. Again, consider the context. (See 1 Jn.5:11-13). Also read Jn. 6:35 & 48; 8:12, 14:6 to see what Jesus had to say on the subject of life.**
* **In Ch.1 Vs. 3 John wants the audience to understand that he, they, and God all share something…what is it? What connects them and what can we learn about that connection from this verse? Contrast the feeling this gives, compared to the feeling they’ve gotten through the messaging provided by those among them teaching falsely. Ch 2:18-19**
* **In Vs. 4 he concludes his introduction with the statement…” we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete!” Some versions might read “your” joy. (Look at Jn. 15:10-11; Jn. 17:3; Jn. 10:10). What’s the source or basis for the joy he speaks of?**

**1st John 1:5-2:2 – Here John provides the essentials for true fellowship as he outlines several “truths” in reference to obtaining fellowship with God.**

* **What is the first truth in verse 5? How is light used to include/exclude fellowship in Eph. 5:6-11? What strikes you about this passage in Ephesians? (Consider also 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 6:12; Col 1:13-14).**
* **What is the second truth in vs. 6-7? What’s necessary to be in fellowship with God (Jn.8:12)? Two types of people are described in vs. 6-7…what did fellowship with God cost?**
* **What is the third truth outlined in vs. 8-9? How does this truth relate to the one above? What is the result of a mindset that claims to have no sin? Finally, what inures to the one who freely confesses their sin? (See Prov. 28:13)**
* **What is the fourth truth about fellowship in vs. 10? Look at Romans 3:23 and explain how denying our sin makes God a liar?**
* **Despite what John says about our past sinfulness, what is the fifth truth in Ch 2:1, that he felt compelled to mention? What is he trying to say with the statement… “but” or, “and” …” if any one does sin”? Said differently, what is another wording you could use to convey his meaning?**
* **What is Jesus’ role with respect to our sin according to Ch.2:1?**
* **What term does John use to refer to Jesus in Ch.2 vs. 2? How does this shed light on God being “faithful” and “just” towards us in Ch. 1 vs. 9.? Think also in the context of parenting…how are we “just” with our children?**

**Thought Questions:**

* **What key take-aways from this passage will you incorporate into the book summary (book review) you will prepare at the end of this study?**
* **What is the doctrine of “continual cleansing” …what can we glean about it from this passage?**
* **What is the relevance of the “Incarnation” to the Gospel…what importance does it play in the salvation of mankind?**
* **How/why is it (the Incarnation) a stumbling block for so many?**
* **It is a fact that we have all sinned. It is also true that even as children of God, we stumble from time to time. What does John say about Jesus that gives us hope, knowing that we are sinners?**