

John's Concerns for Christians, Pt. 2

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[0 : 0 0] Everybody else, let's get out the Word of God and find 1 John. Back to the back, 1 John, last Wednesday, I began a message about some things that I see in this book that I was saying are John's concerns for believers.

And the thought was, and I said this last week, I mean it every time I come through to hit this book. It just intrigues me. It catches my attention. It's so quick. It's so loaded. It's got more in there than I fully understand, as does most of the Scriptures.

But this one really, I love this book. These short five chapters are just loaded. They've got some doctrinal truths that go out beyond, I believe, the church age.

But nevertheless, it's loaded with practical truth and insight into the Christian life. And last Wednesday night, we got into this, and I showed you from chapter 1 that John is concerned for believers.

And number one, he was concerned about your fellowship. And we saw that in chapter 1, the word fellowship shows up four times, and that's more than any other, not just chapter, but any other book of the Bible.

[1 : 1 9] The Apostle John, thank you, talks about your fellowship. He's concerned about your fellowship. And what I like about John, as we tried to see last week, was John was tighter on a personal level with the Lord Jesus Christ than any other man that has ever walked the face of the earth.

John spent time with Jesus Christ. John was closer to Christ. John didn't just hear his words like the other 12, but John was called at times into this inner circle, they call it, where there was Peter, James, and John.

And then even at times, John had more than that. John identifies himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one single disciple he calls himself, whom Jesus loved.

He had surely a greater insight. I picture, as I suggested last week, that as they walked from town to town and all these journeys that they took, that John was not in the back hanging out with the other disciples or with Matthew or talking with James.

But John was side by side with Jesus Christ. He was in there with him. At the Last Supper, we see that he was laid on his bosom. And then, as I pictured it, that he turned his head.

[2 : 2 9] And the Bible says that his head was on his breast. And he just turned up to him and said, Lord, who is it? Just in a private one-on-one thing, no one else hears this. Peter says, ask him who it is.

Who's going to deny or who's going to betray him? And Peter didn't dare ask it out loud. But John was so close that he could just turn and say, who is it? And Christ responded.

And he told him who it was. And so John had something that no one else had. And so that being truth and that being the case, when John writes to believers, he writes in his own style.

And sometimes his style is just, oh, John, you're a little softer. You're over here talking about certain things. But maybe we need to say, wait a minute. Why does John write like that?

Why does John have that take? Why does John have that angle? And what is he trying to get across? And perhaps, and I want to suggest to you and propose, that it's because he was that close to Jesus Christ.

[3 : 27] You know, when you read through Peter's two epistles here, there's one thing that comes out. You can't miss it. It's suffering. Peter talks about suffering probably more than the other guys at all. And I see Peter, he's that tough guy.

And he wants you to be tough. And he wants to prepare you. And he wants you to be ready to take it. And not to back down. And not to give in. Suffer for Christ. He gave us that example. We should follow in his steps and be ready.

And Peter talks like that. John doesn't talk like that. John sees different things. John talks about different things. And I wonder, not to put one above the other, but I just feel like he might have a little greater insight into the mind of Christ, into what Christ wants us to know.

And what John says is, in chapter 1, he's concerned about your fellowship. He's concerned about your fellowship. And so we ran some scriptures. And we saw that he wants to bring us into a fellowship with God and with his son, Jesus Christ.

That takes place upon salvation. A new relationship is established. And then you maintain or experience that intimate fellowship with God by walking with him.

[4 : 36] And walking with him in the light. Because as we said last week, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. And God is never going to leave the light to come to the darkness so that he can have fellowship with you.

He calls you to leave the darkness and come to the light. And John even said it in chapter 3 of his gospel, He that doeth truth cometh to the light. But men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

Paul says to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Our fellowship with God we saw last week's conditioned upon our walk.

Our fellowship with God is accomplished by abiding in him. Something John heard from the beginning and he taught to these people here. And he's teaching to us in these chapters. We ran a slew of references and I didn't even cover half of them that he uses the word abide.

And John, it's all over this epistle. Abiding in him and he in you. And then thirdly, our fellowship with God is based upon the truth abiding in us. And we're going to see this even stronger this evening.

[5 : 45] The truth abiding in us. That was a concern for John and that's going to kick us right into tonight's second concern. John's concern for believers, number one, was that about your fellowship.

He's concerned about your fellowship, so he writes about that first and foremost. Secondly, tonight, John's concerned about your relationship with the truth. Your personal relationship with the truth.

Now, look in 1 John chapter 1 and notice right away at the beginning, he says, That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes.

In verse 3 he says, That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you. Then in verse 5 he says, This then is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you.

And so John's epistle, he's coming from what I've learned and heard from Jesus Christ, what I've seen with my eyes, what I've experienced in a relationship with him, I'm declaring to you.

[6 : 48] And one of the things is fellowship. The second thing is how important your relationship is with the truth. The verse was quoted tonight by our young brother, John 17, 17. Sanctify them through thy truth.

John wrote that. Thy word is truth. Matthew was on that same walk with Jesus Christ that night to the garden. Mark and Luke, they, maybe not there, but John's the one that records it.

He records all these chapters of the words of Jesus Christ in verses, chapter 14, 15, 16 of his gospel, chapter 17 of his prayer, looking upward to heaven where he said, Thy word is truth.

John heard that. John was close to him when he said it. He heard that. He wrote that down. John, thy word is truth. And so let's remember that John heard this.

Now, just to give you a little something to intrigue you if you're into this, the word truth shows up in Matthew, Mark, and Luke 11 times in those three books.

[7 : 50] 11 times they reference or they use the word truth. John, double that. Just John alone, 22 times he's talking about truth. The word true shows up only three times.

I think one time in each Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but in the book of John, 19 times. He's got a thing for the truth. And to figure this, to put that all together, those three gospels, if we averaged out their references to true or truth, comes out to just under five times in each gospel they reference this.

But John, 41 times. Over eight times as much as the other men had to write. John talks about the truth. He's concerned about your relationship with the truth. Now, I think John hears a lot of talk about being a Christian and about being a good person.

What John's concerned with is your relationship with the truth. And I think this is such a strong indicator of your fellowship and your abiding and your walk with God.

It's not how much money you give to church. It's not how good you are to people and kind to your neighbors. It's not what you do in your free time if you say no or if you give in.

[9 : 04] I think this is the strongest indicator of your walk with God is your relationship with the truth. It's not even what you profess with your mouth because that's what we're going to hit on a lot tonight.

Your professions and what you say about yourself, what you declare, I am this, I am that, I'm a Christian, I go to church, I'm a Bible believer, I love the Lord. That may indicate what you think and what you believe, whether it's about yourself or even about the truth itself.

Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. And let a man speak enough, it'll reveal what he thinks about himself. But it can also indicate your professions whether you're deceived or not.

Whether you know what you're talking about at all. Whether you get it. You meet a young believer sometimes and they get talking about certain things. And Paul refers to this in Romans 11 as someone weak in the faith.

And just as an example in Romans 14, he says he's abstaining from meat just completely. I can't touch that. It's offered to idols. It's ungodly.

[10 : 06] It's wicked. Or I just, I stay away from all of it because his conscience. And Paul's like, he says this even in the church in Corinth. He's like, we can, we know that an idol is nothing. The meat offered to the idol, none of that means anything.

I could gorge myself on that all day long. It wouldn't do a thing to defile me. But that man who's weak in the faith, that young believer, he's professing to be saved and a Christian and loves the Lord and all this.

And out of his mouth comes things that are just kind of ridiculous because he doesn't have a great understanding. He's not grown yet. He's not strong. And this is the case with professions, with what people say.

And pay attention to this word profession. You're going to see it all over this epistle. And what I originally was going to say, John's concerned with your professions. I refined it in studying this to say that, no, John's concerned with your relationship with the truth and whether you're deceived or not.

And where you are spiritually, I believe, is not expressly based on what you say, but rather whether your life is going to line up with the truth.

[11 : 12] Now, look at John chapter 1, 1 John chapter 1 with me. Because John's main concern here, again, and now this is in relation to the truth. And what John wants to do is expose whether somebody's deceived or not and illuminate them to what is called the truth.

For instance, 1 John chapter 1 verse 6. If we say, there's a profession, if we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, well, we lie and do not the truth.

The truth. We're not doing the truth. If we say this, but the truth is we're walking in darkness. So what's the result here of a faulty profession claiming to have fellowship with him?

Believing even in ourselves and minds that we are, yeah, we're good. We have fellowship with Christ, of course. I'm a Christian, I'm saved, and I'm living right. I'm doing pretty good. What's the result?

John says we lie and do not the truth. Why? Because our profession's not lining up with what John's concerned about, the truth. There's a truth.

[12 : 26] Whether we understand it or acknowledge it or not, it is so. And he's concerned that our relationship with the truth, that we're grown and understand the truth, not just what we feel, not just that we think, of course I'm okay.

I'm doing fine. I have fellowship with him. How many Christians, how many people do you know personally just because I'd say you're around a better atmosphere of Scripture and of Bible preaching and teaching and things, but how many Christians get this watered-down gospel, watered-down book, and just the sharing and caring mindset and never really get meat and truth?

And how many of them do you see and can spot and just be like, there's so much more to the Christian life than what you think there is. There's so much more to God than you're giving him credit for.

Why? Because you've got more insight to truth than them. And because of that, you see things clearer. That's what John's getting at here. He's concerned with your relationship with the truth.

Not just you feel like you're saved and talk about it. Eh, Jesus is great. But that there's a relationship with the truth that you're growing, that you're where God wants you to be in this. Watch chapter 1, verse 8.

[13 : 46] If we say, here's another profession, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. And look at that. The truth, again, the truth is not in us.

What's the result of this false profession? We're deceived. We're deceiving ourselves. So John's trying to expose the deception here.

He's trying to open people's eyes up to saying, you're not as good as you think you are. And he's concerned about it. And he's trying to drive you to the truth, to the truth, to the truth, to the truth, to get you to seek the truth, to want the truth, and to follow it, and to obey it, and to submit to it, instead of being deceived about your own condition before God.

The truth is not in us. Now John's dealing with your fellowship, and he's dealing with your relationship with the truth. Never once does he say, you're not saved, and bless God, if you don't dress this way and talk this way, you're not born again.

John doesn't talk like these big mouth preachers do around. He doesn't need to. He's concerned about your relationship with the truth. Look at chapter number 1 and verse number 10.

[14 : 59] So we lie as one result. We deceive ourselves, and we're not aligned with the truth. Now in verse number 10, if we say, profession number 3, that we have not sinned, we make him a liar.

And notice, his word is not in us. Verse 8 said, the truth is not in us. There's your cross reference. His word, thy word, is truth.

If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar. Now it's not saying that God literally becomes a liar because of what we profess. That's obviously not the case at all.

Titus chapter 1 and verse 2, if you need a cross reference there, God cannot lie. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar. His word's not in us.

It's just stating that God, if we disagree with his word, that we're making him out to be wrong. We're suggesting he's wrong.

[15 : 58] We're right. Oh, maybe we didn't say God's wrong here. God's a liar. But if God says it's black, we say, eh, it's really, it's more gray, maybe white. It's not black. We're calling God wrong.

And John's saying, if we say we have not sinned, guess who's wrong? We are. But what we're doing is making it out that he's wrong, that he's in error, and we're declaring that our wrong is right or that our sin is not sin.

When God says it is, we read this some weeks back in Isaiah. It's very thought in Isaiah chapter 5 where they call evil good and good evil. So there's another false or faulty profession and the result here is making God out to be the one that's wrong when we're the one that's wrong and we need to fix our relationship with the truth and get on the right side.

John's concerned about our professions here and he wants us to understand that truth is not relative. Now this kicks everything in the world today that they're pumping for the last 20 to 50 years that truth is, it's your truth.

It's what you believe. It's how you were raised. And John wants you to get this. Truth is not relative. He calls it the truth, the truth, the truth. There is a singular truth that belongs.

[17 : 24] It is possessed by God. His truth. And he's concerned that we have fellowship with him according to truth. Thy word is truth.

What God declares is truth. We don't get to decide. What John says is, his word is not in us. To declare that we don't have sin, well that's just a profession of our own making and really it comes out of our deceitful heart, our desperately wicked heart, that says, no, we're good.

That's fine. Nothing wrong with that. That's the modern translation of that. There's nothing wrong with that. And God says, or John says, oh, you're making God a liar then? You're saying God's wrong when you say there's nothing wrong with it?

Because he plainly declares there's wrong. Look at chapter 2 and verse number 4. Here's another one. Chapter 2 and verse 4. He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.

Now let me give you the cross reference here. 1 John 5 verse 20. We read this last week in connection to the fellowship that John's calling us to and that he's concerned about.

[18 : 39] When it says, I know him, it's not saying, like you say on your job site, oh, do you know so and so? Yeah, I know him. Like I've met him before. No, it's talking about an intimate relationship. 1 John 5 and verse 20.

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding that we may know him that is true. And we are in him that is true. That's a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the true God and eternal life.

Knowing him is not just knowing about him. And so if he saith, it's going back to that first thought of having fellowship with him. He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar.

And look at verse 4 again. The truth is not in him. The result of this faulty profession is he's a liar.

And it's surely not God that's the liar. Now keep your place here and come back to John chapter 8. Look at John chapter 8. Where does this stuff come from?

[19 : 45] Claiming one thing and being a liar. and not having the truth in him. Look at John chapter 8.

We're right in the middle of a passage that Christ is speaking of the truth all over the place in this. And notice verse 44.

John 8, 44. Therefore, ye are of your father the devil and the lust of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there's no truth in him.

That's what he just said about that liar. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own for he is a liar and the father of it. Because I tell you the truth ye believe me not.

And notice in verse 46. Which of you convinceth me of sin if I say the truth? Why do you not believe me? He that is of God heareth here he substitutes something for the truth.

[20 : 51] It's God's words. God's words. The truth. But there's the liar and the father the father of it he is a liar in 1 John 2 verse 4 who saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.

Sounds just like the devil. Sounds just like the father the devil. I call him the father of your flesh if you want some clarity on that. 1 John chapter 2 look at verse number 6.

Here's another profession it keeps going. 1 John chapter 2 in verse 6 he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked. Who?

Jesus Christ. If you're going to claim or profess to abide in Christ you ought to walk like Jesus Christ walked. How did he walk? Well he walked according to truth.

Look at Ephesians chapter 5 Ephesians I'm sorry chapter 4 Ephesians 4 John thinks that our profession ought to match our position if we're in Christ and if he saith he abideth in him well then you ought to walk like that and so your your talk ought to match your walk and your walk ought to resemble the walk of the Lord Jesus Christ as he walked look at Ephesians 4 and we'll start in verse 17 Paul says this this I say therefore and testify in the Lord that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk and how do they walk?

[22 : 38] In the vanity of their mind he describes in verse 18 their understandings darkened he describes their ignorance he describes the blindness of their heart and lasciviousness uncleanness greediness notice verse 20 but ye have not so learned Christ if so be that ye have heard him John did just like we read John heard him and have been taught by him notice verse 21 as the truth is in Jesus he's talking about your walk and if you've heard and been taught by him that's where the truth is and he declared he's the way the truth and the life your walk ought to match his walk and your walk ought to be evidence that he's inside of you if you're going to profess to know him and to have fellowship with him John thinks that your walk and he goes on Paul gives us some details about the new nature the new man and describes how he can put away lying and speak truth he describes how if you stole instead of stealing in verse 28 you should labor and then give instead of take you should be a giver and he describes your speech in verse 29 and your attitude and the rest of the chapter how it ought to change from what it was to what it can be in Christ it ought to match

Jesus Christ the profession is another false profession if the walk isn't matching the talk come back to 1 John chapter 2 and see one more profession that he speaks of in verse 9 1 John chapter 2 verse 9 he that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in darkness even until now he's sorry bro but you're not in the light oh just because you say you are doesn't mean you are and this practical thought here in his relationships with others and we'll get into that probably in next week Lord willing but here's another faulty profession the result is they're in darkness even currently present tense until now still in darkness in this area thinking you're in the light thinking you're right thinking you know it's my brother that's wrong and John needs to wake up say wake up

I'm concerned concerned about your relationship with the truth now let me get some more out of this John's concerned about your relationship with the truth he's concerned that you might be deceiving yourself about what you are about how right you are you might be lying to yourself and to God and to others you might be deceived thinking you have no sin say things are okay and they're not say things are right and essentially saying that God's wrong and all the while professing to be clean professing to be Christian and John's saying if that's you then you're not comparing yourself to a few things one of them is God because he said in chapter 1 that God is light and in him is no darkness at all if you're going to have fellowship with him and walk with him it's going to be in the light so if somebody's going to be deceived well they're not walking in the light they're not comparing themselves to God number 2 they're not comparing themselves to what we just saw in chapter 2 verse 6 to the walk of the Lord

Jesus Christ even as he walked that's how you ought to be walking as he walked walking like Jesus Christ walked how did he walk in chapter 3 in verse 5 John says ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins and in him is no sin that's how he walked and Hebrews says he was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin you want to talk about being deceived and saying you don't have sin you're not comparing yourself to the walk of Jesus Christ because that's a walk where there's never been sin once that's a pure walk in chapter 3 he says he is pure in verse 3 so you're not comparing yourself to God you're not comparing yourself to the walk of the Lord Jesus Christ and thirdly you're not comparing yourself to God's standard of truth which is his words and there's no lie of the truth now turn to 2nd John I need to point this out 2nd John and 3rd John come to those two short little epistles

John is concerned about your relationship with the truth and he's trying to point you to the holiness of God that he's in the light and you come to him and he's trying to point you to the walk of the Lord Jesus Christ you imitate that and he's trying to point you to God's standard his words for truth 2nd John look at the first four verses the elder unto the elect lady and her children whom I love in the truth and not I only but also all they that have known the truth for the truth's sake are you getting this which dwelleth in us and shall be with us forever grace be with you mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father in truth and in love I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth as ye have received a commandment from the Father boy is John obsessed with this or what he can't even introduce something without saying it five times the truth the truth the truth there's nothing more important than the truth in verse 7 he's worried about deceivers that are out there and saying some things and he's worried that they get taken away from the truth look at 3 John verse 1 the elder unto the well beloved Gaius whom I love in the truth beloved I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prosperous for I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee even as thou walkest in the truth

[29 : 14] I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth later on he's worried about the atrophies and some of the mess he's making in that church but in verse 12 he commends somebody Demetrius he says he hath a good report in verse 12 of all men and of the truth itself well John could have said a whole lot of other things about that man about this woman about his relationship with them and his concern for them but what did he keep saying he's concerned and he's so pleased to know and hear they're walking in the truth and he'll love you in the truth you better understand that's an important important and so high important thing with God and when I see John writing about it and concerned about it there's a reason and again I see John being that close to Jesus Christ that what comes out of his mouth his concern is gold absolutely gold come to Revelation

Revelation chapter 3 John has a major hang up with the truth and he can't stop talking about the truth now Revelation chapter 3 here's this church of Laodicea in verse 14 and they typify the church today and what kind of condition does God see in his people verse 14 under the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write these things saith the amen the faithful and true witness the beginning of the creation of God I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot I would thou work cold or hot so then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot

I will spew thee out of my mouth now what is it about this church that makes God sick verse 17 look at this because thou sayest they've got a profession and you know what their profession is about themselves I am rich I am increased with goods and have need of nothing huh boy does that sound like the world I've grown up in American Christianity got it made so blessed so blessed of God God you've truly blessed blessed blessed blessed blessed us we have everything we don't need anything and God said that's what you're professing but look at the truth later in the verse he says and knowest not you know what they're deceived sounds like what John was worried about they're deceived about themselves they're deceived thou knowest not that thou art wretched you're not good and miserable and poor and blind and naked oh no no we're rich increased with goods it's all good

God is on our side so they think and John writes as Jesus Christ rebukes them because they're they're so comfortable and they're so blessed and they know not they're ignorant of their condition they're ignorant they're deceived and so this church that typifies perhaps even us in the last days think they're okay they have a profession and it makes God sick and you know what John is concerned John's concerned enough to put this stuff in his epistle in 1st John he's concerned about your fellowship with God with your fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ that you have it that you seek him that you walk with him in the light that you abide in him and that you walk according to truth he's also concerned about your relationship with the truth itself the truth that you seek the truth that you're not satisfied with what I am that you don't go by your feelings and lean one way and then the next day lean the other way but you seek the truth and you fellowship in the truth with God Almighty

Jesus Christ said I am the way the truth and the life if you know the Lord Jesus Christ you have fellowship with him you're going to want the truth you're going to want to walk according to truth you're not going to want it any other way because you're going to see that he's in the light and if I'm in darkness then I got to get this fixed or I'm not right with him and John has that concern for Christians I think John's words are gold I think what he puts in these five chapters there's something in there that we need to get a hold of we need to see things from his perspective we need to follow through with what he's throwing down because he wants to make sure that we're concerned the way he is with our relationship with the truth I wonder tonight do you consider yourself to be walking in truth do you consider yourself to have fellowship with God it's going to be in the light if so or are you a liar or are you deceived you say I would call me a liar don't you dare call me a liar what if God does what if God stood here and said you're a liar you're lying telling me you're walking in truth you're lying to yourself you're lying to your church you're lying to your family you're a liar and you need to get it right what if God showed up and got in your face a little bit are you walking in truth are you having fellowship with God and have you determined that the rules of your Christianity aren't based on what you decide it's not relative it's not based on your upbringing it's based on the book

[35 : 33] God's going to draw you to truth if your heart's open to it he's going to he doesn't want you he doesn't want the way you think he wants the way he thinks to get inside of you so the disciple that knew Jesus Christ the best and really only wrote a few words in these latter epistles he's concerned number one about your fellowship number two about your relationship with the truth Lord willing next week we're going to see that he's also concerned about something else that shows up a lot in this epistle he's concerned about your relationship with the brethren let's close in prayer Father as we close