

**1JOHN**  
**THIS IS THE LIFE**  
**SMALL GROUP STUDY #1: FELLOWSHIP 101**

**Ice Breaker:** Have you ever been an eyewitness to something? If so, how important was your testimony?

**INTRO:** John (as best we know) was the last living apostle when he wrote this letter. He had lived long enough to see many “teachers” come along making all kinds of claims about Jesus and His Kingdom. While some were being drawn off to exciting new ideas and ways to do church, John insisted the original message had not changed and was the only one that could provide real fellowship.

**READ: 1John 1:1-7**

***1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.***

***5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by 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, purifies us from all sin.***

Q: Why do you think John starts off his letter talking about “That” which was from the beginning instead of “Him” who was from the beginning? (vs.1)

- John is talking about “the life” (vs. 2), which is Jesus.
- John is talking about us living Jesus’ life because we are in Him.

Q: In verse 1, John chose to use some interesting words. The word translated “seen” is the Greek word “*horaoo*” which means “to stare at”. The word translated “looked at” is the Greek word “*theaomai*” which means “to look closely at”. Why might John have used these words instead of simply saying he saw Jesus?

- Lots of people could say they had seen Jesus (He was a public figure), but not many could claim to have seen Him the same way John, James and Peter had. (Matt. 17:2)
- John is saying He is THE eyewitness and his testimony is more credible than anybody else’s.

Q: What is John’s message in verse 5? (This statement is essential to understanding John’s whole letter.)

- List as many characteristics of light as you can.
- If you are in Christ, you are in the light. How does this light affect you?

Q: (Vs. 6) What is the difference between fellowship and friendship?

- Friendship is different from fellowship in the same way that happiness is different from joy.
- The Greek word for fellowship, *koinonia*, means, “to share in common, to partake, or to partner.”
- Fellowship is about sharing the journey, helping each other get where you’re going. The bonds of fellowship are strong and reliable.
- Friendships can be self-serving on some level and quite fragile.

Q: What does it mean to have “fellowship” with God?

- We are to be partners in the light with Christ.
- We are to share Jesus’ journey.

Q: What happens to our fellowship with God when we walk in darkness (vs. 6)?

- Is there a difference between sinning and *walking* in darkness? Explain.
- What warning signals might you experience if you begin to walk in darkness?

Q: What two promises do we receive if we walk in the light as He is in the light? (vs. 7)

- How does walking in the light make it easier for us to have fellowship with other believers?

Q: What is the difference between being forgiven of sin and being purified from sin (vs. 7)?

- How does this affect our ability to walk in the light?

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APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. Walking in the light will naturally expose sin, even “secret” sins. Recognizing that you are “as sick as your secrets”, what sin is God exposing in you?
2. Which have you focused more on with other disciples, friendship or fellowship? What have been the results of this focus?
3. What keeps you in the “friend zone” instead of having real fellowship?