

**TITLE:** KEYS TO CONSISTENT CHRISTIANITY (LIVING IN THE LIGHT)

**TEXT:** 1 JOHN 1:1-2:2

**INTRO:** When Jesus called the Laodiceans lukewarm (**Rev 3:16**), He was saying they were inconsistent (hot *and* cold), and He couldn't stand this! God's promises are consistent (**2 Cor 1:19-20**), & He demands consistency in following Him!

### **I. CONSISTENT FOUNDATION (1:1-4):**

**(v. 1-2) *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard...seen...looked upon...handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, & we have seen it, & bear witness, & shew unto you that eternal life...)***

Immediately John attacks the Gnostic views of the day by indicating that the One they (apostles) had heard, seen, & touched is "from the beginning," is "eternal" and is "life." These things indicate that He (Jesus) was and is God, and *did* come in the flesh.

**(v. 3-4) *That which we have seen & heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.***

He's establishing the Deity of Jesus & declaring His teachings to them so that 1) they could have fellowship, and 2) for complete joy.

### **II. CONSISTENT FELLOWSHIP (1:5-7):**

**(v. 5) *This then is the message which we have heard of him, & declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.***

A. **The character of God:** He is light – pure, righteous, sinless, perfect, and He's the source of everything good (**Jam 1:17**) – truth, knowledge, wisdom, law & justice, guidance, holiness, righteousness, and joy in this life & the next. It **ALL** comes from Him!

- John says the same about Jesus: **Jn 1:4-5**–*"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness"*

B. **The consistency of God**–*"in Him is no darkness at all."* A friend once told me that he felt closer to God because God made mistakes & learned from them (he was unable to give an example)! If God is imperfect, then how is He any different than us?

How can *He* save us from that which defeated Him (i.e., sin)? God has **never** made a mistake, never sinned, no imperfections!

- The same is true of Jesus (**1 Pet 2:22**–*"who did no sin"*; **Heb 4:15**–*"in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"*).

**(v. 6) *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:***

A. Fellowship (**κοινωνία**) is more than a church luncheon! It's partnership, working together, being in agreement. You **can't** have this with God while choosing to walk in darkness (God is **100%** light)! This addressed Gnostics "flesh=evil, spirit=good" belief.

B. In & out of the Lord's church, false claims of spirituality & Christian fellowship abound! Throughout this letter John puts heavy challenges on the professing Christian, and very fundamentally exposes the uncommitted follower of God (cf. the ifs in **v. 6-10**)!

God is consistent, and He commands consistency from His people!

**(v. 7) *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*** Here is the recipe for brotherly fellowship! Who is my brother in Christ? Generally speaking, it is he who walks in the light. You & I have fellowship (partnership, agreement) if & only if we are **both** walking (living) in the light *as He is in the light* (v. 5).

Jesus walked in the light by **ALWAYS** doing His Father's will, not His own (**Jn 4:34; 5:19,30; 6:38; 8:28**). We're called to do the same thing (**2:17**–*He that doeth the will of God...*; **Mt 7:21; 1 Pet 4:11**–*"speak as the oracles of God"*).

- *"The blood...cleanses us from all sin."* When we sin, we *aren't* walking in the light *as he is in the light*. However, a huge benefit of Christianity is that we have cleansing from sin (present tense, continuous action)(explained in **v. 8-10**). But we *strive* for sinlessness. Throughout the rest of the letter he'll encourage us to have the same consistency as God & Jesus. But what if we fail?

### **III. CONSISTENT FORGIVENESS (1:8-2:2):**

A. **How a Christian is forgiven – Confession (1:8-10)**

**(v. 8) *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.***

So here's the next false claim a Christian can make (1<sup>st</sup> is v. 6): claiming to have no sin. This may have been part of the Gnostic claim. But John makes certain we understand that all have sinned (**Rom 3:23**), and to say otherwise is to deceive yourself & live in sin, because the truth isn't in you (**3:6**–*"Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him"*).

**(v. 9) *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

- This is God's plan of forgiveness for Christians who sins. God knows when you've sinned. But He wants *you* to confess it.

- *If we confess* – not confess only (**Acts 8:22**–repent & pray)–this is in contrast to the denial of **v. 8**. He is faithful – we can trust Him that He forgives our sins; they're gone (*"as far as the east is from the west"*–**Psa 103:12**).

**(v. 10) *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*** Again, if we say we have not sinned... In v. 8, *"if we say we have no sin (noun)..."* Here, *"If we say we have not sinned (verb–perfect tense– i.e., "If we say we haven't sinned now or ever."* It seems John is saying the same thing in both verses, using the noun & verb forms of the same word, **for emphasis**. All have sinned, & you cannot be forgiven if you deny this (you're calling God a liar – **Rom 3:10f**)!

B. **Why a Christian is forgiven – The Advocate (2:1-2)**

**(v. 1) *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:***

1. John has just said not to deny/ignore sin, but to admit it & confess it, and it will be forgiven. This is **very** comforting, but might lead some to conclude that "since I'll be forgiven, why worry about sin?" (cf. **Rom 6:1**). John states firmly that he's writing these things *"that ye sin not!"* As Paul responded, *"How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"*

2. So, **DON'T SIN!** Strive to be sinless! But if you do sin, *"we have an Advocate* (helper, intercessor) *with the Father, Jesus..."* He is at the right hand of God, and makes intercession for us (**Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24**).

**(v. 2) *And he is the propitiation for our sins: & not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*** This is why God can forgive us – because Jesus' died to be our propitiation (appeasing, atonement). And He did this for **ALL** (not limited atonement).

**CONCLUSION:** This is a reminder of what our Advocate came to do – to provide a way to the Father by the forgiveness of our sins. As Christians we **must** admit when we sin, repent, & confess it to God. **Prov 28:13**–*"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth & forsaketh them shall have mercy."*