

1 John 1:1-5
The Joy of Knowing Christ

“In the early days of the expansion of the Christian church, there was a large measure of agreement, if not unanimity, as to what the faith was. But in time as various heretical movements began to appear within the church, this initial agreement broke up in places, and many normal Christians found themselves asking: What is Christianity after all? Is belief in Jesus Christ essential to the highest form of Christianity? Is Christianity Christ? If not, what is? Or if Christ is essential to Christianity, then what precisely is one to believe about him? In the churches to which John wrote, these questions had grown out of a major schism caused by those whom today we would call Gnostics. They were intense and fundamental questions. (Who are we? What is the truth?) Moreover, they obviously involved authority (Who is right?) as well.” Boice [1 Tim. 4:1; Acts 7:11; Col. 2:8]

1:1 The words John used in his opening statement were meant to dispel any notion of having a mere opinion about what it meant to know Christ. Instead, he gives indisputable facts concerning the truth of Christ’s existence and purpose as the Son of God.

“from the beginning” The eternity of the Godhead is a mystery. John is referring to Jesus’ existence from before time began. That is why our conclusions concerning the faith must be based on what has been revealed to us from the Scriptures, otherwise they become mere conjecture.

John 1:1-4 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.*

- How can anyone come into the church and say that they have a better way? There’s nothing new; no man can improve upon what Jesus did. If someone comes with a new teaching, revelation or insight then run, don’t entertain it.

Hebrews 13:8-9 *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.*

John gives Objective truth concerning the humanity of Christ:

- **“which we have heard”** The perfect tense of the verb “have heard” means that Jesus’ words had a lasting, ongoing influence in John’s life. He was the only believer alive who heard Jesus speak.

Luke 10:23-24 *Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”*

- **“which we have seen” “which we have looked at”** John uses the perfect tense again to tell of the lasting, ongoing effect seeing the Son of God in the flesh had on him.
- I knew what he looked like! I saw what he did! I saw the miracles He performed! I saw him transfigured! I was with Him when he was glorified by God the Father! In fact, I saw Moses and Isaiah standing there giving their assent. I saw how He interacted with people and I saw and experienced his love and compassion for the lost! I saw what they did to him and how he willingly

laid his life down as a ransom for the sins of mankind! I saw him hanging on the cross and I saw him resurrected! I saw God in the flesh!

- The Greek word John uses for saw is **horaō**. It means to see with understanding.

Three different Greek verbs are used for “to see.”

John 20:3-9 3 So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. 4 Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 And stooping to look in, he saw (**blepō**) the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw (**theōreō**) the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw (**horaō**) and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

βλέπω blépō– most common Greek word. Means simply to impress upon, to simply see without a lot of thought.

θεωρέω theōréō– means to “behold with intelligence, to scrutinize. *to view attentively, take a view of, survey, to view mentally, consider*

ὁράω horáō– to see with understanding. *to see with the mind, to perceive, know*

- John uses the word **horaō** three times in the first four verses of 1st John to say that he not only saw Jesus, but he also understood who He was and what He did.

■ **“our hands have touched”** I touched him before his death and after his resurrection.

Luke 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

■ **“concerning the Word of life”** “The person and work of Jesus Christ proclaimed in the gospel.” MacArthur. “It is best to take ‘Word’ as the gospel which is centered in Christ.” Boice

“There is an important principle here, for while it is true that it is impossible to proclaim Christ without doctrine and while it is equally true that neither John nor any other New Testament writer ever disparages any verbalized statement of God’s true revelation, nevertheless it is also true that it is Jesus and not a system of thought who is the essential core of the Christian proclamation. The Gnostics had a system, just as many professional religionists have a system today. But a system is not life, nor does it transform life. A system in and of itself is nothing. What Christianity has and the others do not have is life, in fact, the life of Jesus himself, the one who is the creator and sustainer of all life and who as the life is also the light of men (John 1:14). It is Christ then, who is proclaimed in Christianity.” Boice

1:2 What John and the disciples experienced in how Christ revealed himself to them, both as God incarnate and as one who gives eternal life through belief in him, was not to be kept to themselves. Unlike the Gnostics, they did not consider their experience mystical and only for a select few. Instead, the proclamation of the gospel and its life changing power through the Spirit was to be proclaimed to anyone who would listen.

- Does any kind of exclusivity exist in the church today? Do systems of religiosity exist? Legalism is a form of exclusivity in that the rule makers see themselves as above those who must abide by their rules.

- Know what you believe, even if you feel totally inept at putting your faith into words. The Holy Spirit will bear testimony of it in your heart. The thing about the Holy Spirit's testimony in our hearts is that He will express himself through us one way or another, He always does, and that is John's point.

John 14:16-17 *And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another helper to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it neither sees (theōreō) Him nor knows (ginōskō, understands) Him. But you do know Him, for He abides with you and will be in you....*

John 15:26 *“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.*

1:3-4 The Gnostics were causing confusion and division in the church. The proclamation of Jesus Christ is a proclamation that binds all who know and proclaim him into a powerful partnership with their Lord and Savior and with one another.

- For all who believe, the power of the cross healed the rift between God and man through reconciliation. A believer immediately enters into fellowship with God upon salvation. It's a bond that cannot be broken. That fellowship opens the door to true fellowship with other believers as the Spirit expresses himself through those of us who know Him.

“Fellowship: The idea of fellowship is one of the most important ideas in this letter of John's. It is the ancient Greek word koinonia, which speaks of a sharing, a communion, a common bond and common life. It speaks of a living, breathing, sharing, loving relationship with another person.”
Guzik

- Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. A sure way to maintain it is to stay in fellowship with Jesus and with one another. It begins with Jesus.

1:5 Notice, that after writing about the undeniable truth of the manhood of Jesus Christ, John now writes about his character. It is a clear message he received, and it is a **clear message** to us as well.

We must begin our understanding of God here. John declares this on the simple understanding that God Himself is light; and light by definition has no darkness at all in it; for there to be darkness, there must be an absence of light. Guzik

- John calls God's holiness **light**. He calls sin **darkness**. He explains that the kind of light God is doesn't allow for any kind of darkness whatsoever. They are diametrically opposed.
- Where light shines there is no darkness and where darkness is, there is no light. Where holiness shines there is no sin and where sin is there is no holiness.

Visible light (commonly referred to simply as **light**) is [electromagnetic radiation](#) that is [visible](#) to the [human eye](#), and is responsible for the sense of [sight](#). **Darkness**, as the polar opposite to [brightness](#), is understood to be an absence of [visible light](#). (wikipedia)

- God is light, which means that he is completely and perfectly holy. His character is holy, His thoughts are holy, His words are holy and His actions are holy. Heaven exalts Him above all because of his perfect holiness.
- It is a positive statement concerning the nature of God.

Isaiah 6:3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

- When John says, "God is light," he takes us into the world of imagery that is found in both the Old and New Testaments.
- David writes in the Psalms about God being light. **Psalm 27:1** *The Lord is my light and salvation.* **Psalm 36:9** *For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.* **Psalm 104** *You are clothed with splendor and majesty. He wraps himself in light as with a garment.*
- Light is visible and it makes things visible, which is its nature. We gather from all this that God's nature is to make himself known.

Isaiah 49:6 *I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.*

Vs.5b *in him there is no darkness at all.* God's light (holiness) is opposed to all that sinful and false. John makes a negative statement meant to reinforce the positive statement; God is light.

- This brings in **two biblical ideas** about light.

1st, it has **ethical overtones**. Light is a symbol of moral purity/holiness.

John 3:19-20 *This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.*

- The lives of Christians should be known for being holy and righteous, to live otherwise is living a life that God opposes.

2 Peter 3:11-12 *... what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.*

- If we claim to know the Lord and continue to embrace a sinful lifestyle, then we are either deceiving ourselves or lying.

2nd, it deals with the true **nature of all believers**. Those who follow Jesus are said to be children of light (holiness) or even light (holiness) itself.

Matthew 5:14,16 *You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men.*

John 12:35b-36 *The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. Put our trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light.*

- We have been given power through the indwelling of the Spirit to influence the world through holiness. There's no darkness in that whatsoever unless we allow it, unless we cheapen grace by living contrary to the character of Jesus.

2 Thess. 2:7 *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.*

- At some point in the very near future, our influence as light in this world will be removed.