

1 John 1:1-4

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life ---the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us ---that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

By now the Apostle John is upward in his years, maybe even in his 90's. He is the only "original" disciple of Christ alive. He has walked with Christ, seen Him crucified, visited the empty tomb and saw Him ascend into Heaven. Knowing that those who had seen Christ first-hand were slowly disappearing from the landscape, John felt it necessary to preserve the true revelation of Christ to ward off any erosion of the Truth and even false teachers. Therefore, he set out to write this short profound book that we call the first letter from John, 1 John.

Unlike the more linear narrative approach that John used to write his Gospel of John, he approaches this writing with a "spiral" logical structure. Rather than layering facts upon facts and truths upon truths in a linear narrative, in this book he develops his thoughts repeating them with greater emphasis over and over. Each new line of his teaching conveys a new level of depth and breadth.

We're all familiar with whirlpools or vortexes. In fact, we are dependent upon them to carry our water away from us such as in the sink or bathtub. If you've ever been white-water rafting you know the power of a larger body of water that spins with great force drawing in unwitting objects to its inescapable grasp. Rafting guides nickname these river vortexes with such names as "Big Mama," "Power Wash," "Eliminator."

The vortex is a powerful force in our physical world. And not only do we see it in bodies of water but also in tornadoes and hurricanes. John's spiral method of conveying spiritual truth in this way ought to remind us of the work of God within us as a process and not merely a one time event.

In this spiral method of conveying truth, John unfolds 3 key ideas and brings them around for discussion over and over again, each time in a deepening and broadening level. **Love. Truth. Obedience.**

John begins his book by assuring us that God wants to be known. And that God wants His message to be known. **That God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ assures us that He wants to be known.** (v. 1,2) Jesus Christ is the perfect manifestation and revelation of God to man. Jesus is the Father's perfect interpretation of Himself to mankind. Through Jesus one can have a relationship with God. This begins at the point of salvation (the turning away from sin and the turning toward God in faith) and continues through the Christian's journey of life. One can be as close to God as they want to be based upon their relationship with Jesus Christ.

That God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ addresses the question of "what is MY life's message?" (v. 2,3) The message from God has not changed. It is "from the beginning" (v. 1). It has been continuous through the Apostles to the date of this letter and now through this letter to us today. John is saying, that he has nothing "new" to say. This is no "new" message. The message is about eternal life found in the Word of Life.

That God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ arrests our relationships for profitable purposes. (v. 3) Unified fellowship together centers upon fellowship with God. This fellowship in the faith has a deeper meaning than causal acquaintances since it is directly tied to the greatest relationship—that blessed fellowship with God. Unity with other disciples of Christ brings joy. John desires that we all have the same experience with Christ with one another. This fellowship can also be thought of as a "sharing" together. It's more than mere socializing, it is true partnership.

See Life Application Questions on reverse side -----

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe that the Bible accurately represents both who God is and what He has done?
2. Why did John believe that it was important to record his personal experience in his letter?
3. What does God want us to know about Him?
4. Does man have the right to teach whatever he wants about God apart from the Bible?
5. How does the teaching of Jesus Christ become twisted or “new” in our world?
6. Do you enjoy rich fellowship with other disciples of Christ in unity with Him? What does true partnership together look like in the disciple’s life?
7. If this is your first time joining us in this study, will you commit to having an open mind and heart to what the Word of God says about Jesus Christ?