

# BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE

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## “GOD’S FORMULA FOR FELLOWSHIP”

Series #3 on the Book of 1 John

### 1 John 1:3-10

Let me quote Chuck Swindoll in his book “**Growing Strong In The Seasons Of Life**,” as told by Don Graham. (Will read story about a young woman, who was traveling alone up the rutted and rugged highway from Alberta, Canada to the Yukon.) John’s invites us to be hugged. He invites us in **v.3** to “have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.” We are invited to have VERTICAL fellowship with God and HORIZONTAL fellowship with His people. The apostle John opens his letter by asserting that one of the main aims of the Christian message is we may enter in to the apostolic fellowship, which is “with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (**1:3**). Such fellowship with God is at the very heart of what it means to be a Christian. Christianity is not, at its core, the observance of rituals or rules. Rather, it is a walk of personal fellowship with the living God. Fellowship means “things held in common.” Before we look at 1 John turn with me to **Acts 2:41-42** and look at what was important with the early NT church in Acts. **V-42** tells us that after teaching the church was to be a place of “**fellowship**”. Now let’s go back to **1 John 1:3** as we see four truths that John wants us know about **GOD’S FORMULA FOR FELLOWSHIP**. First ....

### I. THE PRINCIPLE OF FELLOWSHIP

The English word *fellowship*, as it is used today, usually means “*friendly, social relations*.” This is not what John had in mind, however. At the time he wrote this general letter to be sent to the Church at large, he was an old man, and certainly had no thought of ever sitting down to enjoy a season of mere friendly, social relations with his readers. This commonly accepted usage of the word could not have been first in the aged apostle's thoughts.

The word used here means *partnership*. When two or more persons share something in common, they are said to be partakers or partners together. Men get up their social fellowships, but the true Christian fellowship is a partnership in the gospel of Christ (**Philippians 1:5**).

Then secondly, we see . . .

### II. THE PARTICIPATION IN THE FELLOWSHIP

Now observe next that the partnership with Deity is a joint partnership with the Father and the Son. “*Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*” In this statement the Holy Spirit continues His argument for the deity of our Lord Jesus, Christ. He is the eternal “Word” (**1 John 1:1**) who was “*with God*” and who “*was God*” (**John 1:1**), and without whom no man can have fellowship with God. Men may talk and preach and write about God, but it is impossible to have communion with Him apart from His Son, Jesus Christ. John wants that which they saw and heard and experienced about Christ to be the common possession of all believers.

Thirdly we see ...

### III. THE PRETENSE OF FELLOWSHIP

It is important at this point that we consider **verses 6 and 7**, where we have the only other appearance of the word “fellowship” in the Epistle. The neuter noun **darkness** is used only twice by John in his five books, here in **1 John 1:6** and in **John 3:19**. **Metaphorically the word is used of moral and spiritual darkness, the darkness of sin.** Fellowshiping with God and walking about in darkness are mutually exclusive experiences. The one who pretends to be doing so is a liar and is not practicing the truth. Like Judas, we are in great danger of being in the constant presence of the Light, yet all the while walking in darkness. **Light is the emblem of holiness.** It is what God is. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of darkness, of moral and spiritual evil (**Ephesians 6:12**). Light and darkness have nothing in common; therefore, he is a liar who walks in darkness and pretends to be in fellowship with the Light. The apostle then makes the distinction between our **words and our walk**. Three allegations, all lies, are prefaced with the words, “*If we say*” (**1:6, 8, 10**).

Lastly, we see...

### IV. THE PRACTICE OF FELLOWSHIP V-7

In the use of “**we**” here, believers only are included, for their first must be union before communion. **Fellowship**” is not just a potluck dinner or an evening of spades or 42. Fellowship is the giving and receiving our lives with one another.

I don’t know how I would live without the fellowship of our church. I couldn’t make it without the fellowship of my brothers and sisters in Christ’s body both here and around the world. Christianity is a “**one another**” religion, where **we have Intimate Vertical Fellowship**. John wants us to experience genuine fellowship with the holy God by walking in the light, as He Himself is in the light.