

Can I Know for Sure if I Have a Relationship with God?

I John 1:5-2:6

1 To answer this question let me first explain something about printing and printing presses. In order to produce full color pages in newspapers, and other printed material, some things need to happen. Normally a full color web press is several presses lined up so a sheet of paper can feed from one of them to the other. Each press has a different color so as the paper goes through a different color is added to the paper. At the end of the line of presses the paper stacks as a finished product with the appropriate colors on each page.

The images on each of the presses have to be adjusted so as the paper runs through each image will be placed exactly where it needs to be on the page. If the adjustments were not made the blue color on Donald Duck's sailor jacket may not be completely where it should be. Donald would look a little undressed.

When the adjustments are accurate on each of the presses the colors line up perfectly. The press is “in register”.

The Book of First John in the New Testament was written to help Christians understand if they are “in register” with God. You can tell if you are where God wants you to be with Him if you are “in register” with His will. First John, chapter 1, verse 5, through chapter 2, verse 6, will help us understand God’s process for getting you “in register” with Him. ²

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 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. ^{1 3}

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is

¹ 1: 5-7.

faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. ² ₄

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. ³ ₅

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did. ⁴

² 1: 8-10.

³ 2:1-2.

⁴ 2:3-6.

This scripture passage answers three questions necessary for us to understand this divine process. ⁶

I. What is Divine Fellowship Anyway?

What is divine fellowship anyway? ⁷ Chapter 1, verse 3, ⁵ tells us it's fellowship with the Father and with the Son. ⁸

The word “fellowship” in the original language ⁶ implies a common sharing experience. We get our English word “coin” from this word. Money is a common element of exchange. You receive it, you give it away, you buy with it, you sell with it, you invest with it. It's something we use in common. We recognize its value and exchange it accordingly. ⁹

⁵1:3 - . . . what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

⁶ κοινωνία.

Verse 7 says that an indicator of that fellowship with the Father and the Son is the relationship we have with one another.⁷ ¹⁰

Verse 7 also states that you get this fellowship by walking in the light.¹¹ Walking has the idea of personal behavior; conducting yourself.

God is light!⁸ So God is glory; He is pure; He gives direction; He is self revealing and reveals other things.¹²

The opposite of walking in the light is darkness. Darkness is separation from God.¹³ First Peter, chapter 2, verse 9 puts it this way, **that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.**¹⁴ John, chapter 3,

⁷ 1:7 - But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another . . .

⁸ 1:5 - This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

verse 19 ⁹ tells us that evil people prefer to stay in the darkness to conceal their lives!

So, that's divine fellowship; a sharing relationship with the Father and the Son indicated by the relationships we have with one another.

Since that is divine fellowship . . . ¹⁵

I. How Would I Know if I Don't Have This Fellowship?

How would I know if I don't have this fellowship? ¹⁶

Chapter 1, verse 8 says you may sell sin too short! **If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.** ¹⁷ The attitude here is "What I do is not important as long as I believe the right stuff!"

When I was a teenager I was involved in a church I now consider to be very legalistic. I received a lot of Bible at the time so the experience was good for me. But the total message of that church was accepting

⁹ John 3:19 - This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

their theological position because, “it’s what the Bible says”. Every Sunday morning, evening and Wednesday worship sermons plus all the Bible study lessons contained doctrine, theological teachings. Your salvation was determined solely on what you believed. Evangelism consisted not only of sharing the gospel message with non believers but also gathering people from other churches because they were being taught wrong. To be a Christian you had to be pure doctrinally.

Please understand; doctrine is important. Accepting what God’s word teaches is a vital part of discipleship; growing in your faith. It is also important to get the Bible teachings straight. There is much false teaching in many churches and Christian organizations. But that’s not all there is to being God’s child!

I visited a woman once to invite her to the church where I served as pastor. In the conversation she told me she was a member of that church. That was a

surprise since no one in the church knew who she was. Come to find out she had been exposed to the gospel message and God's plan of salvation. She stepped forward at the Invitation time, made her confession of faith and was baptized. That was fifteen years ago. She had never gone back to church to worship or to be discipled. She simply went through the ceremony of becoming a Christian and marked that off her bucket list. That was it.

Believing the truth is important. But God's plan is to transform lives; build character and help those He created in His "image and likeness"¹⁰ to begin conforming to the image of Lord Jesus.¹⁸

Revelation, chapter 3, verse 16 says, **So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to spit you out of my mouth.**¹⁹ Lord Jesus said of some of His disciples that their **love would grow cold.**¹¹²⁰

¹⁰ Genesis 1:26 - Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness .

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¹¹ Matthew 24:12 - Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. . .

First Timothy, chapter 4, verse 1 ¹² says that some would even depart from the faith! ²¹ Hebrews, chapter 6, verses 4 through 6 ¹³ tell us they would be impossible to restore when they do! ²²

Besides, the truth is something you do as well as something you believe! ²³ You can suppress the truth ¹⁴ ; ²⁴ you can obey the truth ¹⁵ and ²⁵ you can walk in the truth ¹⁶. ²⁶ James, chapter 2, verse 24 ¹⁷ says that simply believing the truth is not enough! ²⁷

The prevailing attitude here is “I am not responsible for what I do”. “My sin was inherited. It’s not my fault; it’s God’s fault, or Adam’s fault.”

“I was brought up in a bad neighborhood. It’s my

¹² I Timothy 4:1 - The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

¹³ Hebrews 6:4-6 - It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened . . . if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance . . .

¹⁴ Romans 1:18 - The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness . . .

¹⁵ Galatians 5:7 - Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?

¹⁶ III John 3 - It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth.

¹⁷ James 2:24 - You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

parents' fault; or my sub-culture's fault." It's just the way I am." The lyrics of Leonard Bernstein in "Gee, Officer Krupke" from the musical "West Side Story" nails this attitude to the wall. ¹⁸ I am the way I am because "our mothers are junkies, our fathers are drunks . . . we're psychologically disturbed." ²⁸

You may be selling sin too short. You are saved by grace, but there will be a judgment! ²⁹

Chapter 1, verse 10, says you may make sin too big! **If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.** ³⁰ The attitude here is "I've really never committed a sin. I'm not a sinner. I live a good moral life. I never steal, murder, or beat the kids. I don't do anything bad enough to get into the newspapers." ³¹

The word "sin" in this verse ¹⁹ means "falling short of the target." Think of a Robin Hood movie where an arrow is shot into the air at a target but it falls short.

¹⁸ <http://www.westsidestory.com/site/level2/lyrics/krupke.html>.

¹⁹ ἁμαρτία.

That's the idea of this word. If you are not measuring up to what God wants you to be, you are a sinner. If you do not have the purposes God intended for you to have, you are a sinner. ³² Romans, chapter 3, verse 23, put it this way, . . . **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** ³³

Chapter 2, verse 4, says you may say, "I am saved", but fail to obey God! **The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.** ³⁴ The attitude here is "all I have to do is have faith!" "All I have to do is be baptized!" ³⁵

The Bible does say you are saved by faith ²⁰ and ³⁶ you are saved by baptism ²¹. But the Bible also says ³⁷ that you are saved by the Lord's life ²²; ³⁸ by the gospel ²³;

²⁰ Ephesians 2:8 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith . . .

²¹ I Peter 3:21 - This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you . . .

²² Romans 5:10 - For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

²³ Romans 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes . . . and I Corinthians 15:2 - By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you.

39 by grace ²⁴; 40 by obedience ²⁵; 41 and by hope ²⁶. 42
Then James, chapter 2, verse 17 says, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.** 43

Chapter 2, verse 6, says you may not continue growing spiritually! **Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.** Walking, here, implies conduct, behavior. 44 Romans, chapter 12, verse 1, says your life is to be a **living sacrifice.** ²⁷ 45

Matthew, chapter 16, verse 24, ²⁸ says you are to be a continual imitation of the Lord's life! The story is told of a successful banker who explained how he got to be in a place of prominence and influence. He started out in the bank as an office boy. One day the president of the bank called him aside and told him to come to his office each day and observe everything

²⁴ Ephesians 2:5 - It is by grace you have been saved.

²⁵ Hebrews 5:9 - . . . once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him . . .

²⁶ Romans 8:24 - For in this hope we were saved.

²⁷ Romans 12:1 - Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices.

²⁸ Matthew 16:24 - If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

he did. The office boy stood by the side of the president each day. The, now famous, banker said, “Being with that wise man made me just like him. I began to do things the way he did, and that accounts for what I am today!” ²⁹

The indicators that you may not have this fellowship, again, are you sell sin too short; you make sin too big; you are not obeying God and you are not growing spiritually. Are you having trouble in any of these areas? ⁴⁶ So . . .

II. What’s the Remedy?

What’s the remedy? We find it also in the scripture today. ⁴⁷

The remedy if you sell sin too short is to confess your sins! Chapter 1, verse 9, **if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** The blood of Jesus continues to cleanse you each time you confess your

²⁹ “Our Daily Bread”, I John 2:1-6, April 27.

sins to Him. ⁴⁸ Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 23 ³⁰ says God is faithful to forgive. He who confesses his sins finds mercy. ³¹ ⁴⁹

The remedy if you make sin too big is to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior! Chapter 2, verses 1 and 2, **My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.** ⁵⁰

The phrase “atoning sacrifice” ³² in this passage is important to understand. In the King James and New American Standard Bibles it is translated “propitiation”. Does anybody know what that means? Didn’t think you did. It means that Lord Jesus became your “mercy seat”. ⁵¹ The mercy seat was the solid

³⁰ Hebrews 10:23 - Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

³¹ Proverbs 28:13 - He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

³² ἰλασμός.

gold lid on the Jewish Ark of the Covenant. 52

On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) each year the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies (inner chamber) of the Jewish Temple and sprinkle the blood of a sacrificial animal on the golden lid of the Ark. This ceremony would forgive the sins of the people of Israel for that year. 53

When Jesus died on the cross He became the mercy seat ceremony for you. Since He became your mercy seat, He pays the price for your sins continually. 54

The remedy if you have not been obeying God is to start obeying His commands! Chapter 2, verse 3, **We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. 55 This passage is not referring to obeying the strict commands of the Law of Moses the way the Jews of old did. 56 The Lord's command, the New Testament Royal Law, is to love your neighbor with all the implications that come with that! 57**

The remedy if you are not growing spiritually is to let

God's word mold your life. Chapter 2, verse 5, **But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. Get into the Bible regularly by establishing a quiet time daily. Hunger and thirst for the word of God by attending worship at your church and Bible studies.**

Can I know for sure if I have a relationship with God? I think you can!

<http://biblelifemessages.org>