

**The Summer of Love**  
**Week 1: Foundation for fellowship**

This is week one of our new summer teaching series called, The Summer of Love. The summer of love was what the summer of **1969** was called. There was unrest in America, particularly in the young people. They were searching for truth, love, and a real sense of community. Many chose political protest, drugs, cutting loose from the confines of traditional Christian morality. The sexual revolution came where it was about expressing however you wanted with whomever you wanted.

At this same time, there was a movement of these same young people searching for truth, love, and a sense of community, and they found it in Jesus. This was called the Jesus Revolution that began in southern California.

This summer of love, 2023, is based upon the **writings of John the apostle**, who was in Jesus' inner circle. He wrote the **gospel of John**, as well as the three smaller works that we call the epistles of John, **1st, 2nd & 3rd John**.

**John was constantly talking about love.** God's amazing love for us, our love back to him, our love for our **brothers and sisters** in Christ, and finally our love for those who are **lost**.

In 1, 2 & 3 John, the **images of light**, hence, the sun in the logo. Also, the focus on love along with the ideas of **fellowship** and **unity** are prevalent. **Therefore, our summer of love is where we, together as a fellowship, seek God's voice** through the works of one of his closest friends and followers.

But we know that you will be **scattering this summer**. As you scatter, **stay connected and unified** by continuing this study together and, as you go, **purposely spread the love** of Jesus and make his kingdom present for others. That's the plan.

**There are different ways you can lean into this series and be able to hear God's voice.** I will talk about them at the end. If you have checked our website, you will have seen a **video** describing how this summer of Love is going to work.

**Today I will use an outline.** From this point on, I don't want you to bounce back and forth from your journal and an outline. I'll have key scriptures and a few things on it, but that is mostly for those who do not have a journal.

Let's begin at the beginning, 1 John 1:1-7. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning **the word** of life— <sup>2</sup> the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— <sup>3</sup> that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

<sup>5</sup> This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup> 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 cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:1-7

Scholars believe that the **letters of John were sent out after an early draft of his gospel** was making the rounds. This early draft was **misunderstood and misused**. This is the point of adding the **prologue to the gospel** and the three letters. After John's death, some in the community of believers gathered all his writings together for a final edit. This was John's legacy to the churches, in what is now western Turkey, that he started.

Scholars believe that it was the **letters that redeemed the gospel of John** in the eyes of those who later put together the New Testament.

**These three letters are written in response to a group of people within the church** who have taken what John taught in his gospel and have twisted it to suit their world view. They believed that the **spiritual and the physical** are two separate things and cannot mix, **and have nothing to do with one another**. The term for this is **Gnosticism**. Because it is based upon a **spiritual knowledge that is given, placing that person on a different plane** from others who just "don't get it." In other words, these people had a **spiritual superiority complex**. They had taken what John wrote about Jesus and **then completed it**. They took the **primitive teaching about Jesus to a more enlightened level**. **Sound familiar?** This was a large part of the world view of that time in that part of the world which shared **Greek culture**.

**So, what did they get wrong?** If the spiritual and the physical are separate and different, then **Jesus could not have been both God and man.** This obviously couldn't be, because the **spiritual is much higher and could not mix with flesh and bone.** To remain consistent in their world view, they must then say that Jesus **"appeared" to be human.**

**What does this mean?** They are denying one of the central parts of the gospel. **"Jesus is Christ, the king God in a human body."** They are preaching, promoting and spreading a completely different gospel than what **John, a first-hand eyewitness, is preaching.**

**If there is no human part of Jesus, then there is no incarnation** and if there is no incarnation then **there is no forgiveness of sin** and, if there is no forgiveness, **then we are still lost** and eternally separated from God. **This is not the good news Jesus came to announce.**

If Jesus was not in the flesh, **then he was not tempted in every way that we are, only to remain completely without sin.** **Sin no longer matters** because the spiritual and the physical are two separate things. **How I use my body or behave in this world, morally or ethically,** has nothing to do with this higher level of spiritual knowledge that I have been given. One has nothing to do with the other.

**His opponents were in error in two related areas.** They get it wrong about who Jesus was, then they got it wrong how they should live based upon the first error. **I. Howard Marshall** describes them this way. **"They were like men kicking away the ladder on which they have climbed to the heights and leaving themselves without any visible means of support."**

**As you can imagine, there is no sense of fellowship or unity in these churches.** People are picking sides between these two gospels. The churches are split.

**So, fellowship is a problem. There is none.** John is using some **strong words to teach both those who are teaching heresy** and those who have remained faithful to the apostle's teaching.

John is looking at this conflict **from the perspective of a pastor.** They need to be in fellowship with one another and they need to be unified. So how are they

ever going to experience this fellowship, this koinonia, living life together with Jesus? **How do we experience fellowship as it was intended?**

**Koinonia...fellowship, association, community, and joint participation.**

After all, the church is called the **body of Christ**. A body is unified in one, but diverse in parts, and those purpose of each of the parts.

**Real unity has love within diversity for a clear shared purpose.** The purpose of the carrying out the mission of Jesus, by making disciples and making his kingdom present for others. This **brings him glory**. When his people, who are being transformed, live and love like Jesus in this world, this is true fellowship and unity.

**<sup>20</sup> "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one... John 17:20-21**

**The perfect unity between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, is our example for the unity that we are intended to have in the church.**

**Everybody wants to experience true fellowship and, therefore, we try creating it by our own ingenuity and through our own strength. We attempt, but always fall short, because Jesus is our example, and his holy Spirit is the glue.**

- Fans of a certain team.
- Working in a work team for a company or business.
- Nationalism.
- Political or ideological groups.

**This is a prerequisite to experiencing fellowship, as it was intended.**

**Believe...God entered human history in the form of Jesus.**

**God is the missionary going into a foreign land.** He modeled "go" for us before commanding that we do it.

Let's read that prelude to John's gospel. **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-5 & 14**

**We are a part of a story where God comes to us.**

**This is the basis of all fellowship and unity. It must begin with Jesus and end with Jesus. Everything falls apart if God didn't come in the form of Jesus. He was one of us and we rally around him. It is the power of his person, and his holiness, while being human, and his willingness to sacrifice himself and suffer for us. This is the glue that holds us together. There is no fellowship with a fully God, fully human, Jesus. We are all on our own. There is no king, there is a power and leadership vacuum.**

To experience true fellowship, we must then... **Experience...Jesus must be met.**

**Fellowship begins with Jesus, but we must meet him. You can't have fellowship with God and with others, if Jesus is second hand. We must share and reflect together on how we met him and how he is transforming our lives. That is the activity of fellowship.**

When I think of fellowship, **I think of food.** If we were with other Christians and eating, then that was fellowship. We even had a building growing up where this happened. It was called the **fellowship hall**. We would have potlucks, fish fries, and youth pizza parties in the fellowship hall.

**Fellowship was meeting with people, the food just helped grease the wheels. It's about meeting Jesus and then meeting with his people. It's all firsthand.**

Look back at verse 1 & 2. **That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— <sup>2</sup> the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, 1 John 1:1-2**

**Bob Boyd, my first boss** when I was a youth pastor in Columbus, Ohio, used to say in tears all the time that on so and so road in Vincennes, Indiana, Jesus came off the pages of the book and into his heart. That was his first, but not last, experience where he met Jesus.

**Is he a theory or is he your reality?** He didn't appear to meet Bob Boyd, he did. **If you aren't sure if you have met him, then maybe you need to trust that he came, and that he will meet you where you are.**

**This summer you can meet him on the pages of 1, 2 & 3 John. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. Whoever opens it, I will enter..." Test him, that he will meet you this summer.**

If you believe that he came and stays in the form of the Holy Spirit, and if you have also met or experienced him in your life, then you can have fellowship with God and with other believers.

Here's a powerful combination for meeting with Jesus; the Bible, nature, and quiet. See what happens.

But, there's more, you need...**Faith...Walking into Jesus, the light.**

**Walking means a way of living.** We used to refer to a relationship with Jesus as "your walk." The question would be, "how is your walk?"

**John's antagonists are the opposite.** The writer Smally, "living habitually in darkness." 68 They are living the Greek culture of hedonistic worldview. **They are fully walking in the separation between spiritual knowledge and how we behave morally.**

**This is John's response** to these people and those who they wish to influence.

**<sup>5</sup> This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup> 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 cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:5-7**

**There was confusion about what will illuminate our way. Was it Jesus or was it some higher knowledge that I came up with? If Jesus wasn't really a person, then I don't need to live or walk with him.**

**I think these gnostics could have fit in well in 1969. Timothy Leery and his mantra tune in, turn on and drop out. You'll experience a different kind of consciousness and spiritual knowledge.**

**And they fit in well today where everyone has their own truth.**

**Light exposes me and illuminates my path. I must accept both. Do you want to be exposed? It hurts initially, but it will pay off in the long run. Jesus doesn't have fellowship with the fake you, or the "you", you wish you were. He only has fellowship with the real you. He prefers it that way, even though the real you is a mess. He's ok with that, just stop pretending.**

**Ministry did this for me. It made it so that I couldn't hide and manage people's perception of me. I was stripped bare and made new.**

**And do you want him to expose the path he has for you, or do you just want to be "free" to blaze your own path. His path or yours. He has a plan for it. It is based upon who knows you best, because he designed you. Your path is based upon what? It is based upon your small narrow perspective and whatever urge, passion, or fancy that strikes you at any given time.**

**This is where I find my identity in Him. Salvation by allegiance alone. It must be grounded in a historical reality, or it means nothing. But we also must meet him. Then we must choose, do I identify with him? Will I put my trust in him as my king? And we must remain with him, abide in him, and walk with him.**

**John helps us with this metaphor of "walking in the light". To walk in the light demands action. We can't just believe the truth about Jesus we must...Do truth.**

**Jumping over to John's gospel it says this in chapter 3. <sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God." John 3:21**



**Obedience keeps me in the light. Disobedience is when we flirt with the darkness.** Now remember his opponents aren't flirting with the darkness, it is the air they breathe.

<sup>22</sup> But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. <sup>25</sup> But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. James 1:22-25 (NLT)

**The great commission says to teach them to obey, not teach them to understand.** Sometimes I just need to obey what Jesus taught and **stop thinking or even studying it.** Truth is to be **acted upon** when Jesus gives it.

**We have fellowship with God and other believers when we walk the light of Jesus. We do that by doing his truth, acting upon it and obeying it. We also walk in his light when we...Continually seek cleansing.**

**...and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:7b**

**This is a willingness to be changed. This is not spiritual elitism.** This not, **stay clear of sinners** so that you stay clean. This is continuing to walk in the light with Jesus and allow him to change you through his Spirit.

You are made new when you put your trust in Jesus as your king. But you are also being made new. New and clean are very similar ideas.

**I have a chance to have deep true meaningful fellowship with God and with you if I understand that I continually need cleansing.** To think otherwise, like these troublemakers is called pride. **Pride will always destroy fellowship with God first and then with the church soon after.**

Here's the promise that comes in next week's passage. <sup>9</sup> **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9**



Remaining firmly in the light of Jesus where we have fellowship is pathed by a willingness to confess often.

John wants very much to see these deluded people return to real fellowship, but he knows what it will take and that is why he is so blunt. He even tells them they are liars. But it's no different for us. You aren't really enjoying fellowship with God nor are you experiencing the fellowship of the body of Christ if you don't believe, experience, and demonstrate faith by walking in the light of Jesus.

The great thing about this true fellowship is that it doesn't matter who you are, where you are from, or what you have done. Just believe, experience, and have faith by walking in the light of Jesus. You don't need some super spiritual gift of knowledge. Your faith is very real, very this world applicable.

Now I can experience true fellowship with Jesus and his people. The fellowship of the redeemed.

### Stepping into the Light

1. I commit to spend my summer soaking in light.  
(video)
2. And reflecting the light.

Spiritual elitism from these dissenters is destroying fellowship, because Jesus is not a part of it.