

A WEB OF HYPOCRISY

1 JOHN 1:6 • TV133A

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1 John 1:6

“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”

This is my text for the message; it is found in **1 John Chapter 1:6**: *“If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.”*

Now, I am speaking today on the subject: **“THE WEB OF HYPOCRISY,” 1 John Chapter 1:6.**

I would like for you to take your Bible if you will and open them with me to the book of **1 John**. I will be reading several verses of Scripture and I would like very much for you to look at them while I read them to you and while I speak from them.

Now, there are three outstanding characteristics of the epistle of John. We are not talking about the book of John but we are talking about the **first general epistle of John**, back in the back of the Bible near the Book of Revelation. This is **First John, the epistle of John**.

There are three outstanding characteristics of this epistle written by the apostle John:

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First of all: It is written in the simplest words, simple, easy to understand words. You would never know that the writer of this epistle wrote the Book of Revelation because the words are so simple and so easy to understand. They are written so that you and I can understand them.

Secondly: The second characteristic of the **first book of John** is the epistle is written in the spirit of love, every line is seasoned with love. John tries every profession by the rule of love. He measures every claim to the test of love; every claim is submitted to the test of love: Do we love Christ and do we love one another?

First, it is written in the simplest words; any person can read this book.

Second, it is seasoned with love; love is on every page. Love is almost in every verse!

Third: All through the epistle of John, John seeks to unravel the web of hypocrisy. He will not suffer us to be deceived.

John insists and he's writing this to church members; he's writing this to believers. He's writing this to people who claim to know Jesus Christ, who claim to be saved by His blood and by His grace.

He insists, John insists all the way through this Book there is a difference in saying a thing and experiencing it. I'm going to give you several examples; John insists that every professor of religion, every professor of Christ, deals with the difference in saying a thing and experiencing it. There is a difference.

There's a difference in saying something and really experiencing that thing. John insists that we deal with the difference between a claim to grace and the reality of grace, claiming to have the grace of God and in reality experiencing the grace of God.

Now, let me give you several examples. Do you have your Bible open? Turn to **1 John chapter 1** and look at **verse 6**; that's the text that I just read a few moments ago: "*If we say;*" notice each time when he begins these sentences he starts, "*if we say, if we say, or he that saith.*"

There is a difference in saying a thing and experiencing it. There's a difference in professing and possessing. There's a difference in a claim and a reality. And that is what we are going to see.

This is what John is talking about; he's unraveling the web of hypocrisy. He insists that we deal with this thing. He insists that we deal with the claim or an experience. He insists that we put ourselves in front of the Word of God and find out if our profession is genuine.

Now listen to it: "*If we say that we have fellowship with Christ and walk, (and notice the word walk) and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth.*"

Now, what is a walk? When we talk about a man's walk; a walk is the general trend of a person's life. We are talking about the general trend of his life. We are talking about the bent of his will, his general direction he is going.

Now, I know believers who walk in the light and they stumble. They may step in darkness, they may fall, and they may sin. That's not the general trend of their lives; that's not the bent of their will. The general trend of their lives is holiness and righteousness and honesty, love and godliness.

Even the man who walks in darkness, the man whose general trend of his life, the bent of his will, his darkness, hatred, bigotry, prejudice, lust, envy, and jealousy; that may be his whole life.

Occasionally he may do something good. Occasionally he'll step into the light. Occasionally he will do something commendable or occasionally he will do something to brag about or some good principle or some humanitarian act.

But, the general trend of his life is hatred, evil, sin, and wickedness. That's the bent of his will; that's the direction he is going.

Here is what John is saying: *"If you say that you have fellowship with Christ (and the general bent of your will and the general trend of your life is rebellion, dishonesty, lies, and hatred, this sort of behavior), you are lying and you do not do the truth."*

Do you see what I am saying? *"If we say that we have fellowship with Christ and we walk in darkness, (the general trend of our lives is disobedience to God's Word) we are not telling the truth."*

Look at **1 John 1:8**; he says: *"If we say, (and here's that term again), if we say we have no sin (and notice that word sin; it is singular), if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."*

No man is free from the nature of sin. I hear people talking about the old nature being eradicated; my friend, not on this earth. In glory, yes, when we are made like Christ, yes, but not on this earth.

This old nature of sin, this original sin, this evil nature that we receive from our father Adam, is a nature, a root and a principle that is in every son of Adam and every daughter of Adam, even those who have been born again know that they have a fleshly nature.

Yes, they have a new nature. They have a nature that is born of God. They've got a righteous nature and a holy nature and a divine nature but they've also got a fleshly nature. Paul said: *"The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh so that you cannot do the things that you will."*

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To deny original sin, to deny the fall in Adam, to deny the nature of sin, John says here: *“is to be deceived and it is to be filled with lies.”*

I can't stand before this television camera and look out over this audience and say that I have no sin and you can't say that either if you tell the truth. *“The thought of foolishness is sin.”* We know that we have in our hearts and our imaginations, our attitudes and our motives; we have within us the principle of sin. It doesn't reign but it does remain. It doesn't rule but it is present. We cope with it and we deal with it every day.

John Wesley use to say: “Every morning when I get up I pray: Lord; keep me from sin. Before I retire at night I say: Lord; forgive me of my sins.” Yes, we have a nature!

Paul the apostle wrote this: *“The things that I would do; I do them not. The things that I would not do, I do.”* He said, *“There is a law; I find a law within me warring against the Spirit of God within me.”* It is true of every believer.

If a man says that he is not by nature a sinner, that he does not have a fleshly nature, that he does not cope with and wrestle with and is not confronted with sin in his nature, John says, *“he is a liar and the truth is not in him; he is deceived.”*

Now, look at **1 John 1:10**: *“If we say, (there's that word again), if we say that we have not sinned, (s-i-n-n-e-d), we have not sinned, we make God a liar and his word is not in us.”*

Now, here is what John is saying; those who profess surety and freedom from all sin blaspheme God. If we say that we have not sinned; I mean this day, if we say that we have not sinned this week, if we say that we have not sinned this month, why, we are making God a liar.

Throughout his Word Paul pictures all men as sinners. He says: *“There's none good, no not one. There's none that understandeth; they are all gone out of the way. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All we like sheep have gone astray.”*

Listen to Isaiah when he saw the Lord, he said: *“Woe is me; I am a man of unclean lips, (not I use to be as I was at one time, I am now). I am a man of unclean lips.”*

Listen to David, *“the man after God's own heart,”* in **Psalm 51**, his Psalm of repentance: *“My sins, are ever before me.”* Listen to the apostle Paul: *“I'm the least of all the saints. Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief, (not I was) I am chief.”*

You will find that's the opinion and the attitude of every believer in God's Word. John says in **1 John 1:9**: *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

My friend, to say that I have not sinned; *“I make God a liar.”* If I say that I have no sin, no fleshly nature, no evil nature to contend with, well, I deceive myself and the truths not in me.

But, if I say I have not sinned, if I dare to boldly declare to the people of this world in a dishonest fashion I have not sinned, *“I make God a liar and his word does not dwell in me.”* That’s serious isn’t it?

Now, look at **1 John 2:4**: *“He that saith, (there’s that word again) this is what a man says and may not be necessarily true because you can say a thing and not experience it.*

“He that saith: I know him; (I know Christ) and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.”

My friend; a person who says: “I know the Lord; I’m acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ” and he has no love for His Word and has no love in regards for His teachings and for His commandments, the commandments of Christ; *“that man is a liar and the truth of the gospel is not in him at all.”*

“If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.” He loves Christ, he loves Christ’s Word, he loves Christ’s commandments, and he loves Christ’s teachings. He loves Christ’s law. He loves Christ’s church. He loves Christ’s people. He’s a new creature!

The law of Christ and the doctrine of Christ is his rule of behavior. Our Lord said that law is summed up in two: *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength and thy neighbor as thyself.”*

Now, look at **1 John 2:9**: *“He that saith;”* (here we go again), *he that saith he is the light, (he’s in the light, that is the light of illumination, the light of understanding, the light of faith, the light of the Gospel), he that saith that he’s in the light and hates his brother, he’s in darkness still, even until now.”*

The man who says that he’s been illuminated by the Holy Ghost, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and he walks in the light of the Gospel understanding and hates anyone, now watch this: *“hates his brother”* we are all brothers by creation.

I’m not teaching the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. I am simply saying that we are all brothers by creation whether we are Jew or Gentile, bond or free; we are brothers by creation. We came from one daddy, Adam.

And then, there are brothers in regeneration. There are brothers in the family of God. This is not just family love; this is love for all people. In other words, what John is saying here is that the love, the love of Christ and the hatred of the flesh cannot rule in the same heart. It is impossible, it is impossible.

I’m not saying that a man never gets angry. I am not saying that he never gets upset. I am not saying that he never disagrees with a person but to hate, to hate that person; to hate is

impossible where the love of Christ dwells, where the love of Christ dwells. That is what he is saying here.

The man that says he's in the light and hates his brother, wishes his brother evil, wishes him misfortune, why, he's in darkness; he always has been in darkness. He never has been in the light of Christ.

He's in the light of religion or denominationalism or sectarianism, or some other kind of "ism" but he's not in the light of regeneration because *"the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit."*

And, we love men. We love the family of God and we love, we are supposed to love, according to the Word of God, *"even our enemies."*

We wish them no unhappiness. We wish them no misfortune. We wish them the blessings and grace and mercy of God. If you cannot wish a man the blessings and mercy and happiness of God, there is something wrong in your own heart. That is what John is saying.

Look at **1 John 4:20**: *"If a man say."* You see; this is what I told you to begin with, this Gospel; you understand what I am saying, and I do too. This epistle is written in the simplest terms and it is seasoned with love and it untangles the web of hypocrisy.

It sits in judgment on every one of us. It makes us weigh our profession and examine our claim and put our profession to the test of this Word right here: *"If any man say, I love God, (and we hear a lot of that don't we I love God, I love Jesus) if a man say I love God and hates his brother, he's a liar."* John doesn't mince words does he? He doesn't mince words! He comes out clearly and says what he thinks and what God has revealed to him.

"He's a liar for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen; (now watch this carefully) whom he hath seen, how can he love God who he hath not seen?" Nothing is more contradictory, nothing is more contradictory!

"If a man say I love God and hate his brother," nothing is more contradictory, not hot and cold, or white and black; nothing is more contradictory. What he is saying is this; for a man to say I love God whom he has never seen (and none of us have seen God a lot of people claim to have visions, you know, but they have never seen God; God is revealed in his Word, God is revealed in the Book).

If a man says that "I love God" (whom he has never seen) and hates the image of God that's before his eyes (you see man was created in the image of God and especially in regeneration). We have been regenerated in the image of Christ, formed in the image of Christ. We have the Spirit of Christ.

For a man to say: "I love God" (whom he has never seen) and I hate the image of God that's before my eyes, well that man is deceived; the Spirit of God does not dwell in him.

Where Jesus Christ lives, love lives, where Jesus Christ dwells, the spirit of love dwells. Where Jesus Christ reigns, the grace of love will reign. Let us not be deceived.

I know that there is a lot of religion today and there is a lot of preaching going on. I hear a lot of it and you are told to do certain things and you are guaranteed you will be saved. You are guaranteed that you will be going to heaven. You are guaranteed that God will prosper you. You are guaranteed God will heal you.

Men can't guarantee you anything. God is the Saviour. Christ is the Redeemer. Salvation is not the work of the handshake or the baptismal pool or some church or some denomination. *"Salvation is of the Lord. The salvation of the righteous is of God."*

It's a regenerating work and it's a miraculous work and it's a mysterious work. It's a new birth; it's a life-giving process that God performs in the heart of a sinner.

Let's not be deceived, let's not be deceived. Let's not hide from the reality of Christ in the claims of religion, in the web of hypocrisy.

A minister may say: "God sent me," when in reality Satan sent him, he's a false prophet. Our Lord said, *"many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many, if it were possible, the very elect of God."*

Then, a person in the church, a church member may say: "I'm a Christian; I know that I'm a Christian," and yet, be a total stranger to the grace of God.

Our Lord said to the most religious people of His day: *"you neither know me nor my Father. If you had known me you should have known my Father also."* Even to His disciples, He said: *"Have I been so long time with you and yet you have not known me?"*

My friend; eternal life is not to know there is a God. It's not to know about God. Eternal life is to know God, in a living, vital, experience of faith, to know God.

Eternal life is not just to call him Lord with your lips and then your hearts be far from him. It's to know him in your heart, to love him in your heart, to have a vital, living union, with the Son of God in your heart. That's eternal life!

Eternal life is not "he that saith I believe on the Son of God hath everlasting life;" eternal life is this: *"He that believeth on the Son of God,"* not he that saith I believe, he that believeth.

Eternal life is not to be involved in the form, ceremony, and ritualism of religion. I have some dear friends who are involved, terribly involved, just completely taken up in the activities and the enthusiasm and the zeal of a denomination, of a program or of a church.

I'm telling you: this is not eternal life. Eternal life is to be involved with a living union with a person, with a person called Jesus Christ who is our living head and we are His body, who is the true Vine and we are the branch, that's to be redeemed, who's the Lords, and we are the servants.

Paul said: *"I travail until Christ be formed in you."* That's eternal life. *"Don't be deceived,"* John says; *"he that saith, he that saith, he that saith;"* it's he that experiences it in his heart, the love of Christ, the person of Christ, the union with Christ.

Let me give you four or five things here now in **1 John chapter 4**. Will you turn to **the 4th chapter of John**? Here John gives us some positive words about those who really know Christ, not just say that they know Him, but those who really know Him, those that are His people, His sheep, His jewels, His body, His bride, His church for whom He suffered:

Here are four or five characteristics in **1 John 4:6**:

First of all: *"We are of God. He that knoweth God heareth us"*

Do you hear what John says? *"He that knoweth God heareth us."* He's not talking about us in the sense of you and me. I can't claim that kind of authority. I'm not saying that any man that is of God will hear me. He may hear another preacher. He may not hear me at all but he may hear another preacher or two or three other preachers.

John is speaking here as an apostle of Christ, as a writer of Holy Scriptures. He is saying the same thing that he is saying in **John chapter 8**: *"He that is of God heareth God's Word."* That's what John said: *"He that is of God heareth God's Word."*

Now, I have set forth today some pretty strong statements from the Word of God. Now, if you are out there listening to this program and this word makes you angry and you rebel against it and you say: "I don't care what that says; that's not what I believe, you are not of God because, *"he that is of God heareth God's Word."*

He receives the Word. He lets the Word sit at judgment upon him. He doesn't sit in judgment on the Word of God. He lets the Word of God sit in judgment on him.

The Word convicts him and condemns him and converts him. But, he says: "I believe it; it's God's Word, it's infallible, inerrant; it's verbally inspired. It's without error and it's unbroken and the Word says: *"Let God be true and every man a liar."*

There were three characteristics of the reformation, three basic principles of the reformation:

First: Christ alone as opposed to any assistance or any help in the conversion of a sinner!

Second: Grace alone as opposed to works!

Third: Scripture alone as opposed to the dogmas or books of men or the writings of men, the Bible alone! *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”* The saved man hears God’s Word. That is what John is saying here: *“We are of God. He that knoweth God will hear us, he will hear the Word.”*

Second: notice the next thing in **1 John 4:7 and 8:** *“Beloved; let us love one another for love is of God and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God for God is love.”* Isn’t that clear, *“he that loveth not?”*

Now, all men love themselves. All men love that which pertains to them. They love themselves in that which pertains to them: But, to sincerely reach out in a genuine heart love to God and to His people and to all men; that’s the gift of God.

“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.” You can teach doctrine but you can’t teach love. You can teach principles and convictions. You can teach standards of righteousness but you can’t teach love.

You can teach tolerance. You can make folks put up with one another but you can’t teach them to love one another. This is the gift of God. This is the work of God.

You see; we have to be changed. We by nature love ourselves and hate God. We’ve got to be changed. We’ve got to be brought to love God and as Job said: *“I hate myself. I’m abased and humbled in God’s presence and my love reaches out to Him.”*

Now, if this love is missing, then God’s not there. Whatever else is there, God’s not there. In **1 Corinthians 13:1 through 3;** listen to it: *“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as a sounding brass and a tinkling symbol.”*

“Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not love, I’m nothing.”

“And though I bestow my goods to feed the poor and give my body to be burned as a martyr for what I believe and have not love; it profiteth me nothing. Now abideth faith, hope, and love and the greatest of these is love.”

I know the emphasis today says, “the greatest of these is faith, the greatest of these is the power to heal.” But the Paul says, *“the greatest of these is love,”* *“He that loveth not knoweth not God.”*

Third: All right, watch **1 John 4:13:** *“Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us because he hath given us his Spirit.”* Now, the Spirit of Christ, I know is the mind of Christ, the humility of Christ: *“Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ.”*

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The Spirit of Christ is also the love and compassion of Christ: *“by this all men shall know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”*

The Spirit of Christ is certainly the grace and forgiveness of Christ. He said: *“If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”*

The Lord said, *“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”* When you come to pray and remember that you have aught against your brother or he against you; you leave your gift at the altar and go make it right and then come pray because God’s not going to hear you when you are holding grudges and hatred is in your heart.

But in this text, it says: *“Hereby we know that we dwell in him and he in us because he has given us of his Spirit.”* We are talking there about the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit regenerated us, the Holy Spirit revealed Christ to us, the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth, He is our teacher, our comforter and our sealer. *“The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God.”* The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ in us!

Why are so many church members so hard to live with? Why are so many church members so hard to work with? Why are so many church members actually so hard to worship with? I will tell you why! *“They have not the Spirit of Christ. If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ; he’s none of his.”*

This is so clear and I pray that the Spirit of the living God will be our teacher in this hour and apply this message to my heart and to your heart and untangle, for God’s glory and for our eternal good, that awful, deceptive, web of hypocrisy!