

LIFE IS SWEETER WITH JESUS

FROM THE MESSAGES OF ADRIAN ROGERS



Life is Sweeter with Jesus (Bible Study)

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INTRODUCTION

LIFE IS SWEETER WITH JESUS

If you long to experience the sweetness of life with Jesus, studying 1 John can help you know what you need to believe to experience abundant life. You will understand the beauty of fellowship with God and others and discover a depth of love that surpasses human understanding. The book of 1 John holds the keys to beginning a transformative journey in your Christian walk.

John was known as “the beloved disciple” and was one of the three disciples who were very close to Jesus. He wrote five books of the Bible: the gospel of John, the Book of Revelation, and 1-3 John. The three epistles of 1-3 John were written to confirm the saints so that they could know the truth. These letters contain themes of knowledge, fellowship, and life and give us the truths we need to anchor our faith so that we can know that what we have believed is true.

The simple, straightforward language of John’s writing helps us clearly understand the spiritual truths that lead to a sweeter life with Jesus. We experience this in fellowship with God and others. We can understand how faith leads to a righteousness that saves us from our sins. We can learn how the Holy Spirit works in and through our lives. We can experience God’s love more fully so that we can share His love with others. We can have the assurance that we are saved and belong to God. Through John’s testimony, you are invited to taste the sweeter life that only Jesus brings.

WANT MORE?

The audio messages by Pastor Adrian Rogers from which this study is derived are linked using the QR code on page 156 at the end of this study.



If you take the word “live” and
spell it backward, it spells evil.

There are so many people
who are just living backward,
and their lives, rather than
glorious, are really evil.

ADRIAN ROGERS

WEEK 1

FELLOWSHIP

■ INTRODUCTION

The Apostle John wrote five books of the Bible. In the Gospel of John, the purpose was to convince sinners and to lead them to faith in Christ. In Revelation, the purpose was to comfort saints, help them understand the days in which they are living, and give believers hope for the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. The epistles of 1, 2, and 3 John were written to confirm the saints. That's what we'll be studying.

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 (1 John 1:1-4).

True living is full and free in the Lord Jesus Christ. John witnessed this in person during his time with Jesus; he was one of His closest disciples. He wanted the saints to know how to experience this kind of life.

■ PRAY OVER IT

Dear God, I know that You offer abundant life with sweet fellowship, but I often find myself just going through the motions. My heart longs for more, and I know that longing comes from You. Open my eyes to see Your goodness and open my ears to hear Your Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

A FACT ESTABLISHED

■ PONDER IT

John talked about a wonderfully sweet fellowship that comes through the life that we have with the Lord Jesus Christ. You can exist and not have life. The Bible talks about this as being spiritually dead, even while you are physically alive.

But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives (1 Timothy 5:6).

The walking dead is not just science fiction; it's a reality that many people live out. Jesus said:

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Jesus was talking to people whose hearts were beating and who had blood flowing through their veins. But Jesus told them that they didn't have life. We are not just physical beings; we are also spiritual beings. To truly live, we need not only physical life, but spiritual life as well.

To enjoy a full and free life, the Apostle John tells us that **a fact must be established.**

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 (1 John 1:1).

In John's day, there was a group of false teachers called the Gnostics. Their name comes from the Greek word "gnosis," which means "to know." These people felt they had superior knowledge. They did not believe God could have come to Earth in human flesh. They believed anything physical or material was evil. Therefore, they believed the true Messiah

could not have had a material, physical body. They believed Jesus was a ghost or phantom that did not have a physical body.

John begins this letter by confronting Gnosticism. He shows the believers that Jesus Christ literally, physically, and bodily walked here on this Earth, and John was an eyewitness.

Just as there were false teachers in John's day, there are false teachers and cults in our day. The key identifier of a cult is what its followers believe about Jesus Christ. Mormons do not believe Jesus is the same person as God the Father. Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with Almighty God. John's inspired words help us deal with the cults of today.

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him (2 John 1:9-10).

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

People who are wrong about Jesus don't know God. If we don't accept the fact of Jesus, then we can't have the life God offers.

■ **PUT IT IN WRITING**

- Are you spiritually alive or dead? How do you know?
- How have you heard other religions question or discount the deity and humanity of Jesus?

Friend, if they're wrong about Jesus, it doesn't matter what they're right about.

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AN ETERNAL FACT AND A PHYSICAL FACT

■ PONDER IT

Jesus is an eternal fact. In both John's first epistle and the Book of John, he starts by establishing who Jesus is, a person of fact, existing since the beginning. Jesus is God's first Word.

That which was from the beginning (1 John 1:1a).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

A word is the expression of an invisible thought or an idea. Jesus is the visible expression of the invisible God. Jesus articulates God. He is God's first word. He was there in the beginning. He is God's full word.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8).

The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are alpha and omega. In the English alphabet, the first and last letters are A and Z. A library filled with English books may have thousands of books; all of them are made up of just 26 letters. Every thought in such a library came into existence through 26 letters. Jesus is saying that He is God's alphabet. Anything that God's going to say, He's going to say through Jesus. Jesus is God's first word, God's full word, and God's final word.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Jesus is also a physical fact. He's not a phantom or a ghost. We have the testimony of evidence from John and others.

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 (1 John 1:1).

John used the Greek word “theaomai,” which means “to look carefully.” John says he was with Jesus for three years. He watched Him and saw Him. There was audible, visible, and physical evidence. He had actual physical dimensions: height, weight, eye color, and hair color. Jesus Christ was in human form. He was born of a virgin, and He was a man, not just a spirit or phantom.

It's as much a heresy to deny the humanity of Jesus as it is to deny the deity of Jesus. He was God, not half God and half man. He wasn't all God and no man. He wasn't all man and no God. He was the God-man, all man and all God. Never has another like the Lord Jesus Christ existed.

Jesus is our Redeemer because He's human. He's our example because He's human. He's our comforter and friend because He's human. We don't have a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin. He knows, He cares, and He understands.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

■ **PUT IT IN WRITING**

- Why are these facts so important in the Christian faith? What would it mean if they were not true?
- In what ways was Jesus unlike us? In what ways was He like us?

When you've said Jesus,
you've said it all.

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A SPIRITUAL FACT

■ PONDER IT

Not only is Jesus an eternal fact and a physical fact, but **He is also a spiritual fact.**

...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 (1 John 1:2).

The people John wrote to didn't see Jesus before His death, so John told them what he saw and heard. Even though you have never seen, heard, or touched Jesus, you can believe in Him. He is a spiritual fact that the Holy Spirit of God reveals. Our faith in John's testimony becomes the ears, eyes, and hands of our souls.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son (1 John 5:9).

An atheist professor ridiculed his Christian students by asking them if anyone had ever heard God. Nobody answered. He asked if anyone had ever seen God. Nobody answered. He asked if anyone had ever touched God. Nobody answered. He concluded, "There is no God." The class sat in silence.

But one student lifted his hand and said, "Professor, may I ask a question to the class?" After the professor gave permission, the student asked if anyone had ever heard the professor's brain. He asked if anyone had ever seen the professor's brain. He asked if anyone had ever touched the professor's brain. Nobody answered. He said, "Then, according to his own logic, we can conclude the professor has no brain."

■ **PUT IT IN WRITING**

- What testimony or witness of others helped convince you to believe the Gospel?
- How do you know Jesus was real? What argument would you give to someone who asks you to give a reason for your belief?

Remember the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ; if you deny the humanity of Jesus, you're denying Christianity

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A FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCED

■ PONDER IT

Jesus' life is a fact established and **a fellowship experienced**. John saw it, and he shared it. Anybody who sees, hears, and knows it, wants to share it.

...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 (1 John 1:3).

John witnesses so that we can have fellowship with God. The Greek word “koinonia” means “to hold things in common.” Because of the established fact of Jesus, we can experience fellowship with God and with one another. We have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. John goes on to tell us what we have in common with the Father.

This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth (1 John 1:5-6).

We're in the dark; He's in the light, and a great chasm separates us. So how can we have fellowship with God? God, who knew that there was a chasm between you and Himself, sent Jesus Christ to take on something that is common to us: human flesh. Jesus became a man, and He never discarded His deity. Because He became human, we began to have something in common. He took on the nature of Man so that we might take on the nature of God.

...by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:4, emphasis added).

The word “partaker” is the same word that is translated “fellowship” in 1 John. He took on our human nature so that we could partake of His divine nature. Because we have fellowship with God, we must have fellowship with one another. When you and a fellow believer are both born of God, the same nature that’s in you is also in the other person. The Jesus in you loves the Jesus in that believer. We’re born from the same womb, the womb of grace. The Bible calls it the “koinonia” of the Gospel or the fellowship of the Spirit.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now (Philippians 1:3-5, emphasis added).

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind (Philippians 2:1-2, emphasis added).

Our fellowship is with the Father and with one another. When you have the nature of God in you, you are born of the Spirit. As a partaker of the divine nature, you have this fellowship with God. Therefore, we should seek out business partners, spouses, and close friends who also have fellowship with God.

■ **PUT IT IN WRITING**

- When have you experienced fellowship with God and with others?
- What have you seen and heard that can only be explained through God?

**The Holy Spirit is to a Christian
what instinct is to an animal.**

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A FULLNESS ENJOYED

■ PONDER IT

Jesus' life is a fact established and a fellowship experienced. Through Him, we can have **a fullness enjoyed**. There is no joy like the joy of knowing one another in Christ. John said he wrote this book so that we might have joy.

**And these things we write to you that your joy may be full
(1 John 1:4).**

A woman lost her house keys. She looked all over the house but couldn't find them. Finally, she looked in her purse where they should have been and found them. She was looking in the wrong places because her keys belonged in her purse. You can look all over for joy, but you won't find it until you find it in Jesus Christ. Joy is the byproduct of fellowship with God and fellowship with the family of God.

You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11).

We're not talking about happiness; we're talking about joy. Happiness depends upon what happens; joy depends upon the Lord. If you live for happiness, you're a prisoner of circumstances. If the circumstances change, then you're not happy anymore. But Jesus never changes, so His joy never ends. Happiness is cosmetic; it's on the outside. Joy is character; it is on the inside. Happiness only meets your surface needs, but joy meets your deepest needs. Happiness evaporates in a crisis. Joy often intensifies in a crisis. Happiness is wonderful. But happiness is at its fullest when it is mingled with the joy of the Lord.

■ **PUT IT IN WRITING**

- Where have you been looking for joy? What would it look like for you to find joy in the Lord?
- Which do you want more: happiness or joy? Why?

The reason we're called witnesses and not lawyers is because a lawyer argues a case, and a witness tells what he's seen and heard. The only person who can't witness is the person who hasn't seen or heard anything.

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A FULLNESS ENJOYED

■ PRACTICE IT

Sin promises joy, but it never delivers. We have more entertainment, more amusements, more restaurants, but also more loneliness, more depression, more alcoholism, more drugs, more divorce, and more suicide than ever. We are looking in the wrong places because true joy is only found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

John said this joy-filled life comes from God, and it is real. It is a fact established, and it results in a fellowship experienced. Then there's a fullness in joy. We have joy unspeakable and full of glory. Jesus is the Word of God, speaking even today. He's telling you that He loves you.

Jesus is broadcasting His love for you. He is sending you messages of love. You wouldn't say that there's no Internet just because your Wi-Fi is turned off. Do you have your Wi-Fi on? Are you searching for a connection? Are you looking for a relationship with Jesus? He is here. He is the Word of life.

If you don't have this joy, the first step is to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You can pray a prayer like this:

Dear God, I know that You love me, and I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me. You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You. Come into my heart, forgive my sin, cleanse me, save me.

I thank You for saving me. I yield my life to You. I turn from all sin. I will follow You wherever You lead me if You will only help me. I'm weak, but You're strong. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be and help me never to be ashamed of You. Give me the courage to make my decision to follow You public. Thank you, Jesus, Amen.

■ PROCLAIM IT

If you prayed to receive Christ, please share your decision with another Christian you know or with your pastor. We would also like to hear about it so that we can provide you with free resources to help you grow in your new faith. Please let us know by going to lwf.org/discover-jesus, scrolling down the page and clicking on I BELIEVE.

If you have received Christ, you have access to a joy-filled life. Just like John testified to what he saw and heard, it's time for you to share with others what you have seen and heard. Ask God to give you an opportunity this week to share with someone else what He has done in your life.

Happiness is like a thermometer; it
just registers conditions. Joy is the
thermostat that controls the conditions.

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