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Before we move on into Chapter 18, I thought it would be best to quickly double back a bit and add a little more explanation to our study of last week. I know that it was very intense and I want to make that things did not go astray in your minds and also clarify one point that I did not make last week but which I think is essential for us to understand.

***John 17:20-21***

"I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even 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 sent Me.

This passage reveals to us one of the ultimate objectives of the Godhead (that the world may believe) and the means for accomplishing that objective (that we may be "one" even as the Father and Son are "one"). From before time the Father planned for the redemption of mankind (***1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:4***). However, He also chose us, His Children, to be the primary means through which that purpose is achieved. And when we live as "one," in the same way that the Father and Son are "one," then those in the world will believe for we will be the living proof, the miraculous evidence, that the Father sent His Son.

This means that the "oneness" shared by the Father and the Son defines for us what this "oneness" looks like in our lives. We discussed the 3 primary ways that the Godhead operates as one:

1. They each have different but complimentary roles and functions.
2. They work cooperatively toward the same unified purposes: to glorify one another.
3. They employ the same immutable attributes in carrying out this work; for example, all that they do is: holy, righteous, true, faithful, is full of wisdom, and is love.

Similarly,

1. We all have different but complimentary roles and functions within both our fellowship and the larger fellowship of the body of Christ.
2. We must work cooperatively toward the same unified purposes: to glorify one another.
3. We must employ the same immutable attributes of the Godhead in carrying out this work: for example, all that we do must be: holy, righteous, true, faithful, full of wisdom, and love.

We focused most of our study last week on number 3. We studied that the only way we can have access to the same immutable attributes of the Godhead is when we live in the *New Creation* which, in His likeness, has been created righteous, holy, and true (***Ephesians 4:24***). When we choose to believe in the name of the Son of God (believe that He is our “I Am” a.k.a. everything that we could ever need) we will walk in the *New Creation* under the power and direction of the Holy Spirit. This is the only way that “oneness” can be achieved and it is how the world will come to believe that the Father sent the Son.

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Moreover, we also studied the perils of not believing that Jesus is our “I Am” and instead choosing to live from our *Old Sinful Nature*—no matter how “Christian” we have trained him to act. This led us to a study in **1 John** where we discovered that if we present ourselves, at any point in time, to our *Old Sinful Nature* we live in darkness, we live in sin, and we are beholden to the enemy.

For most of us this was alarming as the passages we studied made it clear that despite what we might think or feel, there is no middle ground of “Christian” goodness where we can be safe and comfy just as long as we are not doing anything “too bad.” In fact, John paints a very black and white picture: either we are or we are not in current fellowship with God; and, if we are not, then we are in current fellowship with darkness.

John makes a direct link between what we believe and our current fellowship with God. For example, if we trust ourselves to Jesus believing that He will be our provision for all that we need in this life (physically, emotionally, psychologically) then we live in current fellowship with God; however, if we do not believe that He will come through for us and decide to find our provision in anyone or anything else, we have presented ourselves to our *Old Sinful Nature*. It is this **choice** of belief that determines whether or not we are actually in current fellowship with the Lord.

The reason I have been beating the drum a little hard on this point is that most of us do not live as if there are real consequences of choosing to live from our *Old Sinful Nature* simply because the impact of our choices is not always immediate or even tangible, and we have little to no visibility into the chain of events that are unleashed by the **choice** to trust ourselves to our *Old Sinful Nature*. Nevertheless,

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the consequences are harrowing to us personally and to the larger body of Christ that needs us to live in the Spirit in order for “oneness” to ever be achieved.

Now, what I want to clarify so that none of us gets confused, freaked out, or overcome with fear, is the following. I was not saying that each and every time you sin you have automatically presented yourself to your *Old Sinful Nature* and are living in darkness and have become beholden to the devil. No, there must be a **choice** that you make to 1) not believe that Jesus is your “I Am” and 2) choose to look elsewhere for your provision in this life (emotionally, physically, psychologically, practically, etc). Let me show you why I make this distinction.

### **1 John 5:16-17**

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death. (ESV)

This may be a bit confusing but we will clear that up quite easily. There is sin that leads to death and sin that does not lead to death. We will be turning to Romans 6 and 8 to get the distinction. But before we go there, we must understand that the overall context of **1 John** is that we must always live as children of God; for those who are surrendered to God will *agape* love their brothers and sisters in the Lord and those who say they are surrendered to God, but are really not (for they do not presently and actively believe in the name of the Son of God), do not *agape* love their brothers and sisters in Christ. Thus, those

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who live as sons of God and those who live as sons of the devil are clearly evident and it is obvious to all. With that as our baseline, let us first consider what is “sin that does not lead to death” and then we will consider “sin that leads to death.”

If you are cooking and you happen to burn yourself on the stove and you let out an expletive (a cuss word); it is definitely sin as “all wrongdoing is sin” (**1 John 5:17**); but it does not mean that you have surrendered your tongue to your flesh to be an instrument of unrighteousness or that you are going to sustain this behavior as a regular pattern of dealing. It just means you sinned and reacted from your *Old Sinful Nature*, but it does not mean that you have presented yourself to your *Old Sinful Nature* and have chosen to become a slave to sin.

Let me give you another example from my personal experience that highlights both realities. My daughter gets horrible headaches that cripple her and it really upsets me. I have prayed and prayed and prayed for her and so have so many other people. We have done the responsible thing and seen multiple doctors, chiropractors, etc., and still there is no apparent solution. There are times where I get so worried for her; yet, the Bible tells me to be anxious for nothing (**Philippians 4:6**). So my worry and anxiety is sin, as all unrighteousness is sin (**1 John 5:17**); but it does not mean that I have chosen to live from my *Old Sinful Nature*—the sin which leads to death.

However, if I refuse to stop and turn this worry and anxiety over to the Lord and trust that He is both my daughter’s Good Shepherd (therefore all that He does is love) and also the Gatekeeper over my daughter’s life (thus, all that He allows in her life is for His good purposes) and I start to get upset at God and mad that He is not healing her headaches and this anger leads me to turn from trusting

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Him for her life and eventually for areas of my life, then I am obviously presenting myself to my *Old Sinful Nature* and walking in wrong belief and unbelief.

During that time (even though I fully know the truth) I chose to live in sin, abide in darkness, am unable to discern the truth, and I become vulnerable to the destructive purposes of the enemy. I have chosen to prioritize what I feel and what my wisdom assumes about my daughter's circumstances over and above what I know to be true from the Word of God. I will have set my mind on the flesh; and, as a result, I will not have life and peace but disorder, worry, anxiety, anger, frustration, and doubt, and so on and so on (death).

Paul says it this way: "For the mind *set* on the flesh is death but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (**Romans 8:6**). This is why I say that **reacting** from your *Old Sinful Nature* is very different from presenting yourself to him, which is an active **choice** you make to not believe in the name of the Son of God.

### **Romans 6:12-13, 16**

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on (*present and actively*) **presenting** the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but **present** yourselves to God (*present is in the aorist active tense—meaning it must be your sustained choice*) as those (*present and actively*) alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God...Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

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So the “sin leading to death” is when you choose out of wrong belief or unbelief to present yourself to your *Old Sinful Nature* by setting your mind on the things of the flesh instead of trusting yourself to God. And because during that time a person lives in darkness and is beholden to the devil John, says we should not pray for them. I think this is because God will literally have nothing to do with their *Old Sinful Nature* for it is an enemy of God.

But John told us that we are to pray for those who struggle with “sin not leading to death”—the normal kind of human reactions that overtake us so often as we deal with the day-in-and-day-out realities of life—so that the Father will give us life so we don’t succumb to temptation and eventually present ourselves to our flesh and become voluntarily enslaved, even for a moment in time.

I know that going through this might feel like overkill; but I want each and every one of us to consider the horrific consequences of placing our trust in anyone (including ourselves) and anything else other than our great “I Am” who is the complete provision for our lives. Yet, I also did not want anyone freaking out thinking that when they sinned they were automatically living in darkness beholden to the devil. This could have become another “wrong belief” that left you gripped with fear and a feeling of total failure, since it is obvious that we all still sin.

Further, the reason I have so emphasized the 3<sup>rd</sup> point about our “oneness” and have dived into this study in **1 John** is because of the climax of Jesus’ prayer in **John 17**. The heartbeat of God is for the world. **1 Timothy 2:4** tells us that He desires all those in the world to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; and the Godhead works collectively toward this purpose. We must never forget

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that this is why He left us in the world. He desires us, collectively, to be the proof, the living evidence that Jesus is God. But if we are ever going to be “one” as the Father and Son are “one,” we must know how to live from the *New Creation* under the control of the Spirit of God. Thus, we must not be deceived into thinking that we are ok living in any form of Christianity that does not compel us to trust ourselves 100% to our great “I Am” for every part of life, including every emotional, physical, psychological, and practical need. Let’s move on.

### ***John 18:1-3***

When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples. Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples. Judas then, having received the Roman cohort and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

With the start of Chapter 18, we move away from general dialogue and move into the story regarding the final hours of Jesus’ life on earth. Interestingly, John gives us a lot of details and it’s important that we understand why the Spirit had him include so many facts. For example, did you think about why John told us about their crossing over the ravine and entering the Garden? Jesus knew all that was going to happen to Him and John is communicating to us Jesus’ intentionality. They were coming after Him and He did not go back home to Galilee, He did not go back to the upper room, He did not go to another garden, but He volitionally



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chose to go exactly where He knew Judas would be looking for Him. It was His time and He was going to glorify His Father.

Obviously Judas and the religious leaders were expecting some serious push back because they came with this huge group armed with weapons, lanterns and torches. Again, a detail we don't want to miss. This was the time of Passover and the moon was full so there was not much need for lanterns and torches unless they believed Jesus was going to run and hide out in the caves. But instead of hiding Jesus walked out to meet them. This reminds me of an amazing passage from Isaiah.

***Isaiah 50:6-7***

I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting. For the Lord God helps Me, therefore, I am not disgraced; therefore, I have set My face like flint

Talk about overkill. Judas came with a cohort of Roman soldiers and officers, as well as Temple guards, all for this one man who had only a handful of followers with Him. There is a lot of speculation about the number of soldiers in a Roman cohort but it is estimated to have been a group between 120 and 800 soldiers. Even if it was the lower number; still when you add to it the officers and the Temple guards, Jesus and the disciples were outnumbered at least 10 to 1 and up to 61 to 1.

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Why do you think the religious leaders thought this was necessary? Remember, the whole scheme to arrest Jesus was driven by the Jewish leaders and was not a Roman affair at all. In fact, it must have cost them a pretty penny to procure these soldiers. I think they were deathly afraid of Jesus. They must have recalled the 2 times that He walked into the Temple and with all authority cleared the floor of all the money changers and market makers while no one was willing to lay a hand on Him. Maybe they remembered the time they sent the Temple guards to arrest Jesus and they came back empty handed as the guards were dumbfounded by the things Jesus had said and they could not see fit to arrest Him. Accordingly, they probably thought that with a big enough crowd Jesus would not be able to work any of His trickery while also hoping that the peer pressure would be so great that it would be less likely that Judas or anyone else would back out of doing the dirty deed.

### ***John 18:4-10***

So Jesus, knowing all the things that were coming upon Him, went forth and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered Him, "Jesus the Nazarene." He said to them, "I am He." And Judas also, who was betraying Him, was standing with them. So when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground. Therefore He again asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way," to fulfill the word which He spoke, "Of those whom You have given Me I lost not one." Simon Peter then, having a

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sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

Can you imagine this scene? I would love to have been there. Jesus and these 12 guys walk through the garden and coming at them was this huge group of professional warriors and without blinking an eye Jesus walks right up to them and says, "whom do you seek?" He knew they were looking for Him but there was method to His madness. Jesus was ready to bring about an immediate fulfillment to His prayer in **John 17:11** where He said, "Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given me."

When they said they were seeking Jesus the Nazarene, Jesus said, "egoo eimi" or "I Am." He spoke His Name, the Name which the Father gave Him and with the utterance of that Name came the unleashing of power and might; and all who sought to take Jesus and harm Him were pushed back by the force of the Name and they all fell down to the ground.

Remember, in **John 17:2** we found out that the Father gave Jesus authority over all flesh, and here we see Him exercise that authority. It did not matter how many people they sent after Jesus, they were to do nothing that He did not allow. He wanted His disciples to be safe and kept from harm so He spoke the Name and we see that even these mighty warriors submitted to His voice and His request and His Word was fulfilled. The soldiers did not touch the disciples but let Him the go without incident. I could imagine that right about now with His rear end pinned to the floor, Judas was beginning to seriously trip as he began to realize the huge, massive, gigundus mistake that he had made.

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Could you imagine what was running in the mind of these warriors? They were not being sent to fight some fierce enemy, they were not rounding up some violent band of terrorist which caused damage to the state; no, they were being sent after some religious man and his handful of followers. Never in their life would they have imagined that they were going to have an encounter with ultimate power. To be forced to the ground by an unseen power at the mere utterance of the Name must have totally freaked them out.

We know this to be true because Peter pulls out a sword and tries to start some action and they do not touch Him. You would think that these trained professionals would have dropped Peter in seconds flat as soon as he even motioned toward his sword. But they were all forced to respect the power of the Name. All flesh is in His hands and all things happen according to His plan and no one can circumvent His purposes. This should greatly comfort you and again convince you why you can, and you must, trust yourself to Jesus.

I want you to be assured that Jesus' prayer that we would be kept in the Name is still applicable to our everyday life. In fact, when we *presently and actively* trust ourselves to the Name by practically believing that Jesus is our "I Am", the enemy cannot even touch us (**1 John 5:18**).

We don't get this detail in John but in **Matthew 26:33-35** Peter proclaimed that he was ready to die for Jesus. And sure enough he put his words into action and seems to be the only disciple that took a personal risk to protect Jesus. What was he thinking; he was surrounded by professional warriors? We may give Peter a lot of grief for his mistakes, but of all the disciples this man was definitely the gutsiest. His blind loyalty was admirable but ever so far off the mark.

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Imagine, after all that Jesus had said and taught, Peter still did not understand that Jesus must die. Zeal without knowledge, no matter how well intentioned, leads even the most sincere of people astray (***Romans 10:2***). Peter's actions symbolize for us religious rebellion to the Word of God. In Peter's mind he was serving Jesus, he was doing what he thought he should do to protect Jesus. But it was all wrong; He fought the wrong enemy, used the wrong weapon, had all the wrong motivations, and misrepresented the heart of God. Jesus taught his disciples to love their enemies not kill them; thus, Peter's actions were in direct contradiction to how Jesus instructed His servants to live. It was a moment of failure that set Peter on the course for continual failure throughout the night.

Actually, let me correct that. He was already on the course. We know that when he should have kept his mouth closed and listened he argued with Jesus about dying and when he should have been praying he was sleeping. If Peter followed Jesus example and only did what the Father told Him to do and only said what the Father told Him to say, he would have been protected from failure. Thank God that He is so merciful that regardless of how many times Peter blew it, the Father was there protecting him.

How many of us are all caught up in doing what we think Jesus wants but in actuality are living in direct opposition to how He instructed us to live? Do we do only what the Father wants us to do and say only what He wants us to say? If not, then there is a good chance that like Peter we are devoted more ardently to our religion (evidenced by our "good" intentions and what we think are "good" deeds) rather than being submitted to the voice and instruction of the Lord.

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I am sure Peter was aiming to whack off Malchus' head, but Malchus must have *providently* moved just in time to lose only the ear, as God ensured that no one was killed. Jesus would be treated as a murderer in His death but He would be guilty of not even the slightest accusation. And then in what was an amazing demonstration of practically loving one's enemies, **Luke 22:51**, tells us that Jesus reached out and healed Malchus' ear. This one act brought to practical life all of Jesus' teachings.

Now, none of the other gospels mentions Malchus by name or even indicates that it was Peter with the sword. But we will find out that John was familiar to the High Priest so it makes sense why he knew his slave's name. It is also important to note that in addition to John only Luke tells us that it was Malchus' right ear that got shaved off. I think this demonstrates that even though Luke was not an eye witness to these events (as he was not one of the disciples) his account of these events is accurate and precise and thus can be fully relied upon.

### ***John 18:11***

So Jesus said to Peter, "Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"

Sheath your sword, was the command. Jesus was not going to let this final chapter of His life play out in warfare. If he wanted a battle He could have called on the whole host of angels to do His bidding and this whole thing would have been over instantly. What am I talking about? Forget the angels; He could have just spoken the Name for no one could have prevailed against the Name. But this

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was the cup His Father asked Him to drink. Jesus knew that it was all from His sovereign hands, according to His perfect plan, and Jesus had set His face like flint and was determined to drink it up—not a drop would be left.

It is interesting that John gives us no account of Jesus struggle in the garden when He asked His Father if there was any chance to remove this cup; he just shows Jesus moving forward having trusted Himself to the Father. I think the Spirit did this intentionally as this is a perfect word picture of how the Father sees us. We all struggle but the Father see's the decisions we make in faith to honor Him and bring Him glory. The struggle is expected, the glory however is always found in the obedience of faith.

What cup has God asked you to drink? I know my cup has been pretty nasty, but it is nothing compared to what the Father asked of His Son. I wish I would have moved through my struggles with the same determination as Jesus, but in all reality I was much more like Peter. I have stumbled about and have done so much of my journey the wrong way. Thank God that He told me that He does not deal with me on the basis of sin (*Psalm 103*) but on the choices I make, in faith, to present myself to Him trusting that He is my "I Am."

If you have lived more like Peter than Jesus, take a deep breath. God does not deal with you on the basis of sin but on faith. Besides, with each area of stumbling He will continue to work to demonstrate to you why you can trust Him the next time. He will continue to help you see the horrors of living in darkness and sin and help you realize that there is no glory in living beholden to the enemy; but the glory comes only in the obedience of faith.

We will stop right here for tonight and next week we will pick up at the arrest and first trial—illegal trial that is—that they suffered upon Jesus.

Let's Pray