



The Constitution of Christian Connection

1 John 1:1-4

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What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life — and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us — 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. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

Main Idea

**Christian community is essential,
especially in times of trouble,
but that community will only endure
difficulty if it is constituted correctly.**

John is addressing Christian connection:

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what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at
and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life
— and the life was manifested, and we have seen
and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life,
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what we have seen and heard **we proclaim to you also,**
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so that you too may have fellowship with us;
and **indeed our fellowship is with the Father,**
and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write,
so that our joy may be made complete.

But what constitutes this community,
and how do we participate in it?



Constituting Christian Community

Choose to reject misguided foundations



Misguided Foundations

Mystical Companionship

Mystical Concepts

“Soulmates”

“It just feels like we have a connection”

“We just ‘get’ one another”

Note the concrete basis of fellowship:

1 John 1:1-4

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Note the concrete basis of fellowship:

1 John 1:1-4

What was from the beginning, what we have **heard**, what we have **seen with our eyes**, what we have **looked at** and **touched with our hands**, concerning the Word of Life — and the life was manifested, and we have **seen** and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was **manifested to us** — what we have **seen** and **heard** we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us...

The truth based in these things...

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and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life
— and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify
and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was
with the Father and was manifested to us —

what we have seen and heard **we proclaim to you** also,
so that you too may have fellowship with us...

...forms the basis of fellowship.

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and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life
— and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify
and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was
with the Father and was manifested to us —
what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also,

so that you too may have fellowship with us...

Misguided Foundations

Mystical Companionship

Intimate Relationship

What is this intimacy?

Emotional Connection

Intellectual Connection

Preferential Connection

But note that neither proximity
nor exclusivity are foundational to
Christian connection.

1 John 1:3

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also,
so that you too may have fellowship with us...

1 John 1:3

What we have seen and heard **we proclaim to you** also,
so that you too may have fellowship with us...

1 John 1:3

What we have seen and heard **we proclaim to you also,**
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This fellowship constitutes a community that transcends proximity and that forms a foundation for the unity *of a people*.

Misguided Foundations

Mystical Companionship

Intimate Relationship

Pragmatic Friendship

Friendships that “work”

We share the same interests

We meet each others' needs

She's there for me

But note that fellowship is something
we have not something we do.

1 John 1:3

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.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light,
we have fellowship with one another.

Christian fellowship does *work*,
but the *work* of fellowship is not
what forms it.

It's what follows *from* it.

Constituting Christian Community

Choose to reject misguided foundations

Choose to embrace *Christian* connections



Embrace Christian Connections

Embrace the connections
of your new position.

Fellowship is a “positional” reality.

Your Old Position

You were in darkness (2:8, 11)

You were in the world (2:16)

You were abiding in death (3:14)

You were living in fear (4:18)

You were in the power of the evil one (5:19)

Your New Position

You were in darkness (2:8, 11)

You are in the light (1:7; 2:10)

You were in the world (2:16)

You are in the Son (2:24; 5:10)

You were abiding in death (3:14)

You are in the Father (2:24)

You were living in fear (4:18)

You are in the Father's love (2:15)

You were in the power of the evil one (5:19)

You are in God (4:15)

The fellowship that *we have* with the Father and the Son and with one another is due to our ***position*** in Christ!

It is our position in Christ that unites us;
we are all together *in Him!*

This means that Christian community will
break the barriers of cultural position and
unite people who do not “belong” together.

Embrace Christian Connections

Embrace the connections of your new position.

**Embrace the connections
of your new identity.**

A New Identity

You were a child of the devil!

1 John 3:10

By this the children of God
and the children of the devil
are obvious.

You are a child of God!

1 John 3:2

Beloved, now we are children
of God...

You now have an unbreakable family
connection with the Father and the Son and
with every member of this eternal family!

A New Identity

You were dead!

1 John 3:14

He who does not love
abides in death.

You are alive!

1 John 3:14

We know that we have passed out
of death into life.

You now have a shared life with every
believer because this new life is vitally
connected to the Source of Life!

Ultimately, it is identity that
constitutes community.

Identity validates belonging.

With this new identity and position
also come new
possessions--*possessions that we all
share.*

Look at what John says we "have" together:

We all have the same advocate (2:1)

We all have the same anointing (2:20)

We all have the same Father (2:23)

We all have the same hope (3:3)

We all have the same eternal life (5:13)

We all proclaim the same message!

Embrace Christian Connections

Embrace the connections of your new position.

Embrace the connections of your new identity.

**Embrace the connections
of your new doctrine.**

1 John 1:3-4

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also,
so that you too may have fellowship with us...

these things we write,
so that our joy may be made complete.

We believe a specific message that
constitutes the Christian community!

Change the message, and you
change the community!

Ephesians 4:4-6

There is one body and one Spirit,
just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all
who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:4-6

There is **one** body and **one** Spirit,

just as also you were called in **one** hope of your calling;

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There is One Faith—One Doctrine

Ephesians 4:4-6

There is one body and one Spirit,

just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;


one Lord, **one faith**, one baptism, one God and Father of all
who is over all and through all and in all.

Jude 1:3

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about
our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you
appealing that you contend earnestly for ***the faith*** which was
once for all handed down to the saints.

The joy of fellowship will be found
as we more deeply understand and
embrace the content of our faith.

“These things we write,
so that our joy may be made complete.”



These things connects us!
These things will keep us!

Constituting Christian Community

Choose to reject misguided foundations

Choose to embrace Christian connections

Choose to pursue Christian occupations

What occupies you?



Pursue Christian Occupations

Are you occupied with Jesus
or with yourself?

Note the focus of John's occupation:

1 John 1:1

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and touched with our hands, **concerning the Word of Life.**

Luke 10:38-40

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."

Martha was occupied with herself
and what she felt she needed.

Mary was occupied with her Lord.

Luke 10:41-42

But the Lord answered and said to her,
“Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for **Mary has chosen the good part**, which shall not be taken away from her.

Does Jesus occupy you?

Pursue Christian Occupations

Are you occupied with Jesus or with yourself?

Are you occupied with the things of Christ
or the things of the world?

Note again the cause of John's joy:

1 John 1:4

These things we write,
so that our joy may be made complete.

John was occupied with the things of Christ knowing that these things would produce the fruit that mattered most.

Note the occupation of the world:

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

Note the occupation of the world:

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Note the occupation of the world:

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh

and the lust of the eyes and **the boastful pride of life,**
is not from the Father, but **is from the world.**

Worldly occupation is an orientation of the heart that will become frustrated with and will turn away from true Christian community.

Pursue Christian Occupations

Are you occupied with Jesus or with yourself?

Are you occupied with the things of Christ or the things of the world?

**Are you occupied with your occupation
or with the Christian mission?**

What occupation occupied John?

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we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

John's occupation of proclamation was clearly important, but only because it was a part of a greater mission.

Are you occupied by your occupation or by the mission your occupation is making possible?

Conclusion:

What constitutes community for you?

Are you looking for something other than Christian community?

Endurance and joy, especially in times of trouble, will only be found in the fellowship of Christ.