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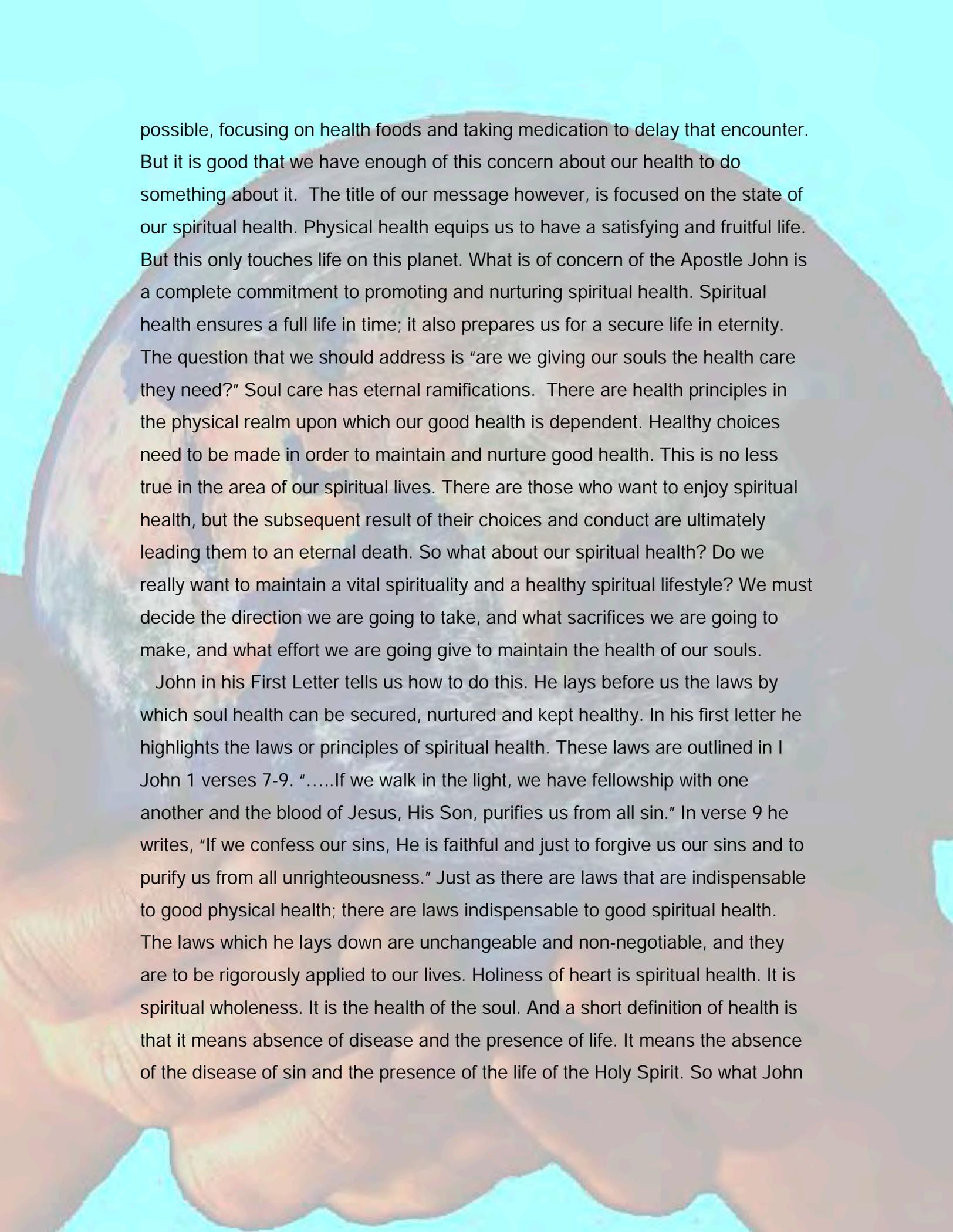
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## WHAT IS THE STATE OF YOUR HEALTH?

**Scripture Reading – 1 John 1:5-10.**

### **Introduction**

These familiar words of John are concerned with the importance of having spiritual health and how can that sustain that health as Christians. In our society we are obsessed with the preservation of good healthy bodies. Across the Television we are inundated with commercials promoting the miraculous health giving powers of anything from exercise equipment to programs and pills. This leads to the question how concerned are you about your health? When we hear this question our immediate thoughts gravitate to the condition of our physical bodies, which is a legitimate concern, for as Christians the physical well being of our bodies should have our interest and concern. They are the temples of the Holy Spirit. We should give attention to the care of them for none of us want to suffer from ill-health, and all of us want to enjoy a healthy life style. A healthy lifestyle is the concern of millions of people, that is why medical drugs have become a multibillion dollar business and the medicine cabinets are arrayed with drug containers of every shape, size and color. We pop pills to keep healthy. We expend our energies to delay the inevitable end of life. Some do everything that is humanly possible to avoid grave. A woman woke up from surgery and said "Doctor was the surgery successful?" The man with her said. "I'm not your doctor. I'm St Peter. We are trying to avoid seeing Saint Peter by every method



possible, focusing on health foods and taking medication to delay that encounter. But it is good that we have enough of this concern about our health to do something about it. The title of our message however, is focused on the state of our spiritual health. Physical health equips us to have a satisfying and fruitful life. But this only touches life on this planet. What is of concern of the Apostle John is a complete commitment to promoting and nurturing spiritual health. Spiritual health ensures a full life in time; it also prepares us for a secure life in eternity. The question that we should address is "are we giving our souls the health care they need?" Soul care has eternal ramifications. There are health principles in the physical realm upon which our good health is dependent. Healthy choices need to be made in order to maintain and nurture good health. This is no less true in the area of our spiritual lives. There are those who want to enjoy spiritual health, but the subsequent result of their choices and conduct are ultimately leading them to an eternal death. So what about our spiritual health? Do we really want to maintain a vital spirituality and a healthy spiritual lifestyle? We must decide the direction we are going to take, and what sacrifices we are going to make, and what effort we are going to give to maintain the health of our souls.

John in his First Letter tells us how to do this. He lays before us the laws by which soul health can be secured, nurtured and kept healthy. In his first letter he highlights the laws or principles of spiritual health. These laws are outlined in I John 1 verses 7-9. ".....If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin." In verse 9 he writes, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to purify us from all unrighteousness." Just as there are laws that are indispensable to good physical health; there are laws indispensable to good spiritual health. The laws which he lays down are unchangeable and non-negotiable, and they are to be rigorously applied to our lives. Holiness of heart is spiritual health. It is spiritual wholeness. It is the health of the soul. And a short definition of health is that it means absence of disease and the presence of life. It means the absence of the disease of sin and the presence of the life of the Holy Spirit. So what John

is discussing here are principles by which can maintain a holy life. Man has been infected with deadly disease of sin. It is the enemy of spiritual health. Paul tells that we are "dead in trespasses and sins." John is saying in this passage of scripture that there is available to each of us a moment by moment and day by day cleansing from the disease of sin which destroys the health of our souls. Let us look at these laws of spiritual health which John lays before us. Firstly there is,

**1. THE LAW OF UNINTERRUPTED CLEANSING. 1 John 1:7-9. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light.....The Blood of Jesus, His Son purifies us from all sin."**

John clearly states this principle. It is the Law of uninterrupted cleansing. "If we walk in the light.....the Blood of Jesus His Son purifies us from all sin." There is a continual purification from all sin. John emphasizes this truth again in verse 9, as though to dispel doubt may arise as to validity of what he is saying. "....He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." This statement is in fact a declaration of the power of the Cross at work within the soul and it is the central message of Calvary. This is the message with which John is concerned in these verses. What he says to us is that the law of uninterrupted cleansing is ensured when the soul is obedient to the light. You will note that this cleansing begins in a,

**a. Definite Act. 1 John 1:7-9. It is the work of God.**

It is a Divine work in heart. There is a definite work of God's grace whereby our hearts are not only instantaneously forgiven, but also in a second work of grace are instantaneously cleansed from all sin. There is a crisis moment when God does the sanctifying work in our hearts. You cannot remove sin in the life by growth, just as you cannot eliminate weeds by the growth of the plants in the fields. The weeds have to be removed in order for the plants to grow and maintain their health. Growth does not remove sin from our hearts, for that makes growth more powerful than the cross. In other words it makes growth a

savior from sin and it is only the crucified risen Christ who IS the savior and sanctifier from sin. This act of cleansing is a definite act. It is the work of God. It is also,

**b. A Delivering Experience by the Power of God. 1 John 1:7-9.** "...the Blood of Jesus Christ purifies us from all sin...." The key words are "...purifies us from all sin...." This is a significant statement. This cleansing is all inclusive. It is from "all sin" that we are purified. **Martin Luther wrote, "Peace if possible, but purity at all costs."**

The focus of John's statement here is on two words – purifies and sin. He emphasizes the liberating power of the Blood of Christ. The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. There is in these verses a distinction made between sins in the plural and sin in the singular. In verse 9 he writes "If we confess our sins.....He will forgive us our sins." By sins he mean the sins committed and the guilt tied to them. Forgiveness is the work of the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby our sins are removed as far as the east is from the west to be remembered against us no longer and buried in the sea of His forgetfulness. It means the blotting out of a sinful past. It is forgiveness for whatever sin we have committed which results in a clean record before God. It means we have been acquitted of the guilt of the past and our sins are no longer held or counted against us.

But the Blood of Christ does much more than bring forgiveness; it provides cleansing from all sin. There is not only pardon from past sins but there is purification from sin itself. Dr John Stott one of the foremost Evangelical Bible teachers and scholars in the British Isles explains that the "forgiveness of sins" refers to a debt that God remits or pardons, and the purification from all sin or unrighteousness refers to a stain that He removes. God not only deals with the acts of sin committed, but also with the inward state or the condition of unrighteousness. Dr. Samuel Chadwick the great Methodist college principal and preacher wrote that "The Cross accomplishes more than reconciliation. Sin goes

deeper than relationship. Behind sins there is sin. Sins maybe pardoned, but unless sin can be purged, the root of evil will remain. The Blood of Jesus not only cancels our sin but cleanses it." Dr. Campbell Morgan said incisively, "unless God has provided a redemption that touches sin in me as well as the sins that grow out of it – it is an imperfect redemption." Paul uses several words to describe and define work of sanctification and one which comes to mind is the word circumcision. It is a graphic metaphor. Basically to circumcise means to cut and writing to the church at Colosse he says. "In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with the circumcision done by the hands of men, but with the circumcision done by Christ. Furthermore in Colossians 2:11 he wrote that "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it or make her holy and cleansing her by the washing of the water and by the Word." Colossians 5:25-26. This cleansing is fundamental to spiritual health or wholeness. And how can we remain healthy if any vestige of sin remains. The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. This is a delivering act. But it also describes,

**c. A DYNAMIC WALK WITH GOD. I John 1:7. This dynamic walk with God begins in the experience of God's sanctifying grace in our hearts.**

John says "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and the Blood of Jesus His Son purifies us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. The word purifies is in the present progressive tense. What this means is that the cleansing which began in a moment of a personal and full surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ is a continuing dynamic process; but it is conditional. It is conditioned upon a complete and continuing obedience to God the Holy Spirit. Thomas A Kempis wrote that "Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from grace." Note how John puts it. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light.....the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies from all sin." The dynamic words here "If we walk in the Light." This is important because the scriptures make clear that 'two cannot walk

together except they are agreed." As we are obedient to the Holy Spirit and walk in the light, the Blood of Jesus goes on cleansing us from all sin. Heart Purity is not a static, stagnant experience whereby we are cleansed once and for all by a decisive dynamic act of God, without need for a continual growth in His grace. We will always be dependent on the mighty cleansing power of the Blood of Christ. It is a moment by moment cleansing contingent on obedience to the light of God and the power of the Cross. When a foreign body enters the eye there is a fluid is secreted which invades the eye. The eye waters and it is then that the fluid exposes and expels the foreign body. In Wales there is a little white flower that grows around the coal mines. It generally is covered with coal dust. If you shake the coal flower the dust falls off leaving the clean and pure. It has within in it a protective chemical that does not allow the filth of coal dust to seep into petals. It remains pure among the filth about it. As we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ continues to inwardly cleanse us expelling any foreign body that would seek to infiltrate and defile the soul. The first law of spiritual health then is the law of uninterrupted cleansing.

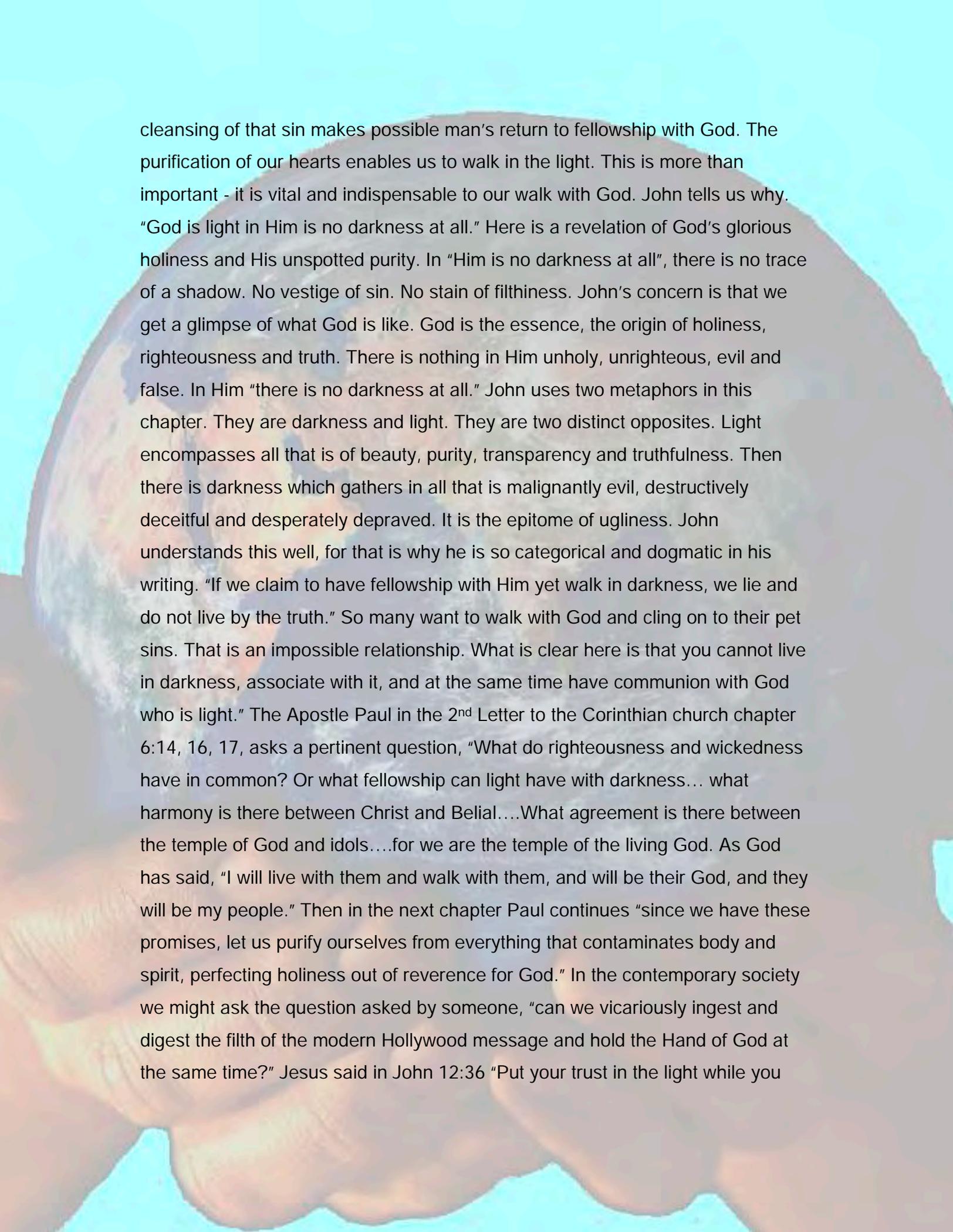
Furthermore this spiritual health is maintained by,

## **2. THE LAW OF UNBROKEN FELLOWSHIP. 1 John 5:5-7.**

"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." "If we claim to have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. BUT if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin." John emphasizes the word "fellowship." And there are two facets to this fellowship. They are intertwined. They are dependent on each other. There is first of all,

### **a. Fellowship with God. John 1:6.**

The law of unbroken fellowship is dependent on the law of uninterrupted cleansing. It is sin that breaks the bonds of man's fellowship with God. The



cleansing of that sin makes possible man's return to fellowship with God. The purification of our hearts enables us to walk in the light. This is more than important - it is vital and indispensable to our walk with God. John tells us why. "God is light in Him is no darkness at all." Here is a revelation of God's glorious holiness and His unspotted purity. In "Him is no darkness at all", there is no trace of a shadow. No vestige of sin. No stain of filthiness. John's concern is that we get a glimpse of what God is like. God is the essence, the origin of holiness, righteousness and truth. There is nothing in Him unholy, unrighteous, evil and false. In Him "there is no darkness at all." John uses two metaphors in this chapter. They are darkness and light. They are two distinct opposites. Light encompasses all that is of beauty, purity, transparency and truthfulness. Then there is darkness which gathers in all that is malignantly evil, destructively deceitful and desperately depraved. It is the epitome of ugliness. John understands this well, for that is why he is so categorical and dogmatic in his writing. "If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth." So many want to walk with God and cling on to their pet sins. That is an impossible relationship. What is clear here is that you cannot live in darkness, associate with it, and at the same time have communion with God who is light." The Apostle Paul in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Corinthian church chapter 6:14, 16, 17, asks a pertinent question, "What do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness... what harmony is there between Christ and Belial...What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols...for we are the temple of the living God. As God has said, "I will live with them and walk with them, and will be their God, and they will be my people." Then in the next chapter Paul continues "since we have these promises, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." In the contemporary society we might ask the question asked by someone, "can we vicariously ingest and digest the filth of the modern Hollywood message and hold the Hand of God at the same time?" Jesus said in John 12:36 "Put your trust in the light while you

have it so that you become sons of the light." The "sons of light" remain so, only as they walk in the light. There is no communion between light and darkness. The secret of spiritual health lies in living according to laws of uninterrupted cleansing and an unbroken fellowship with God. But it involves more than fellowship with God it includes,

**b. Fellowship with each other. 1 John 1:7. "If we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin."** The Cross not only breaks down the barrier between God and man, but also between man and man. Walking in the light or walking in obedience to God is the basis and condition for fellowship with one another. John latches on to this truth and in his second chapter of this letter in 9-11 he writes, "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in darkness, whoever loves his brother lives in the light and there is nothing in him to make him stumble." But whoever hates his brother is in darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded him." That is why Jesus is insistent in the Sermon on the Mount that when you come to the altar with a gift and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go and be reconciled to your brother first, and come and offer your gift." It is futile to try and have fellowship with God and be out of fellowship with one another. Once the fellowship is broken with another, fellowship with God is severed or as John puts it we "walk in darkness." There are those in the church who are tragically self-deceived, because they are out of fellowship with someone in church and at the same believing that they are right with God. John said this is not so. He says that they "walk in darkness and the truth is not in them." This is not a contemporary interpretation of what John is saying: it is an unabridged version of the truth as John proclaims it. It may be distasteful and uncomfortable but obedience to the truth will free us and bring us to heaven. We are told here that as "we walk in light (as we live in obedience to God) that we have fellowship with one another." The secret of spiritual health is to adhere to

the law of an unbroken fellowship with God and others. Finally one of the signs of spiritual health is the

**3. THE LAW OF UNIMPEDED PROGRESS. 1 John 1:7. This principle is stated succinctly in the words "if we walk in the light."** Walking implies progress and growth which means,

**a. Moving Forward in the light of God. 1 John 1:7.**

This movement is not the movement of a treadmill where there is plenty of action but no progress forward. It is movement out of spiritual babyhood toward spiritual adulthood, vitality and depth. Little Jeremy was on a walk with his grandfather when a stranger smiled at him and asked "how old are you?" Jeremy replied, "Three." The man then asked "When will you be four?" And Jeremy answered "when I am through being three?" Jeremy in his childlike way was conscious of moving forward a step at a time in his life. There is nothing quite as beautiful as a 23 day old baby and nothing and quite as tragic as a 23 year old baby. One has written that the "strong sons of God are not perfected by childish pursuits." There are millions of Christians who need to be through with immaturity, for they have been meandering too much in the dimensions of the superficial or childish pursuits and childish attitudes. They have become stunted in their spiritual growth because they refuse to walk in obedience to the light. Jesus said "if anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble because he sees the light of the world, but if anyone walks at night, he stumbles because the light is not in him. Walk while you have the light lest the darkness overtake you, he who walks in darkness does not know where he goes." You can only grow in spirit if walk in the light. The man who walks in the light or in obedience to the Holy Spirit is confident of his direction. He is sure of his standing with Christ. He is certain of his position with God. He walks unashamedly in the light, under the gaze of God, and within the searching eye of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a dynamic walk. There is no stagnancy to this walk. It is movement forward in the light of God. It is

growing in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is one side of the coin because it also means,

**b. Moving God-ward in the Light of God. 1 John 1:5-10.** "To walk in the light is a process whereby we are constantly moving in a God-ward direction. It is in the light that we have fellowship with a Holy God. It is in the light that we are able to draw closer to Him. It is in the light that all barriers between the soul and God have been removed and fellowship with Him is ensured. In verse 6 John makes clear if we walk in darkness and "claim to have fellowship with Him we lie and do not live in the truth." It is in the light that we have fellowship with Him and it is the light that we move in a God-ward direction. To walk in the light is to be a child of the light, and to be a child of the light is to reveal what it means to be so. And what does it mean to walk in the light? To expand and expose what John means here, we need to look at what the New Testament says about walking in the light. We are exhorted in Acts (:31 to "walk in the fear of the Lord." And in Roman 4:12 we are to walk in the steps of faith. John in his 3<sup>rd</sup> Letter chapter verse 4 we are "to walk in truth." Paul adds to this in I Thessalonians 4:12 that "we are to walk honestly." And in his Colossian letter chapter 4:5 he urges us to "walk wisely." And Ephesians 5:15 Paul tells us "To walk in the Spirit and you will not gratify the sins of sinful nature." Then we are to walk in "newness of life." Romans 6:4. And in Ephesians 5:2, we are to "walk worthy of the calling you have received." And in Ephesians 4:1 Paul in one phrase he sums up all that we have cited here in these verses when he wrote that it means to "walk or live as Jesus lived." And John again in First Letter chapter 2:6 reinforces this statement and writes "whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus walked." This is what it means to walk in the light; to walk with movement in a God-ward direction.

### **Conclusion**

The question facing us: "What is the state or condition of your spiritual health?" It is quite clear that in this passage of scripture That God has provided for our spiritual health. He sent His Son that he might destroy the works of the Devil. He went to extremes to offer us spiritual health. For heart of the solution to spiritual

knowing this health is the Cross. John talks about the shed Blood of Jesus as fountain and spring of spiritual wholeness. It is His Blood that cleanses us from the enemy of soul health which is sin. Are you spiritually healthy? Do you know cleansing power of the Blood of Christ in your souls? Has there ever been a moment when in full surrender to God you allowed him to cleanse your heart from all sin? If not there is a present and continuous cleansing through the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ available to those who recognize and confess their need of heart purity, and in a full surrender to the Lordship of Christ accept the provision of heart cleansing through the shed blood of Christ. .

