

**LOVE FROM ABOVE**  
***(Fullness of Joy through Biblical Fellowship in Christ)***  
**Studies in 1 John**

**'Rebound'**

One of the most important skills in basketball is the ability to rebound well. If an outside shot isn't exactly on target and bounces off the rim rather than *swish* the net, other team members must be ready to retrieve that loose ball and put it in the basket. Great players are not only good shooters and great defenders – they are also good rebounders. To grab that ball after a missed shot and get another chance to score makes a player extremely valuable to their team and fans. Games are won or lost based upon the rebounding skills of the players. If you can't rebound, you'll probably not only lose games, you'll probably also lose your position on the team. Even if you are very good at shooting, defending, and passing, the ability to rebound is an essential part of a good player's game.

The art of *rebounding* is also an essential part of every mature, successful Christian's spiritual life. Christians are forgiven but far from perfect, and when we *miss the mark* (*the actual meaning of the New Testament Greek word for 'sin' / 'ha-mar-tee-a'*), it is very important to *bounce back* or *rebound* from that moral or spiritual failure to joyful fellowship in the Lord as quickly as possible.

The Apostle John's opening chapters of his general epistle (**1 John**) are all about his wise spiritual insight on how to *rebound* quickly from occasional failure so *fellowship and fullness of joy* can be restored ASAP (**1 John 1:3-4**). No doubt John's 60+ year *walk with the Lord* was filled with many *rebounds* as God painstakingly transformed him from a *son of thunder* to the *apostle of love*. We can only imagine the many times John must have implemented the biblical techniques of *rebound* in bouncing back from periodic setbacks to his spiritual maturation (*honest admission and humble confession of his sin / 1:5-10; sincere repentance and restoration by Christ / 2:1-2*); *gradual perfection of his love for God and Christ-like lifestyle / 2:3-6*).

John also extended the spiritual art of *rebound* to his (and our) relationship with other believers in the church family (2:7-14). Living out the 'Great Commandment' to relate to our brothers and sisters in Christ the same way we do with our Father includes skillfully rebounding through confession and restoration ASAP. Whether we are new believers (*children*), or mature disciples (*fathers*), or evolving new leaders (*young men*) *fullness of joy fellowship* depends upon everybody on God's team being skilled *rebounders* with the Lord and each other (**2:12-14**). *Rebound* is the way God's love is experienced in Christ's body.

The best example of the power of *spiritual rebound* is remembered every time Christ's disciples gather at the Lord's table for communion (**1 Corinthians 11:23-32**). The Corinthian Christians had failed with God and one another – they needed to rebound with Him and each other, or just not even bother with partaking of it (**1 Corinthians 11:18-22**). To take communion while there was such sin in their lives and church family was such hypocrisy that God wasn't going to put up with any more (**1 Corinthians 11:27-31**). The *broken bread* symbol of His broken body and the *cup of wine* symbol of His precious blood poured out to forgive others' sin against Him was exactly what they were not doing, and it was killing their fellowship with God and the body of Christ.

But the Lord's Table also speaks of Jesus' ability to rebound from sin and death, forgive repentant sinners and love them with *fullness of joy*. We don't know about the Corinthians; the Bible leaves us wondering if they rebounded or not. But we do know about ourselves – is there sin in your life that's blocking fellowship and fullness of joy with God? Is there any broken fellowship with some brothers or sisters in Christ that you haven't even tried to reconcile? Why not *bounce back* today and get things right with God above and your brethren here below? If God gives out MVP awards someday, I think they will go to Christians who weren't perfect, but were great *rebounders* in the game of life.

**PtL**

## **“THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL”**

*(Beware of the Joy-Stealers)*

**1 John 2:15-27**

### **Don't Lust for the World's Stuff**

*(The affection that saps believers' souls)*

*“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”*

**2:15-17**

**Why is it so dangerous to want to be a part of this temporal, material world system?**

**What are various ways that Christians disobey this passage? What and who does it hurt?**

**Describe each category of ‘the world’ (lust of flesh, lust of eyes, pride of life):**

**Is it possible to have the best of both worlds for a Christian?**

### **Don't Listen to the World's Liars**

*(The ‘anointing’ that discerns truth from error)*

*“Little children, it is the last hour; and you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you know it and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar - he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”*

**2:18-23**

**If troublesome people leave good churches to start their own thing, what does it show?**

**Talk about this anointing from the Holy One – what is it? When do you get it?**

**How do you know if you have it? What is it for according to the passage?**

**How can you discern if somebody or some movement is ‘anointed of God’ or not?**

### **Don't Let the World Lessen HIM**

*(The ‘anointing’ that keeps you abiding to the end)*

*“Therefore, let that abide in you which you have heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us – eternal life. These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.”*

**2:24-27**

**What is the secret of a long, successful, fruitful, contented Christian life (like John's)?**

**What does John mean by *the same anointing teaches you concerning all things*?**