

1 John 1:1-4 – Experiencing Jesus

Hook (1005-1007) – We studied Malachi and learned what it is really like to experience God. Nonetheless, most people say that they want to experience Him. Even more, God made us so that we need to experience Him.

When asked why he became a Christian, Paul did not mention a careful exegesis of how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament Scriptures about the Messiah. Instead Paul described how he experienced Jesus.

Protestants especially try to know God through our minds alone, but our Biblical forebears did not. They wanted to know Him through every part of their being.

Pagans wanted to do the same, even though they worshipped false gods. Rituals, many very sensual and even sexual, formed a major part of their religions.

We intentionally experience Him We seek fellowship and joy	How to Experience Jesus	We share our experience with others
---	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Book (1007-1010) – 1 John 1:1-4

Look (1010-1040)

We intentionally experience Him

V1 – John, the Apostle whom Jesus loved, was with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry. Along with the other disciples, he experienced almost everything that Jesus said and did. In addition to what is recorded in the Bible, they watched Jesus handle the most spectacular and the most mundane aspects of life. They noted when He scrupulously obeyed the Law and when He chose to disobey it, or at least appear to, because as the Son of God and God the Son, Jesus never actually disobeyed the commands of the Father. After experiencing Jesus for three years, John concludes that He not only had the Words of Life, He was the Word of Life.

John wanted to gain Christ, just as Paul did (Philippians 3:8). He had known Him with his ears, his eyes and his hands. Paul was not able (and initially not willing) to be a disciple of Jesus during His earthly ministry because he was “untimely born” (1 Corinthians 15:8). How much more us, born two millennia after the amazing events in early first century Palestine? John was able to experience Jesus in a way that none of us can, so how can we experience Him today. How can we gain Christ, the Word of Life, as our forebears in the faith strove to do?

Illustration

1. Muslims experience God through dreams.
2. Neopagans in the West experience God through intentional experiences.
 - a. Sacred space (a circle to delineate space and keep out mundane and malign influences)
 - b. Sacred objects (athame – knife to create space and cut away mundane attachments)
 - c. Sacred time (allot unhurried time for their ritual, including beginning and end)
 - d. Sacred sensations (candles, fragrances, music, recitations, dancing, sex)
 - e. Sacred rituals (both set and varying patterns of rituals to experience “the divine”)
 - f. Sacred fellowship (experiencing “the divine” with others)
 - g. Specific purpose (“We are doing this ritual to heal XXX or to help YYY find a job”)

Discussion Questions and Answers/Application

How do we experience the risen Christ? How have you experienced Him in the past? Have you been in more ritualistic or liturgical Christian traditions? How did you experience Him then?

Do we put the same time and effort into experiencing the real God as our neopagan friends do into experiencing the “divine”? Should we? Do we only try to know Jesus through our minds?

How do experiences or lack thereof impact those we try to bring to Christ?

We share our experience with others

V2 - It was not enough for John to experience Christ himself; he had to share his experiences with others. John did this by teaching and by writing. Even more, John did what Christ did. He imitated His Lord in His words, His works, and even His mannerisms.

Illustration Paul Brand was an orthopedic surgeon and Christian missionary in India in the early and mid-20th century. He had trained in London under one of the most gifted physicians of his day. Years later Dr. Brand was teaching medical students in India and noticed that one of them approached a patient and held her hand in exactly the same way that his mentor did. After the visit, he asked his student if she had been to London and studied under the same man. Surprised, the young student replied “No, Dr. Brand. That is exactly the same way that you do it!” Dr. Brand had so thoroughly the lessons of his mentor that he passed them unconsciously to his own students.

This is what John did to his disciples and them to theirs. This is what parents do to their children, and the children to their children, for generations.

Discussion Questions and Answers/Application

Does our experience in Christ lead us to or away from others? Does it lead us to imitate others, or them to imitate us?

We seek fellowship and joy

VV 3-4 – The purpose of John’s testimony was to have fellowship with the Father, the Son, and other believers, and so that all could have the joy of the Lord. No one can fully experience God alone. Nor can they have His joy by themselves.

Illustration 1984 – Big Brother – they conquered Winston through rituals and experiences, even though his mind opposed them. They also conquered him by making him alone.

Discussion Questions and Answers/Application

Does our experience in Christ lead us to joy?

Took (1040-1045)

We intentionally experience Him
We seek fellowship and joy

How to Experience Jesus

We share our experience with others

Verdict – What do you want them to DO as a result of the truths they have just received?

Closing prayer