

Study Guide



1 John 1:5-10 "Walking in the Light" September 4, 2016

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

In the first four verses of 1 John, John tells us that Jesus Christ, the Word of Life, has been manifested in the flesh, complete in His humanity. John, as well as others, had physically witnessed the ministry life of Jesus. He was not only a witness to His earthly life, but he had also witnessed His death and resurrection. He had even eaten with the risen Savior. John's declaration, his testimony, serves to make his joy complete. Telling others about our relationship with Christ brings complete joy!

For more in depth study check out the following pages...

Walk Prayer & Missions

October 12-22—South Sudan
December 18-28—South Sudan
For further information visit
norrisferrychurch.org

Calendar

September-November— [Women's Bible Study](#)

September 18th—Connection Group Starts
November 13th—Orphan Sunday

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Jesus?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to “Nothing But The Blood”:

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Come to us, Lord
You reward those who earnestly, diligently seek You
I wanna see Your face, I wanna know Your way
Come to us, Lord

We want You more than this life
More than our way Your way is higher
Your thoughts are higher
We surrender here tonight

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Oh, precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow
No other fount I know
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

Oh, precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow
No other fount I know
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

I. Introduction

This week, in verses 5-10, we are told that truly knowing that Christ has been manifested in flesh is accompanied by a life of devotion and obedience. It is a fact that He has come, that He is the Son of God, that He is the savior, the light of the world. This descriptive truth requires more from us than simply intellectually knowing or acknowledging those facts. I am reminded that James told his readers the Devil knows these very facts first hand. Saving Faith calls and equips us to walk in the light as He is in the light. Both talking and walking in are acts of obedience. They are necessary for our complete joy and assurance in salvation. A line from the Newsboys song *We Believe* resonates with our need to have an authentic faith: *“So, let our faith be more than anthems, greater than the songs we sing...”*

II. God is Light (1 John 1:5)

Let's now look a verse 5-10, beginning with verse 5. This verse begins John's confession and testimony about Christ. John's description reveals the perfect righteous nature of God. *“This is the message we have heard from Him and now proclaim to you, that God is light...”* The use of the term “light” has several implications, but is best understood as a metaphor relating to God's holiness, purity and perfect righteousness. *“...in Him is no darkness at all.”*

John is using this imagery of light and darkness to explain the clear contrast between God's righteousness and sin's unrighteousness. In nature all men are able to understand that the absence of light results in darkness and the presence of even a little light dispels the greatest darkness.

John also uses these same descriptive terms contrasting light and darkness in the Gospel that bears his name: *“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”* (John 1:4-5)

Of course, we can all think about God's brilliance, His radiance, His Glory as it is spoken of in many places throughout Scripture. These images are also apart of John's declaration that God is light, but John's main point it centered in on God's perfect and holy righteousness. Interestingly, this revelation of God's nature and attributes came directly from Jesus Himself. *“This is the message we have heard from him...”*

Our salvation is also described in terms that are related to light. (1 Peter 2:9) God called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Thessalonians 5:5) Paul describes the believer in similar terms. We are children of light; we do not belong to the night nor to darkness.

The verses in this passage deal with this great truth and the need for us to pursue a holy walk that matches our salvation talk. As one preacher said it best, ***“The demands of the Gospel are not our immediate perfection, but they are about our immediate direction.”***

Our past studies of both Romans & Galatians were helpful in understanding that the old nature strives against the new nature. The old nature desires to sin and tempts us to sin. (Galatians 5:16-26 and Romans 8:12-13) but God in Christ has made us more than survivors. He has made us conquerors. Sin shall no longer be your master.

III. When We Try To Cover Our Sins, We Walk In Darkness (1 John 1:6, 8, 10)

Walking in the darkness of sin always causes us to stumble. There is no grey middle ground when it comes to sin. For the believer, sin does not break our relationship with God. That has been established by God through His grace. It does, however, strain and sometimes temporarily break our intimate fellowship with our heavenly Father.

This is John's point in these verses - the necessity of our walk matching our talk. In other words, to confess that Jesus Christ is the son of God and has been manifested in the flesh and then to live a life of sinful unrighteousness is not a life that can have real fellowship with God. It is not a life marked by an obedience of faith. The assurance we need is found in living, "*walking*," in the light. That means our living will, and must, back up what we are saying.

So how do Christians try to cover their sins? There are some general ways; blaming others, blaming circumstances or simply justifying our sins as not being sinful. But John points out the number one way we try to cover up our sin, we lie. We want other Christians to think we are beyond sin, or that we are walking in the light when we may be struggling in darkness. When the truth of our sinfulness is covered by the sin of telling a lie, we not only lie to others, but we risk lying to ourselves and so deceive ourselves. See how John states it in verse 8, "*we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.*" Once we begin to lie to others about our sins, we soon begin to believe the lies we've been telling. Now this is not to say that every Christian is deeply involved in sin and lying to keep those dark secrets from others. It is to say, however, that we must be careful with sin and that we are all capable and susceptible to the deception of sin. At our best spiritual moment we are one glance, one thought, one action from being snared in sin. If not brought to light our spiritual decline can become worse.

If we say we are without sin, John says makes God out to be a liar and we have no place in our lives for His word. (v.10)

We need to take care if we only apply God's Word to others and not first to our own hearts. In these verses we see that a believer starts walking toward the darkness when they lie about their condition of their fellowship, (v.6), when they deny the reality of their continued struggle with sin, (v. 8), and ultimately to claim to be sinless in their "walk" (v.10).

If not for the hope offered in verses 7 and 9, we would all be buried in our sins and under the weight of self-justifying lies and accusation of God.

So where do we start when we come to the realization of our spiritual condition? We start by being honest. Honest with others, honest with ourselves, and honest with God.

IV. When We Confess our Sins, God Responds In Grace (1 John 1:7, 9)

We will study later that Christ is given two titles by John, advocate and propitiation, which are tied to the great 'IF' and prescription for personal confession of sin in verse 7. "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*"

Because of the truth found in verse 7, we are able to receive forgiveness of sins. It is an all-inclusive cleansing, past sins, present sins and by His great grace, future sins. Because God is light, He sees everything. He cannot look past sin. Because He is also love, he has made away for the forgiveness of sin, the blood of His precious Son, our Lord Jesus.

Forgiveness is in some measure appropriated to our lives through repentance and confession.

Biblical, true, confession is not praying a great prayer or bargaining with God, saying we are really sorry. We've all done that, "Lord if you'll get me out of this, I promise I will never do this or that again." That's not confession. True confession is naming sin, agreeing with God's definition of sin, and committing to war with sin. The deadly "little" sins are what pile up and get us - sins like envy, strife, lust, hatred and deceit. We are unable to truly confess if we continue to justify our sins. Did you notice where confession and forgiveness are dealt with? *"If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship with him."* Confession simply means being honest with ourselves and with God. It means we bring our sins out into the light, before God who already knows all about us. Confession begins in a contrite and humble heart that responds to the Word of God and the conviction of His Spirit. Its more than admitting sin, it's judging sin and facing it as against God's holiness and righteousness. True confession arises and flows from a grateful heart that desires to please and live for God's glory.

Notice how our great God is at the ready to act. When we confess our sins, God promises to forgive us. He not only promises to forgive us, but he also promises to cleanse us and restore us. Have you ever taken a piece of old, well-constructed furniture that has lost its beauty through neglect, stains and wear and gone through the process to restore the piece to its former beauty? This is what God is able to do with a contrite heart that confesses sin, asks for forgiveness, and desires fellowship with Him. Do you see the two precious and powerful attributes of God in response to our true confession? God is faithful and just. His actions toward us are on behalf of the obedience of His Son at Calvary. We receive perfect, complete forgiveness, cleansing that removes all stain of sin and our needed fellowship is completely restored.

***"O the blood, Crimson love, Price of life's demand, Shameful sin,
Placed on him, The hope of every man, O the blood of Jesus washes me"***

We need to get this wonderful truth and grace in the right order. Do we confess our sins to get off the spiritual hook with God or is our motive the desire to be right before God in light of our salvation and His glorious grace? It must be the latter. Yes, God forgives sin. Yes, the blood of Jesus has eternally secured His people, and yes, God is faithful and just to restore us. But, we must never tempt the Lord and approach sin as an easy fix. The provision for forgiveness and restoration was at the price of the life of God's only son, Jesus Christ. The right perspective is everything when it comes to God's justice and our sin. Of course we all know by experience that we do sin, that's what the thrust of this passage teaches us, but while we cannot be completely sinless, we should be before the Lord in prayer, Scripture study and church fellowship to help us to sin less.

One final thought. Looking forward to our rich study of 1 John gives us hope that not only can we confess our sins and receive forgiveness and restoration, but we can also conquer our sins in a holy pursuit of God with all effort.

Sermon Questions

What Does it Say?

1. According to verse 5 what truth did Jesus teach to the disciples about God?
2. In verse 6 what does John say about the relationship between fellowship with God and a lifestyle of walking in darkness? Is it possible to have fellowship with God and walk in darkness?
3. According to verse 7 if we walk in the light as God is in the light, what are the results in our relationships? As a result of walking in the light with whom do we have fellowship?
4. In verse 8 what does John say about the person who says he has no sin in his life?
5. What provision does John point to in verse 9 to deal with individual sins that Christians commit? What are two actions that Jesus does in response to confession of sins according to verse 9?
6. In verse 10 what does John say about people who say they have not sinned?

Sermon Questions

What Does it Mean?

1. In verse 5 John says that one of the essential qualities of God is that he is light. What does it mean that God is light? Read John 1:4-5 and John 3:19-20 to help answer this question.
2. In verse 6 what does the word “fellowship” mean? What does it mean to walk in darkness (Psalm 1:1)? Why is it not possible to have fellowship with God and walk in darkness?
3. If you think of verse 7 as an extension of verse 6 how would you have expected verse 7 to end —If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with ___? How does walking in the light as God is in the light produce fellowship with one another?

4. In verse 7 John says that those who walk in the light as God is in the light have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses them from all sin. If they are walking in the light, why do they need to be cleansed from all sin? What does it mean for Christians to be cleansed from sins? Does it mean forgiven from sins that they commit? Does it mean they are healed from the damaging effects of sin in their lives? Does it mean they are delivered from the power of sin in their lives? Does it mean their fellowship with the God of light is restored?
5. Who is the “we” in John’s statement in verse 8—“If we say we have no sin” Is he talking about Christians here or non-believers?
6. Again in verse 9, is John primarily addressing these words to Christians or unbelievers? What does it mean to confess our sins—confess them to whom?
7. We can understand that God is faithful to forgive us our sins, but how is he just to forgive us our sins (Romans 3:21-26)?
8. How does Jesus response to confession go beyond forgiveness according to verse 9? This is similar to what is said in verse 7—“cleanse us from all unrighteousness”. What is the depth of meaning of being cleansed from all unrighteousness? Read Psalm 51:9-12 to help you think about this question.
9. How is verse 8 different from verse 10? How is saying “we have no sin” different from saying “we have not sinned”?

Sermon Questions

How Does it Apply?

1. Are you practicing the process of confession/forgiveness/cleansing described in verse 9? What a precious gift this is for Christians!! Please review Psalm 51:4 and 51:9-12 to see what confession and cleansing look like in real life. Discuss with your group what part of this process you need to pay more attention to.
2. I think we probably have a pretty good idea of what walking in darkness looks like, but what does walking in the light as he is in the light look like? Is it just avoiding a lifestyle of sin? What are some important elements of walking in the light? Look at Psalm 1 and 1 John 4:7 for some ideas.

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying times of fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in 1 John to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I would encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you lead your groups! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

Model Answers

What does it say?

1. God is light and in him is no darkness at all.
2. John says in verse 6 that walking in a lifestyle of darkness makes it impossible to be in fellowship with God.
3. Walking in the light as he is in the light brings fellowship with God and with each other.
4. He is deceiving himself if he says he has no sin.
5. John points to the act of confession as a means to seek forgiveness of sins through Jesus. He forgives sins and he cleanses from all unrighteousness.
6. Those who say they have not sinned make God out to be a liar, and his word is not in them.

What does it mean?

1. God is light means that God is morally pure and with no trace of evil. John 3:19 uses this definition of light. It says, "And this is the judgment; the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil."
2. Fellowship means a close, comfortable relationship with others based upon some common thing that is shared with them. To "walk" in darkness means to live a lifestyle that enjoys and participates in the darkness or sinful practices. You cannot live a lifestyle of sinful practices and be in close, comfortable relationship with God who is light (morally pure and without sin).
3. We would probably expect that verse 7 would say if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with God. (We certainly do have fellowship with God and with his Son, Jesus as stated in verse 3) However verse 7 jumps one step ahead and says we have fellowship with each other. If I have fellowship with God and with his Son, Jesus and you have that same kind of fellowship with God and his Son, Jesus, we will automatically have fellowship with each other based upon our sharing in the same relationship with God.
4. Walking in the light does not mean that Christians live sinless lives. It means that they are seeking to daily live a morally pure life. When we sin we need God's forgiveness for those sins and we need to experience a restored relationship with the God of light. Being cleansed from all sins probably means forgiveness of sins, healing from the damaging effects of sin, being delivered from the power of sin in our lives, and restoration of fellowship with the God of light.
5. He is talking to Christians. If we (Christians who are believers) say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
6. In verse 9 John is addressing these words to Christians. To confess sins is to admit our sins and agree with God that they are sins against him. It also means we have a desire to forsake them (repentance). Confession is primarily made by the Christian to God in prayer (as in David's prayer in Psalm 51:4).
7. God is both faithful and just to forgive us our sins. He is just to forgive our sins only because Jesus paid the penalty for our sins by taking them upon himself. He was able to pay the penalty because he had committed no sins of his own. This is explained in Romans 3:21-26.
8. In Psalm 51 David is confessing his sin with Bathsheba and asking for forgiveness and cleansing. You can hear him asking for forgiveness in verse 9 and asking for cleansing in verses 10-12.
9. You could say you do not now have sin in your life (vs.8) because of your advanced experience with Jesus. If you do say you have no sin, you are deceiving yourself. The person in verse 10 takes it a step further and says he has not (ever) sinned. That statement makes God out to be a liar. He says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.