



Stepping into the Light

1 John 1:5-2:2

INTRODUCTION

If you have ever gone on a cave tour, you know what it is to be in total darkness. On one of our family vacations, we visited Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. At one point during our underground tour, the guide had us all sit down on some benches. Then he flipped a switch and we were engulfed in total darkness. I could not even see my hand in front of my face.

Throughout the Bible, the image of darkness and light is used to illustrate sin and righteousness. Darkness stands for everything that is evil and false. Light stands for all that is good, true, and holy.

God Himself is often depicted in terms of light. There are many references to God's presence being accompanied with overwhelming light. When Paul had his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, he was struck down by a blinding light. The light of God symbolizes His purity and holiness.

The Apostle John used the image of light and darkness to talk about our relationship with Christ. He makes a distinction between walking in light and walking in darkness. A person who is walking in darkness is one controlled by the sinful nature. Their path is leading them away from God. A person who is walking in the light is one who is in relationship with Christ. Their path is leading them toward God.

The famous actor of the past, John Wayne, had a distinctive walk. You could recognize him just by the way he walked. Each of us has our own distinctive walk. The way that we walk through life marks us either as a follower of Christ, or as a follower of our sinful nature. We cannot hide our walk, but we can change it, by putting our faith in Christ.

Study 1: 1 John 1:5-7

John clearly makes a distinction between following Christ and following the world.

1. Where did John get the information that he was passing on?

2. John makes a definitive statement about God.
 - a. What is John stressing when he says that God is light?

 - b. How does John further clarify who God is?

 - c. Why is this understanding of God important?

3. John makes a distinction between a person's words and actions.
 - a. What does it mean to claim to have fellowship with God?

 - b. What does it mean to walk in darkness?

 - c. Why are these two things incompatible?

4. John turns his focus on walking in the light.
 - a. What does it mean to walk in the light?

 - b. Who is the source of the light?

 - c. How does walking in the light affect our relationship with others?

 - d. What are the spiritual implications of walking in the light?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. It has often been said that a person's actions speak louder than their words. What is the truth behind this saying?

2. What is the relationship between light and darkness? Which is stronger?

3. What is the impact of the light of Christ coming into the world? Consider John 3:19-21.

4. How would you describe the difference between walking in darkness and walking in the light?

5. What are the advantages of walking in light normally? Spiritually?

Study 2: 1 John 1:8-10

John turns from the theoretical to the practical as he addresses the normal experience of people.

1. What definitive statement does John make about our walk, in verse 8?

2. Why would a person claim to be without sin in their life?

3. John focuses on the power of forgiveness.
 - a. In what ways is Jesus the source of life?

 - b. What does it mean for Jesus to be the light of men?

4. John sets up a conflict our reality and God's holiness.
 - a. What does God expect us to do with our sin?

 - b. If we honestly come to God with our sin, what can we expect?

 - c. What is the broader impact of being honest before God?

5. John returns to the idea of denying our sin.
 - a. In what way do people justify their sin?

 - b. Whose standard is used to determine sin?

 - c. When our view and God's view conflict, who is right?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What are some reasons why a person would deny the reality of sin in their life?
2. How do people deceive themselves about their sin?
3. What are some of the barriers to confessing our sins to God? What holds us back from being totally honest?
4. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the penalty for all of our sins. (Consider Psalm 103:8-14) If Jesus has already paid for our sins, what is the point of confession?
5. In what ways is unconfessed sin a barrier to our fellowship with other people and with God?
6. In what ways is honest confession a liberating experience?

Study 3: 1 John 2:1-2

John's concern for his people is that they would actively choose to live a life of obedience.

1. What does John mean when he states that he writing so that they do not sin? How does this relate to the previous verses?

2. John quickly includes a statement about a person sinning.

a. What is implied by this quick addition?

b. What hope is offered for those who do sin?

3. What does it mean that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins?

4. In what ways is Jesus' death on the cross the atoning sacrifice for the world's sins?

5. In what ways is John combining personal obedience with God's grace?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What is the difference between walking in sin and falling into sin?

2. What are ways that you can safeguard your life from falling into sin? Consider Psalm 119:9-16.

3. How can knowing that Jesus is our defender relieve us from unnecessary anxiety?

4. Once we put our faith in Christ, the ultimate sin question is resolved. How can knowing this help us to avoid sin? Consider Romans 8:1-4.

5. Take some time to reflect upon the fact that Jesus took the burden of your sins on His shoulders long before you understood what He had done. Consider Romans 5:6-8.

Study 4: Colossians 1:9-14

Paul approached the important concept of walking in the light of Christ from a practical perspective. As he opened his letter to the Colossians, he challenged them to live a life worthy of the Lord.

1. Paul is letting the Colossians in on the content of his prayer for them.

a. What was Paul's motivation for praying for the Colossians? Look back at verses 3-8.

b. How intent was Paul in praying for them?

c. What was the specific focus of his prayer for them?

2. Paul adds a long, run on sentence to elaborate on what he hopes will be the outcome of his prayers.

a. How does Paul make his prayer practical?

b. What are the three main things Paul is asking on behalf of the Colossians?

c. What does he expect to be the outcome of these requests in the lives of the Colossians?

d. What is the ultimate motivation for the Colossians to live a life worthy of the Lord?

3. How does Paul describe what God has done for us in Christ?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. In what way is Paul an example for us of how we should be praying for one another? How is this different from the way we normally pray for others?
2. How can a greater knowledge of God's will help us to live a life worthy of Christ?
3. What does bearing fruit for Christ look like in your life?
4. In what ways can you grow in your knowledge of God?
5. In what areas of your life do you need to develop spiritual endurance and patience?
6. What does it mean to you to be qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints?
7. In what ways has Christ rescued you from the dominion of darkness?