

## Walking in Light (1 John 1:5-10)

I worked at summer camps during my college years. It was a great time for very little pay. One of the things about working at camp was there were always games. One of my favorite games was “capture the flag.” How many of you have played it? The rules are simple: You split into two teams. Then you hide a flag or some object. For us, it was a brightly colored green or orange bandana. The goal was to bring the other team’s flag back to your side without getting caught. If you got caught you went to ‘jail’ until someone rescued you. I am a competitive person, but I get ultra-competitive with “capture the flag.”

We played this every week with different age groups. We would play right after dinner with our 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders. It was so much fun. Kids would think they were sneaky and try to hide behind objects that wouldn’t hide them. Your bright yellow shirt doesn’t blend with that tree. Also, the bandana didn’t hide as well with the sun still up. The light outside made trying to be sneaky hard. Although we had a blast with the junior campers, the real fun was when we had high school camp. We would play after chapel and cabin talks. We would get started at 9/9:30. By then it was pitch black. You could hide behind trees without being seen. The flag blended into the bush or tree or wherever we placed it. Since where we played had the main building in the middle of the playing field. Although it was dark outside some building lights stayed on. Safety thing or something. This revealed some of the sneakiness of the teens as they ran by there. I would often hide at the back of the building as I saw someone come into the light, I would jump out revealing where I was, and watch them panic about where to run. Being in the light revealed who I was.

Living in light shows who you are as a believer. Today we will look at what it means to live honestly so we can be in the light. Let’s pray.

Today will be looking at 1 John 1:5-10. This passage isn't difficult to understand passages of Scripture. That doesn't mean it does hold powerful truths for us today. John is writing to people he has a connection with. He has seen some false teaching sneaking into what they believe, and he writes with compassion and truth to help them.

(Read verse 5). We could stop now and be done. God is light and in him no darkness. John uses the metaphor of light and darkness here. In fact, it is one of his favorite metaphors. He often used it in his gospel. The first chapter of John is all about how Jesus is light, and the light shall not be overcome with darkness. John 8:12- Jesus he is the light of the world and everyone who follows him will have the light of life.

We understand the light metaphor. Light exposes the hidden things. Light has a sense of purity and holiness with it. Light drives back darkness. In light, there can't be darkness. Even a light makes a difference it is why lots of kids use night lights and if you're my daughter you have 3 different kinds of night lights. It contrasts with darkness which is most times in Scripture having to deal with sin or being drawn to sinful things. God is light and in him, there is no darkness is a simple yet powerful metaphor.

Since God is light how do we walk in the light to be in fellowship with him? How do we rid ourselves of darkness? How do we live in this sort of purity? John tells us it is by walking in the light. John in this passage contrasts walking in light and darkness. Truth or deception? Honesty or dishonesty? We are called to be a person of radical integrity.

John writes of about 3 claims we could make about this sort of life. (Read verse 6) If are walking with Jesus there must be evidence of it. You cannot go on doing the same thing in the same ways. To use another John term, you must bear good fruit. The NT talks about this often.

James talks about faith without works is dead. Your relationship with Jesus leads to you living like him. It is the evidence of the fruit of spirit within you. Following Jesus means something. It is not just something you checked off. In contrast, if nothing has changed it means you are not in the light. It means you don't have a relationship with him.

John gives us some evidence right in this passage of walking in the light. (Read verse 7) One is your fellowship with each other. Meaning you have a connection with someone. You aren't hiding but are in connection with another person. You are living honestly.

I worked in childcare and one of my classrooms was with preschoolers. 30 4-5 years old. Every day would have a snack. Most of the time it was a healthy snack but once every other month we would get chocolate chip cookies. At the center, there were lots of classrooms. This means would sometimes get our tray of cookies early. There is nothing like the smell of warm chocolate chip cookies. It is one of the most tempting things in the world. I don't even like sweets and if I smell warm cookies, it will take extreme forms of willpower to resist. So, our procedure was after rest time the kids would read with one of the teachers well the other set up snacks. I was setting up and all sudden the other teacher yelled have you seen Samantha? I begin to search around the classroom for Samantha and I found her behind the art shelf. I began to ask her why she was hiding over here when she turned around. She had crumbs down her chin and chocolate covering the corner of her mouth. My question became what happened? She replied, "They just looked so yummy." I said she could back to the circle, and she wouldn't have cookie later. Her honesty allowed us to continue to have a connection and she never again took a sweet without asking.

The other evidence John gives us of walking in the light is that we are being purified by Jesus's blood (read the end of verse 7). When we step into a relationship with God, we start

addressing the behaviors. We try not to lie or say bad words. We may change our entertainment habits. We go after sinful behaviors. Then we realize God isn't just after our behavior he is after our hearts. We might not steal the million dollars, but we start thinking about how we can get more money at the cost of others. How can I benefit from having million dollars? We realize we have greedy hearts. This is what this purification is about. It is what call sanctification. It is the ongoing process of looking like Jesus. When we walk in the light, it allows for this process.

Walking in the light means we change to be more like Jesus. It also means we admit to having sinned. This is the second claim John talks about (read verse 8). There is a danger we start to rationalize our sins. Saying it is just a mistake. I made an oopsie. I didn't sin. It is self-justification. "The men in my family just have tempers." On and on. How many of us have ever thought rather or not what we just did was a sin? That person did something crazy on the road, I called him a name, but I didn't cuss at him. Yes, I took a box of tissue home from work without asking but I 'work' at home a lot. When we fail to call sin, a sin we have fallen victim to what John is talking about.

The good news is that there is one of the greatest promises of Scripture in the next verse (Quote verse 9). Confess means to agree with God about what happened. If you stole, say you stole. If you lied, say you lied. Easy to understand hard sometimes to do. Here is the best part if you confess God forgives you! It isn't based on your righteousness it is based on Jesus's! He doesn't just forgive you he also purifies you. He cleanses you of the shame. He gets to the root.

Sidenote- This is more than a general confession that I have sinned against God and people. It is a specific confession. If you have troubling sensing as God has forgiven, you of sin confess specifically. God forgive me of lying becomes God forgive me for lying about stealing

cookies from Mr. Gordon. This will allow you to get the root which might be realizing that I don't trust you God to give me good things which that cleanses the process.

God expects life change. He expects us to deal with our sins and finally, he expects us to admit to being a sinner. The last claim here is saying haven't ever sinned.

(Read verse 10). This is like the last claim, but it is extreme. Some people don't only claim to have no sin but in fact, they have never sinned. All their mistakes were just mistakes. Errors. Mess-ups. Working things out. It is not a sin. I have not gone against what God has commanded. Who is even this God to call me a sinner?

Romans 3:23 states All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. You might not like it, but you must deal with its truth claim. If you don't believe it, you have called God a liar and you aren't one to walk in the light and connection with him. It is what the word of God says.

Thankfully, God didn't leave us in sin but sent Jesus to die for our sins. It is what we talked about earlier. He is faithful to forgive our sins if we confess. If we confess that is only by the blood of Jesus, we entered this covenant.

Walking in the light requires honesty about how we are living, and when and if we have sinned. Friends, we don't have to live in darkness. We don't have to live in hiddenness. We don't have to live in shame. Walking in light comes down to being honest with God so he can change us. The fact is we have sinned and probably will sin again. We need to be honest with this fact. Bringing it to him is about what walking in the light is all about. It has so many benefits: forgiveness, purification, and fellowship with others to name a few.

How is God calling you to take that next step into the light? Do you simply need to admit finally that you are a sinner in need of a savior? Do you need to finally trust him and make him

LORD? Or has there been a rationalization of sin in your life? Maybe not all sin but a particular sin. God is calling you to confess sin as sin today and give it to him so he can forgive it and purify you. Or is God calling you into walking in the light by having a connection with other people? To step out of hiding yourself and allow others in as this is the way of Jesus? I am going to give you a moment to talk with God about how you should respond. Remember walking in the light means we no longer have anything to do with darkness. Allow God to work within you. Let's pray.