

1 John – God is Love: Week One

What it Means to Have Fellowship

Day Three: Light vs. Darkness (deception vs. truth)

Let's begin our third day this week by refreshing our memory!

In Day One, we considered John's stated purpose for writing this letter. Do you remember what it was? John wants us to experience the "koinonia" fellowship that he had with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. And secondly, he wants us to know what it's like to be full of joy, because of our fellowship.

In Day Two, we considered the name that John used for Jesus in his letter – the "Word of Life". We learned that John could have chosen many different names for Jesus, but "Word of Life" was chosen. Perhaps one reason, was so that we would realize that Jesus and His Word can only be understood through spiritual eyes and ears. What our human mind can't understand, our spirit can discern. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14) The imperishable seed of the Word of God, is what has been planted in you and I when we were born again into a spirit- life, giving us the ability to comprehend, or discern spiritual things.

So, with two days under our belt – let's put on our spiritual eyes and ears – and hear the "Words of Life" for us today!

Light vs. Darkness – (deception vs. truth)

Read 1 John 1:5-10 and 2:1-11

"Now we are informed it is a holy fellowship for it is exercised only in "the light". The blissful fellowship which the apostle was speaking of is radically different from anything known to natural man. The joy which it produces is greatly superior to any experienced by the senses. It is not carnal, but wholly spiritual". (Arthur Pink's Exposition of 1st John)

"Jesus declared 'I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness". John 12:46

Charles Spurgeon said "the concept (of God Himself being light) makes us feel how inconceivable the personal glory of the Lord must be. If light itself is but His garment and veil (Psalm 104:2), what must be the blazing splendor of His own essential being?"

God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

What comes to mind when you think of light and darkness?

When I think of light, I think about the sun. Waking up in the morning, one of the best feelings in the world (especially in Michigan!), is when the sunshine is streaming in through your bedroom window, and you know it is going to be a beautifully sunny day. Life is good in the light.

But on the other hand, when I think about the dark, it is an entirely different emotion. With darkness my mind goes to creepy crawly things... anything that hides until dark and comes out at night just to scare us! I am not a night person. Unless it means that I can sit by a fire or with my loved ones and wrap up in a blanket. Darkness is where people hide their sins. Darkness is the color of evil.

Today we are going to look at some contrasts. John loves to give us the polar opposites. There are no shades of light or dark. There are no greys or pale colors. In First John there is only light or dark. There is also truth vs. lies, or righteousness vs. sin.

If we say “....” or, the one who says “....” statements

Look back at today's passage, 1 John 1:5-10 and 2:1-11 and fill in the blanks.

1. (v.6) **If we say** we have fellowship with Him (God) and yet _____
_____ we lie and do not practice the truth.
2. (v.8) **If we say** that we have no sin _____
and the truth is not in us.
3. (v. 10) **If we say** that we have not sinned _____
_____ is not in us.
4. (2:4) **The one who says** “I have come to know Him” and does not _____
_____ is a _____ and the truth is not _____.
5. (2:6) **The one who says** he “abides in Him” ought himself _____
_____ as He walked.
6. (2:9) **The one who says** he is in the Light and yet _____
is in the darkness until now.

John is pretty direct, isn't he? I wonder if - as the Holy Spirit was inspiring him to write these things – he ever prayed and said, “Lord, are you sure you want me to say this? It sounds a bit harsh!” He isn't giving us any room to make excuses or to find the politically correct way of saying something. John says we are either God's people or not.

Jesus said the same thing.

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”
Matthew 6:24

Let's go back and read the “If you say” and the “one who says” statements again..

Which of these statements can you relate to the most? Maybe you've said these statements in the past. Maybe you know someone who says things like this. Maybe you find yourself questioning how these statements can be true. Circle the number of each statement that you have experienced.

Yes, I know that these statements are hard. Truth can be hard to hear!

The problem we all face, is that God's holy righteous standard is so much higher than the standard of the world we live in. We know that the tv shows, the movies, the comments on social media, the conversations we hear, the restaurant/bar/entertainment venues, etc. dwell in the darkness. Occasionally we hear something that is good, and God-honoring. But it is not the norm. So, if we involve ourselves in the pollution of the world, if we “walk in darkness”, then we need to understand, John explains, that it is **impossible to have fellowship with the Father in that case.**

But you could argue, didn't Jesus eat with publicans and sinners? Didn't Jesus go to the areas where he could reach the outcasts of society? Yes He did. The difference was that, wherever Jesus went, He went in obedience to the Father, and to honor God. It's a matter of whose side you are on, the popular culture's side or God's. Are we walking in the darkness or walking in the Light?

The words LIE and LIAR are also difficult for me to hear. I have been taught to be more diplomatic. I would prefer that John would say, for example, “If we say we have fellowship with God and yet walk in darkness” I wish he had said, “It's okay, just try a little harder next time.” Or – “don't worry, you will get better as you get older.” But John just tells it like it is. He tells us the truth.

Look at these belief statements. Underline the ones that best describe your current belief in your heart before you read the words in 1st John.

- I believe I can walk in darkness and still have fellowship with God.
- I believe it's impossible for me to ever really have fellowship with God.
- I believe it is impossible NOT to walk in darkness while we live on this earth.
- I believe God wants me to have fellowship with Him.
- I believe I am still walking in darkness.
- I believe I am walking in the Light.

The 4th statement is true, and either the 5th or 6th statement is true. The others are false. I get the feeling that there were people in John's church (people – not building) that were getting it wrong. They were saying the right things, but John realized that they were missing out on true fellowship. They were just going through the motions, without experiencing the fullness of joy that God wanted them to have. They were walking in darkness and didn't know it.

If we walk like the rest of the world – in the dark, conforming to the popular culture around us, yet think that we can also have “koinonia” fellowship with God, we are simply wrong. Just going to church on Sunday morning will not give us the type of fellowship and joy that John had with His Heavenly Father. If we truly want that fellowship, God has to be Number One in our lives. Think about this: The Creator of the Universe wants to have fellowship with you. But fellowship with our holy God means we may have to surrender some things. Are you willing to do that?

This would be a good time to take a few minutes and pray. Here is a sample prayer:

“Lord, I want to really, truly, experience “koinonia” fellowship with you. Please show me the areas in my life that are obstacles in my path to you. I know that there are times that I still walk in the darkness. I ask you now to set me free from any and all areas of sin so that I can walk in the Light with you. I want to experience fullness of joy. I want to experience Your Love, Your Peace, more of You, Jesus. (Confess any specific sins and ask the Holy Spirit to help you resist the temptation to sin). Amen

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

This is such a great promise! Let's come daily to the Lord with a humble heart and ask Him to forgive us of our sins so that we leave darkness behind and step into the Light of Life.

Answer these questions:

1. (v.7) Who else will we have fellowship with when we are walking in the Light?

2. (v.8) What causes us to deceive ourselves? _____

3. (v.10) How do we make God into a liar? _____

4. (2:4) If I don't keep His commandments, but still say that I have come to know Him, what am I? _____

5. (2:9) If I say that I am in the Light and yet I hate my (Christian brother or sister), where am I? _____

John tells us that although we live in a sin-diseased body, we can still learn to walk in the Light. Sin and darkness should not be the norm for us. When we fall into sin (which will happen due to the snares and traps set by the enemy), the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from all sin. So, immediately repent and confess your sin. Then get back up, dust yourself off, and walk back into the Light of Fellowship!

Read these words of the Savior, at the Last Supper, with your spiritual eyes and ears.

"I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one (fellowship) even as We are."

*"While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now I come to You; and these things **I speak** in the world so that they may have **My joy made full in themselves**. I have given them **Your word**; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. **Sanctify them** in the truth; **Your word** is truth.... The glory which You have given Me I have given to them **that they may be one just as We are one**. I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity so that the world may know that You sent Me and **loved them even as You have loved me**." John 17:11-17, 22-23*