



MERCY HILL

Walking in the Light

Session 2

1 John 1:5-10

Main Point

Fellowship with God is characterized by a life of holiness.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Describe a time in your life when you tried to navigate darkness without turning on a light. What was the result?

Why do we not only need light physically, but also spiritually?

We may be able to somewhat function in the dark, but we'll face problems—even dangers—when we don't use the light available to us. While this is true in our physical lives, it's even truer in our spiritual lives.

The idea of walking in the light is a biblical one and paints a good picture of what God wants for you and I. In this study from 1 John 1, we'll see that God is light, and we cannot be in right fellowship with Him when we are living in darkness.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Ask a volunteer to read 1 John 1:5-6.

What did John mean when he wrote that God is light and there is no darkness in Him? Was John being literal or metaphorical?

John used the metaphors of light and dark to contrast God's righteousness with sinfulness. The two cannot exist together. Absolutely no evil or sin can ever be related to God's character or actions.

What inconsistency did John address in verse 6?

What does it mean to walk in darkness? How is walking in darkness while also having fellowship with God impossible?

What evidence do you see that a large percentage of people in our culture live in darkness and need the light of Jesus? How can you help dispel the darkness in our culture?

Ask a volunteer to read 1 John 1:7.

What does it mean to walk in the light? Does this mean you will never sin? Explain.

A relationship with God is characterized by continual fellowship with Him. This is a lifelong journey—away from a life controlled by sin and into a life controlled by God’s Spirit. Walking in the light is the process of holiness where we work with God to become more like Him.

Based on this verse, what are two results of walking in the light?

How does walking in the light produce fellowship among believers?

What is the relationship between walking in the light and the forgiveness of sin?

Jesus’ death on the cross not only cleanses believers from sin at conversion (justification), but it also keeps on cleansing them throughout their lives (sanctification). Believers who continue to walk in the light of Christ will experience a progressive sanctification as the stains of sin are removed and their character is changed into Christ’s likeness.

Ask a volunteer to read 1 John 1:8-10.

How were some believers deceiving themselves, according to verse 8?

To deny the presence of sin in our lives is to deny the truth of the gospel. The remedy for our sin problem begins with acknowledging our sin problem.

If God has forgiven all of our sins because of Christ’s death, why do we need to confess our sins?

What encouragement did John give to believers who struggle with sin?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Based on today’s passage, how would you explain to an unbeliever the differences between walking with God and walking without God?

What specific, ongoing sins are keeping you from walking in the light?

What are some ways your Bible study group can encourage one another to walk in the light?

Pray

As you lead the group in prayer, ask God to reveal the truth of His Word to those living in darkness, and for the courage to confess to God what He reveals. Pray that the group's fellowship with God would deepen.

Commentary

1 John 1:5-10

-1:5 John had divine guidance in the message he related. As an apostle he actually lived alongside the Son of God. Darkness had crept in among the readers whom John addressed. To dispel it John testified to Him who is light. God sent the light of the world, Jesus (Jn 8:12).

-1:6 The words, "if we say" may indicate that John was paraphrasing false views that needed to be exposed and corrected. To walk in darkness is to persist in sin. Since God is light (v. 5), His people are called and enabled to live by the light of His wisdom, truth, and love.

-1:7 To walk in the light is to live consistent with God's commands and character. Fellowship, the shared knowledge of God's light and love, is one of life's deepest satisfactions. With the phrase the blood of Jesus, John identified the focal point of Christ's saving work in the cross.

-1:8 In both Scripture and church history, people have excused their wrongful deeds by claiming to be right with God. John diagnosed an ancient and recurrent human tendency.

-1:9 Confessing our sins does not mean a shallow reciting of misdeeds. It means owning up to wrongdoing and bringing our lives into line with God's goodness and commands. God can forgive and cleanse us from terrible transgressions.

-1:10 Since God is light and there is no darkness in Him (v. 5), to claim to be without sin is to claim to be on par with God, but God says there is no one like Him (Isa 45:18). If His word is not in us, the saving message of Christ has not taken root. There may be surface knowledge of Christian religion, but the heart has not been transformed.