

SESSION 2 – WEEK OF 24 JAN 2021

CAN SINNERS LIKE US WALK IN GOD’S LIGHT?

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 1:5-2:2

Theme:

The theme for this session is on the question of whether sinners (like us) can actually walk in God’s light given that light and darkness cannot co-exist at the same time. The questions underlying this theme are: what does it mean to walk in the light and is it possible to walk in the light every day, every minute of our life? We should not need to “hide” our wrongdoings and sins because of Jesus and what He has done for us. Yet we do have to deal with our sins and face up to them – on one extreme, it may fill us with condemnation, self-loathing and the impression that we are not worthy. On the other extreme, we might deny our sin, rationalise it even. There there is that middle ground where we enter into indifference

Key Verse:

“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, purifies us from all sin.” (1John 1:7)

Read 1 John 1:5-2:2

Core Questions for Discussion

(If your group meets fortnightly, combine Core Questions of two sessions and choose one Further Question from either session.)

1. What was the message that was heard and declared by John (v.5)? What does 1 John refer to when it uses the term “light”?

2. In verses 6 to 2:2, John sets out a set of 3 conditional indicators that start with “if we claim...” that highlights how we can know we have fellowship with God. Can you identify these indicators and the key message of how we can walk in the light?

“As the aged Apostle began to write he was living over again his first happy experiences with the Savior... and John tells us that we may enter into the same close partnership with the Father and the Son. But no impurity or insincerity is permissible to those who enter that fellowship. Our one aim should be to maintain such a walk with God that the union with God may be unimpaired. If there are still sins of ignorance, the blood of Jesus will continue to remove them. Sin differs from sins, as the root from the fruit. God does not only forgive, He cleanses. He is faithful to His promises and just to His Son. Notice the ifs of these verses and in 1 Jn 2:1; they are a compendium of the blessed life.” F.B. Meyer's 'Through the Bible' Commentary on 1 John 1:1-10
<<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/fbm/1-john-1.html>>.

3. In verses 6-7, what type of person is John describing by their “walk”? Are these persons “Christians” in reality, or only in name?

4. At vv.8-10, John highlights an attitude towards sin that reveals the reality of our fellowship with God. What does our denial or confession of sin reveal about our attitude and relationship with God?

The Bible teaches that there are traits that God's people have that show they are in fact God's people and do truly belong to Christ — truly born again, truly united with Jesus. These traits are how we can know that our sins were fully paid for and that our forgiveness is fully secured by the death of Jesus.

And one of those traits is how we deal with ongoing sinning in our lives... "Well, if you are a true child of God, and if your sins are truly and fully paid for — covered, canceled — what will you feel? What will your thoughts and actions be toward your ongoing sinning? What trait will mark you?" Here are two biblical answers.

Colossians 3:3: "You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." That's a description of wonderful, completed salvation. We're already home. Then comes Colossians 3:5: "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire." So, one trait of those whose sins are fully paid for is that we make war on our sinning. That's the mark of those whose sins are fully canceled: We make war on our sinning. We put them to death. But you can't do that if you don't admit — that is, confess — that you have any.

The second trait is confession (1 John 1:9). You have to confess your sins in order to make war on them. If you don't think you have any, if you're not confessing, "Yes, I have sinned and I'm sorry," you won't make war. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

So, confessing our sin is the agreement with God that we have sin and it must be fought and killed. If we don't confess this truth, we're living, John says, in an illusion. We're lying, we're deceived, we're calling God a deceiver, and we're not saved. If we believe we have no sin and that it doesn't need to be killed, we're living in an illusion, not in salvation. So, confession of sin is not the basis of our forgiveness; it is one of the traits that show we are truly in Christ, where all our sins are covered by his blood. "Ask John Piper: Why Do We Confess If Our Sins Are Already Forgiven?"

<<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/why-do-we-confess-if-our-sins-are-already-forgiven>>

5. At 2:1-2, we can be assured of God's grace and provision when we do sin. What does Christ, speaking on your defence, and His atoning sacrifice mean to you and the way you deal with day-to-day sins that you may commit?

Sacrifice & Atonement: How does sacrifice and atonement in the Bible work?

Read the BibleProject explanation on how the death of Christ was able to atone for our sins.
<<https://bibleproject.com/learn/sacrifice-atonement/>>

Further Questions for Discussion

(Optional question for discussion if time permits. Do allocate adequate time for prayer and fellowship.)

6. *If You Have Time ...*

- a. Reflecting on the discussions above on sin, confession and the assurance of forgiveness, how might I answer the question that is the title for this session: can a sinner like me walk in God's light? (At the next session we discuss the question: "Are we living in Him and in the light?")

- b. In our previous session, we discussed about deep fellowship - yet why do we feel uncomfortable confessing our sins to one another (such as in our small groups)?

Suggestions for Prayer

7. We could pray for:

- a. Ourselves: Do you need to confess your sins to God? Do we need to make or renew our commitment to walk in the light - are there habits or attitudes that we need to renounce, repent of, turn away from?

- b. Others: Do we friends or family that need to hear the words that they can have fellowship with God and with other Christians? Can we pray for opportunities to share this message of what Christ has done for them, His atoning sacrifice, the forgiveness of sin, which opens the way to fellowship with God?