

SESSION 3 – WEEK OF 31 JAN 2021

ARE WE LIVING IN HIM AND IN THE LIGHT?

SCRIPTURE: 1JOHN 2:3-2:11

Theme:

In the previous two sessions, we explored John's emphasis that our claim to know Christ must be evidenced by our conduct, to manifest the reality of our faith. We discussed about what it might mean to have fellowship with man and with God. We also considered that genuine fellowship with God would cause us to oppose sin (2:1-2). In the scripture passage for this week, John affirms the requirement to obey God and he relates obedience to one command in particular: love for our brothers and sisters (2:7-11). The theme for this session is on the question of whether we are living in Christ Jesus and in the light – do we love our brothers and sisters?

Key Verse:

"This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. ... Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble." (1John 2.5b-6, 10)

Read 1 John 2:3-2:11

Core Questions for Discussion

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

1. According to John, how can we know whether we truly know Christ and what consequence is there for those who obey (vv.3-6)?
 - The first aspect of whether we truly know Christ is whether or not we obey the commands of Christ.
 - We can see John's emphasis on the demonstration or conduct in our lives to evidence whether we know God.
 - The second aspect of evidence that we know Christ is that we live in Christ and if we live in Christ, we must live (or walk) as Christ did.
 - What flows from knowing Christ is obedience. Obedience to Christ's commands is evidence that we love God and are in union with Christ.
 - Grammatically speaking, it is possible for the words "love for God" or "God's love" (as suggested in the footnote to v. 5) to have one of two meanings:
 - (a) God's love for us, which is made complete when it moves us to obedience;
 - (b) our love for God, which is made complete when it is demonstrated by obedience.
 - The evidence that we live in Christ is that we live (or walk) like Christ.

2. What does it mean for us, in practical terms, to live (or walk) as Jesus did (v.6)?

- In previous weeks, we discussed what it might look like for us to walk in the light. This question seeks a similar reflection and a foundation for application.

- Some practical aspects to consider are:

Prayer: Jesus spent much time in prayer with His Father.

Obedience: Jesus was entirely committed to obeying His Father's will.

Sacrifice: Jesus was willing to sacrifice His life on the cross.

- There may be other aspects we might voice: Jesus' compassion, His method of discipling the disciples, etc.

- Perhaps one aspect that might be discussed is our desire to be transformed more and more into Christlikeness. Our church theme for 2021 is: "Jesus, Our Light In The Darkness; A Lamp In Every Home". How might we express in practical terms this theme for our church in 2021?

Church theme 2021:

Jesus, Our Light In The Darkness;
A Lamp In Every Home

This theme flows from a conviction that Jesus is reminding us to follow Him closely so that we will not walk in darkness, but experience the light of His presence in our lives.

"I am the light of the world", Jesus says, "if you follow me, you will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of life" (John 8:12).

The reflection questions discussed were:

- a. What are some specific occasions where Jesus has been your light in the darkness? Are there areas of your life where you need to experience Jesus as your light in the year ahead?
- b. How do you envisage Jesus being a lamp in every home? What do you think this might mean for you and your household?

You can revisit the Leader's guide here:

<http://www.brmc.org.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/BRMC-Small-Group-Study-Guide_-3_10Jan2021_Leaders-final.pdf>

3. In verses 7-11, John focuses on one of the commands. How can this command be both old and new (vv. 7-8)?

- The biblical command to love is old, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev 19:18).

- The new command is "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34). This command is new for two reasons.

First, it is new because of those whom we are to love: "love one another" - that is, other Christians.

Second, it is new in its standard: "as I have loved you" - that is as Christ has loved us. Christ has become our standard to follow. His sacrificial death on the cross is now the measure of our love for one another.

- As we shall consider in later weeks, in 1 John 3:16, John declares, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers". The measure of our love, the standard of our conduct is Christ.

4. Why would love for our brother rather than love for God serve as a test of being in the light (vv. 9-11)?

- Love for our brother is the evidence of our love for God.
- This is clear from these verses: "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness." (v.9) "Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble." (v.10)
- This is a theme that John will repeat again in later passages. Evidence of love for others reflects living in the light, while hatred for our brother or sister reflects living in darkness.

Do you know your love language? How do you give and receive love?

We can learn to give and receive love in more meaningful ways by identifying each other's primary love language, what it means, and how we can use it to connect with each other.

Everyone gives and receives love differently and these differences can be identified and understood. The 5 Love Languages® developed by Dr. Gary Chapman presents a simple method of identifying preferences in how we receive love.

You can take a simple free test here to discover your love language and encourage a loved one to take the test to discover their love language <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/>

We can then practice giving or expressing our love based on their preferred love language.

Further Questions for Discussion

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

5. *If You Have Time ...*

- a. Given the context of this week's scripture passage, what particular area of your life would you like to bring into the light? What barriers might you face?

- Perhaps you might steer the group into the focus and theme for this week: love for brother and sister in Christ. Perhaps an area that we often find difficult bringing into the light is unforgiveness.

- b. How does this passage encourage you to obey Christ and love other members of his body? How might

Asking Questions to Develop Intimacy

How well do you know others in your group? Are you able to share intimate thoughts or burdens with each other?

The NYTimes 36 Questions are 36 questions designed to help two strangers develop feelings of closeness and intimacy. They may or may not lead to individuals "falling in love," but the research has shown that spending time asking and listening to each other is effective in developing intimacy.

You can read the N Y Times article here <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/09/style/no-37-big-wedding-or-small.html>

You can use this website as a platform to explore the questions, one-by-one <http://36questionsinlove.com/>

you get to know others in your group better? (see the 36 Questions)

Suggestions for Prayer

6. We could pray for:

- a. **Ourselves:** Would you take this opportunity to confess any hatred you may have for your brother or sister in Christ. Perhaps you could make a start towards forgiving them.

Perhaps we could reflect on and accept the promise in 1 John 1:9:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

And indeed, we have the assurance in 1 John 2:1b-2:

“But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

- Please be encouraged to seek pastoral support concerning unforgiveness.



WE CARE
NEED PRAYER, PASTORAL
OR PRACTICAL SUPPORT?
CONNECT WITH US VIA OUR
PASTORAL CARE HELPLINE

- e-mail: wecare@brmc.org.sg
- 6592 4011 (Line 1)
- 6592 4012 (Line 2)



- b. **Others:** Would you take this opportunity to pray for those whom you might hate or those who hate you. Pray for opportunities to reconcile or seek a mediator to help in the process of reconciliation. Pray for the spirit of peace in our Lord to abide with you and your brother or sister.