

2. Light vs. darkness

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The dictionary defines that light is electromagnetic radiation with a wavelength that is visible to the eye which we know as visible light, or in a technical or scientific context, electromagnetic radiation of any wavelength.

The three basic dimensions of light are:

Intensity: Brightness of the light

Frequency: The color of the light

Polarization: Angle of vibration

Light can travel faster than anything we have produced at the speed of 186,000 miles/second.

The precise nature of light is one of the unanswered questions of modern physics. Scientists can produce light, analyze light and use light, but no one knows how it came into existence. But those who believe in God know how. God made it into existence by a simple command: *"Let there be light."*

Then we also have to think about darkness. Darkness is not opposite of light. Rather it is absence of light. Apostle John declares that God is light. It reveals many facets about the person of God. Although it doesn't cover the whole spectrum of the attributes of God, it says a great deal about Him.

I see three points from this:

- 1) Light speaks of the glory, the radiance, the beauty and the wonders of God.
- 2) Light is self-revealing. Light can be seen, but it diffuses itself. It illuminates the darkness. That is what the Lord our God does in our lives. He reveals our sins, flaws and impurity to us.
- 3) Light speaks of the purity and holiness of God.

A. GOD IS LIGHT

1 John 1:5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Apostle John illustrates his theme by using the contrast between light and darkness: God is light and sin is darkness. Actually, you can see that v5, 7 and 9 are when we walk with God. But v6, 8 and 10 are when we don't walk with God.

But there is another contrast here too – the contrast between saying and doing. Three times John writes, "If we say". It is clear that our Christian life is to amount to more than mere "talk". We must also "walk" what we believe. But if we are living in sin, then our lives will contradict what our lips are saying, making us hypocrites.

Some of you may wonder, "Why do you keep preaching to us Christians about sin? After all, sin in the life of a Christian is different from sin in the life of an unsaved person." Yes, you are absolutely right. It is different. It's much worse!

Our hypocritical and contradicting lives will give opportunities to some non-believers to come up with an excuse not to follow God or simply blaspheme Him.

The New Testament calls the Christian life a “walk.” This walk begins with a step of faith when we trust Christ as our Savior. But salvation is not the end – it’s only the beginning – of spiritual life.

B. WALKING IN DARKNESS WITHOUT TRUTH

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

Sin is not simply outward disobedience. It is also inner rebellion and transgression of the Law of God. Sin is refusal to submit to the Law of God. Lawlessness is the very essence of sin. If a believer decides to live a lawless life, how can he possibly walk in fellowship with God?

Darkness and light cannot exist in the same place. If we are walking in the light, the darkness has to go. If we are holding to sin, then the light must go. There is no middle ground, no vague “gray” area, where sin is concerned.

How do Christians try to cover up their sins? By telling lies! First, we tell lies to others. We want our Christian friends to think we are “spiritual,” so we lie about our lives and try to make a favorable impression on them. We want them to think that we are walking in the light, though in reality we are walking in the darkness.

A backslidden husband, for example, who is walking in spiritual darkness, out of fellowship with God, can never enjoy full fellowship with his Christian wife, who is walking in the light. In a superficial way, the couple can have companionship. But true spiritual fellowship is impossible. This inability to share spiritual experiences causes many personal problems in homes and between members of local churches.

C. DECEIVING OURSELVES

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Once a person begins to lie to others to justify and cover up his sins, he will sooner or later convince himself that everything is fine in his relationship to the Lord.

A classic example of this is King David from 2 Sam. 11-12. First David lusted after Bathsheba. Then he actually committed adultery. Instead of openly admitting what he had done, he tried to cover his sin. He tried to deceive Bathsheba’s husband, made him drunk, and had him killed. He lied to himself and tried to carry on his royal duties as usual for a year. When the Prophet Nathan, confronted him with a similar hypothetical situation, David condemned the other man, though he felt no condemnation at all for himself. Once we begin to lie to others, it may not be long before we actually believe our own lie.

Many will say “I make mistakes” or “I’m not perfect” or “I’m only human,” but usually they say such things to excuse or defend. This is different from knowing and admitting “I am a sinner.”

To say that we have no sin puts us in a dangerous place, because God’s grace and mercy is only extended to sinners, not to “those who make mistakes” or “I’m only human” or “no one is perfect” people, but sinners. We need to realize the victory and forgiveness that comes from saying, “I am a sinner, but I have a Savior who cleanses me from all sin.”

There is only one truth. It is God's truth that does not negotiate, nor alter, nor depend on a person's opinion. Anything or anyone against God's truth that is mentioned in the Bible is against the truth.

D. MAKING GOD A LIAR

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

But the spiritual decline becomes still worse. We have made ourselves liars. Now we try to make God a liar! We contradict His Word, which says that "all have sinned," and we maintain that we are exceptions to the rule. We apply God's Word to others but not to ourselves. We sit through church services or Bible studies and are not touched by the Bible's teachings.

Believers who have reached this low level are usually highly critical of other Christians, but they strongly resist applying the Word to their own lives. Some of you might be the very ones I am talking about. You need to repent.

E. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND OTHERS

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

This means to walk in a generally obedient life, without harboring known sin or resisting the conviction of the Holy Spirit on a particular point. We know that on this side of eternity, sinless perfection is not possible. Yet we can still sin less because we follow God closely.

I asked you to underline "we have fellowship with one another". This leads to an important idea. If we do not have fellowship with one another in God, then one party or both parties are not walking in the light. Two Christians who are in right relationship with God will also naturally be in right relationship with each other.

As we walk in the light we also enjoy the continual cleansing of Jesus. We need a continual cleansing because the Bible says we continually sin and fall short of the glory of God. Even though Christians have been cleansed in an important general sense, our "feet" need cleaning as it mentioned in John 13.

The Greek verb form John used in "cleanses us from all sin" is in the present tense, not in the future tense. We can do more than merely hope we will one day be cleansed. Because of what Jesus did on the cross for me, I can be cleansed today.

We can't come to fellowship with God through philosophical speculation, or intellectual education, or drugs, or entertainment, or scientific investigation. We can only come to fellowship with God by dealing with our sin problem through the blood of Jesus.

F. HE IS FAITHFUL TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS

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

If you have not memorize this verse before, please memorize it today. The Holy Spirit will speak to you through this verse, when you sin against God. Then you come to Him and repent and turn away from that sin, the Lord will forgive you from that sin.

Here are three more verses to remember:

Micah 7:19 He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.

Psalm 103:9-12 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Lamentations 3:22-23 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

Though sin is present and damaging, it need not remain a hindrance to our relationship with God - we may find complete cleansing as we confess our sins.

What does it mean to confess our sins? The word 'confess' is from the Greek verb 'homologeō', meaning "to say the same thing." 'Logeō' means "to say" and homo means "the same." We are to say the same thing that God says. When God in His Word says that the thing we did is sin, we are to get over on God's side and look at it. And we are to say, "You are right, Lord, I say the same thing that You say. It is sin." That is what it means to confess our sins. That is one of the greatest needs in the church, more than helping the poor – even though it is very important. This is God's way for a Christian to deal with sin in his own life.

When we have confessed our sin, it means that we have turned from that sin. It means that we have said the same thing which God has said. Sin is a terrible thing. God hates it and now we hate it. But confession restores us to our Father.

Just because we confess our sins to the Lord, it doesn't mean that we are going to go scott free and avoid the consequences of our sins. Most likely the Lord is going to use the consequence to teach us not to do that again.

If a person says, "I know what I am doing is a sin. But I will ask God to forgive me later, because He is a loving God and He will." If that is the mindset some of you have, you are treading a very dangerous territory. How can you abuse the precious blood of Jesus that was shed for your eternal life in such a careless way? Not only that, but also how do you know you are truly saved when you are trying to manipulate God's grace in that way? Don't even go there.

A couple of things I must mention before we make applications:

1) We can find two types of sins we accumulate in our lives: the sin of commission which means the sins we commit and the sin of omission which means it becomes our sin because we don't do the things we ought to do. Neither one is good. If we walk in the light of God, we don't have to have either one of them.

2) When we walk into a dark room, we don't pick up a baseball bat and start to swing at darkness. We simply reach over the light switch and let the light come in. When we face the darkness of sin, if we try to fight against it with our own strength, we fail miserably. But if we depend on the Lord and let Him guide us and strengthen us, we don't have to sin each time we get tempted.

G. APPLICATIONS

- 1) We must be honest with ourselves, honest with others, and honest with God.
- 2) Our hypocritical and contradicting lives will give opportunities to some non-believers to come up with an excuse not to follow God or simply blaspheme Him.

It is my desire and prayer that in 2007 all of us may live in the light and have an intimate and continuing relationship with our Father in heaven because we keep short accounts with Him. Jesus is coming back soon for us. Be ready and be watchful!