

## Lesson 3: “God Is Light”

## 1 John 1:5-7

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*1 John 1:5-7 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

John began his message, in verses 1-4, announcing that he desires to proclaim to all the message that God has given him through His Son, Jesus. In his artistic and aesthetic way of communicating, John begins by giving us the cursory but profound announcement of “God is light.” He tells us that this message was heard directly through Jesus, and now he is passing it on to us. And then he adds for clarification, “and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

First of all, let’s be clear that “God is light” is a beautiful metaphor, and not the reality of who God is. When you see a beam of light, that is not God. God is not the sun, or the stars. God created them. John is not trying to pass on some metaphysical spiritual gobbly-gook that we are to worship light. And John’s clarification of God having no darkness at all helps us to understand this as a metaphor.

He means for us to understand that God is goodness, and truth and purity and righteousness – perfection in every moral sense, with no hint or trace of immorality unkindness or covert motivations.

**LIGHT AS A METAPHOR**

I see three key implications in John’s pronouncement that “God is light.”

**1. POWER** (“in Him there is no darkness at all”)

- ✓ **Light preceded creation.** Light preceded day one of creation (“let there be light”) and day four of creation (sun and stars). And God, who is LIGHT, preceded creation.
- ✓ **Light defines darkness.** It is not the opposite of darkness, for darkness is the absence of light – not the other way around. Light is the power source. We don’t “turn on” darkness. Darkness is when we turn off the light. True both physically and spiritually. God defines spiritual darkness – the absence of God.
- ✓ **Light cannot be subdivided.** Every other substance can be subdivided into smaller parts, including the air we breathe and the water we drink (both were created by LIGHT). Light is the same at any “size.” Neither can God be subdivided – He is complete unity in Himself.
- ✓ **Light cannot be moved.** You can move water, air and every other substance, for it has substance. But you can’t “move” light. It permeates all. In this sense, light cannot be contained, just as God has no physical substance and is “unshakable” – unmoving in His perfection and not able to be contained.
- ✓ **Light permeates all.** Turn on the light and it fills wherever it is – even reaching into shadows. God is omnipresent. You can’t hide from God.
- ✓ **Light is the ultimate speed.** Scientists have determined that nothing can travel faster than the speed of light. Nothing can exceed the power and momentum of light – 186,000+ miles per second. And nothing is “faster” than God – you can’t outrun Him. He is all-powerful.
- ✓ **At the speed of Light, time “stands still.”** Einstein’s theory of relativity, now acknowledged by most as fact, is that as you approach the speed of light, time diminishes. The theory of relativity reasons that time “stands still” at the speed of light. That is, if it were possible to travel at the speed of light, there would be no perceptible passing of time between the time of departing and the time of arriving, despite the distance travelled. God is timeless – outside of time and eternal. As you “approach” Him, eternity takes on greater importance, and things of the earth, locked in time, take on less importance.
- ✓ **Light brings forth life.** Physically, the photosynthesis of light produces life on the earth. Spiritually, the Light of God brings forth new life and refurbishes life.

- ✓ **Light in the Bible is associated with POWER.** Examples: creation of the earth, the rainbow in the sky, flashes on Mt. Sinai, Shekinah glory of God, Elijah's defeat of Baal with blazing fire, angelic appearance to the shepherds, light from the heavens at the baptism of Jesus, Jesus in blazing light at the conversion of Paul and John's vision of heaven full of light references.

## 2. ILLUMINATION ("walk in the light")

- ✓ **Light is what guides us physically.** From lights on an airplane runway, to lighthouses on a rocky shore, to streetlights on a dark pathway we know that it is light that guides our way.
- ✓ **Light of God's Word guides us spiritually.**

***Psalms 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

And when Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah to come to Galilee he likened Him to "light.":

***Isaiah 9:2** The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.*

- ✓ **Light of God's presence guides us spiritually.** It is the indwelling Holy Spirit that has been given the ministry of guiding God's people.

***John 16:13** But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth.*

We also know that our guardian angels protect and thus guide us.

***Hebrews 1:14** Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*

So, we have spiritual guidance by the light of the (1) Word of God, (2) Holy Spirit and (3) angels.

- ✓ **Light reveals.** Just as a bright light into a corner reveals the dust and dirt that darkness hides, the bright light of God shining in our life will reveal the sin and rebellion and demand that it depart. If in God "there is no darkness at all," then so it must be in the true follower of God – sin will be revealed and must be dispelled.
- ✓ **The Light of God in heaven will be our only needed illumination.**

***Revelation 22:5** And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them.*

## 3. PURITY ("cleanses us from all sin")

- ✓ **Light best indicates the perfect purity of God.** The absolute perfection of God in every aspect is at the heart of his pronouncement. The clarification that "In Him is no darkness at all" seems to make this implication of purity all the more clear. And then he further clarifies by saying "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses from all sin." So it seems that the primary implication is the holiness of God as opposed to the sin of mankind.
- ✓ **Light is the purity of all colors.** Scientifically, light is the purity of all the colors of the seen and unseen spectrum. All the colors combined do not produce black, as our non-informed rational minds might expect, but rather the white of pure light. God is all-in-all.
- ✓ **Light cannot be purified.** It is perfectly pure in and of itself, just as is God.
- ✓ **Light cannot be contaminated.** It can be blocked, or diffused, but it cannot mix it with some contaminate to dirty it. You can contaminate any other substance – air, water, and the like, but not light. Likewise, God cannot be contaminated. He cannot sin or even be tempted to sin. (James 1:13)
- ✓ **Light is a mystery as to what exactly it is.** Is it particles? Yes. Is it a wave? Yes. Is in pure energy? Yes. Is it a mystery? – absolutely. And so is God a mystery unable to be defined or explained.
- ✓ **Light is not really seen, but allows us to see.** We don't really "see" light – we just know that we are able to see because of it. We might see a light source in the darkness, but once we are bathed in light we don't "see" the light, but just its effect. In the same way spiritually, we don't "see" God, but only His

amazing effects on our life. God is the purity of light in that all that is touched by God is made better – purified in some sense.

## THE CHALLENGE TO PURITY

Having described the absolute moral purity of our holy, perfect God in the metaphor of LIGHT, John goes on to challenge each Christian to walk in that purity. When he says “if we say we have fellowship with Him” it is another way of saying we are Christians who know God in relationship. I trust that most all of us here today would say that “we have fellowship with Him” because we are Christians.

“But walk in darkness” means, yet live our life with choices that are in direct opposition to His holiness. Now we all commit sins – we acknowledge that, but this is not to what John is speaking. He is speaking of a life that at its core is impure – perhaps godly on Sundays but living for self and the world the rest of the week – to use a metaphor, “walking in darkness.” For this person, their profession of fellowship with God is a lie, says John. Just as light and darkness cannot coexist, neither can fellowship with God (light) and fellowship with sin (darkness). This person would not only be lying to others, he would be lying to himself, thinking he was having fellowship with God while living a life of selfishness and disregard for the purity of God’s ways.

## WALKING IN THE LIGHT

If a ship is lost on the ocean in the darkness of night – it must head for any light it sees. If you are lost in dark tunnel, but see a glimmer of light – head for it. The presence of light gives hope and direction.

One in three people are said to have a form of S.A.D., which stands for “Seasonal Affective Disorder.” This is when the winter months, when there is less light, gets you down and causes a depression of spirit. This is a true phenomenon. It has been proven that lack of light, or not “walking in the light” enough can cause depression and lack of hope. The remedy for many is “light therapy.”

It has been shown that rats put in water to swim for their lives last much longer in the light than in the dark. In tests, rats lasted about 6 hours in the dark before they gave up and drowned. In the light they lasted up to fifteen hours. The point is that being in the light gave them more hope to survive. (Sorry rat lovers, don’t blame me – I didn’t do the experiment.)

Spiritually speaking the same is true, and John says it this way:

**1 John 1:7** *If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

Translation of the metaphor: If we live our life in the purity of God’s ways, just as He lives in that purity of perfect morality, we will find ourselves having meaningful spiritual interchange with other believers, since the blood sacrifice of Christ on the cross will be cleansing us from our sin and removing the barrier of fellowship it caused by sin.

So – follow the light! Read the truth of God’s Word and let it guide you into pure living. The Word of God is LIGHT.

**Ephesians 5:25b-26** *{Christ} gave Himself up for [the Church] that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.*

**Psalms 119:11** *Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.*

Did you know that by reading and treasuring the Word of God you will sin less? Wow! You had better start that program of reading through the New Testament we have started at Oaks this year. There is a guarantee to guide you into pure living.

Coming to church and hearing the Word of God preached is also a way to “follow the light.”

**Romans 10:17** *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*

Did you know that your faith will grow as you come to church and hear the word of Christ spoken? This too is “walking in the light.”

But just right living – following the moral teachings of God – is “walking in the light.” Honestly, integrity, love of others, godly choices – all this is “walking in the light.” Remember, the “light” is God. He is LIGHT.

So to walk in the LIGHT, is to walk in the ways of God and with God. And when we do this, what is the promise? - we will have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from all sin.

And so what if we fail to walk in God’s ways and we therefore “walk in the darkness?” the obvious conclusion is that we will not have fellowship with God and others and the blood of Jesus will NOT cleanse our sin – we will be left to flounder in spiritual darkness.

### **FINAL HELPFUL ACROSTIC**

In my studies I found this helpful acrostic on LIGHT. I leave you with this to ponder.

**L Life** – the Light of God brings fresh meaning and reality to life

**I Inspires** – the Light of God inspires us with warmth, encouragement and vision

**G Guides** – the Light of God guides us through the darkness of this world

**H Hope** – the Light of God gives us hope through the dark times

**T Truth** - the Light of God leads us into truth

**MAY WE EVER CHOOSE TO WALK IN THE LIGHT!**