

Week #2

Fellowship with God (1 John 1:1–2:2)

READ the Scripture Passage

Chapter 1

The Incarnation of the Word of Life

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.

Light and Darkness, Sin and Forgiveness

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 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, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

Chapter 2

1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Testimony

- John begins his letter telling us about the most amazing thing he has ever heard, seen, and touched. What is it? Who is it? _____

- In verse 1 John 1:3, John tells us why he is sharing his testimony about Jesus. What is the reason he tells us this? _____
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How can we discern whether we are truly "walking in the light" or "walking in darkness"?

(We are going to look at a lot of scripture because we need to know God's truth and the address to live for him.)

1. Examine Your Relationship with God

- Walking in the Light Means:
 - Living in fellowship with God, acknowledging His holiness ("God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all").
 - Regularly spending time in prayer, worship, and Scripture to align your heart with God's will.
 - Being honest with God about your sin, confessing it, and seeking His forgiveness.

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."

- Walking in Darkness Means:
 - Living as though sin doesn't matter or denying its presence in your life. (1 John 1:8, 10)

1 John 1:8, 10

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

"If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us."

- Avoiding or neglecting time with God, leading to spiritual disconnection.
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2. Evaluate Your Actions and Attitudes

- Walking in the Light Means:
 - Obedience to God's Word. (John 14:15)

John 14:15

"If you love me, keep my commands."

- Demonstrating love, kindness, and humility in your interactions with others. (1 John 2:10; Galatians 5:22-23)

1 John 2:10

"Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble."

Galatians 5:22-23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

- Pursuing truth, integrity, and righteousness in daily life.
- Walking in Darkness Means:
 - Living in ways that contradict God's truth, such as harboring hatred, bitterness, or deceit. (1 John 2:9)

1 John 2:9

"Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness."

- Habitually engaging in sinful behaviors without repentance. (Ephesians 5:8-11)

Ephesians 5:8-11

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."

3. Assess Your Relationships with Others

- Walking in the Light Means:
 - Having fellowship with other believers, marked by mutual encouragement and accountability. (1 John 1:7)

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, his Son, purifies us from all sin."

- Seeking reconciliation and forgiving others as Christ forgave you. (Colossians 3:13)

Colossians 3:13

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

- Walking in Darkness Means:
 - Avoiding accountability or isolating yourself from the body of Christ.
 - Allowing unresolved conflict, resentment, or division to persist in your relationships.
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4. Look for the Fruit of Transformation

- Walking in the Light Means:
 - Seeing evidence of spiritual growth, such as increased love for God, greater conviction over sin, and a desire to serve others. (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:22-23)

2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

Galatians 5:22-23

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

- Walking in Darkness Means:
 - A lack of growth or change, with persistent habits of sin dominating your life. (Matthew 7:17-20)

Matthew 7:17-20

"Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them."

5. Rely on the Holy Spirit for Discernment

- Ask for Guidance:
 - Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of darkness in your life and help you walk in the light. (John 16:13)

John 16:13

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come."

- Listen to Conviction:
 - Pay attention to the Spirit's prompting, which often comes as conviction over sin and a call to repentance.
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Walking in the light means living a life of faith, love, and obedience to God while being honest about sin and relying on Jesus' sacrifice for forgiveness. Walking in darkness, on the other hand, involves denying sin, rejecting truth, and living in a way that contradicts God's Word. The key to discernment lies in self-examination, guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit, and in aligning your life with God's truth and character. (Psalm 139:23-24)

Psalm 139:23-24

"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Questions for Discussion

1. **Testimony — A testimony is not the same as a biography.** In a biography, the focus is on your life story, showcasing how you are the hero of the narrative. In a testimony, the focus shifts entirely to how **Jesus** is the hero of your life story, transforming and redeeming every chapter of your life.
2. **1 John 1:4** says, “We write this to make our joy complete.” How does writing this testimony letter about Jesus make John’s “joy complete”...?
3. What stood out to you the most about walking in the light or walking in darkness...?