

Wednesday Night Yard Teaching Guide: 1 John 1:5–2:6

[1:5] This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. [6] If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice 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 cleanses us from all sin. [8] If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [9] If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [10] If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

[2:1] My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. [2] He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. [3] And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. [4] Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, [5] but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: [6] whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Main Idea

Having been cleansed by Jesus Christ, we walk in the light by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Outline

- I. God Is Light
 - A. This speaks of God’s holiness (compare 1 Tim 6:16)
 - B. The light of God’s holiness exposes our sinfulness (see John 3:19-21)
 - C. We are sinners (see 1:8, 10 in the present text); but the purpose of God’s word is to offer us the only medicine by which we can be healed
- II. Jesus Heals
 - A. Jesus is the atoning sacrifice on our behalf (see 1:7b, 2:2 in the present text)
 - B. Jesus is our righteousness (compare 1:9 with 2:1 in the present text)
 - C. Jesus is our advocate (see 2:1; compare Heb 7:25)
 - D. Jesus’ death and resurrection purchases for us healing and transformation. Receiving Christ’s healing involves being humbled by and convicted of sin, rejoicing in Christ’s forgiveness, and being transformed by grace

III. We Respond (by the Spirit)

- A. This text aims at a changed way of living (not merely a change in status before God)
- B. Through the cross, we gain fellowship with one another (see 1:7)
- C. Through the cross, we can confess our sins and receive pardon (1:9)
- D. Through the cross, we are empowered to keep God's commandments (2:3-6)
 - 1. This is not legalism.
 - 2. Rather, the love of God is perfected in us when we obey God (see 2:5).
 - 3. Compare 1 John 4:16-17. It is by God's abiding in us (through the Holy Spirit) that we are strengthened to follow in Christ's way.

Discussion Questions

Leaders, please be sure to spend time on questions 10 through 13, focusing especially on how Christ's sacrifice and the indwelling Holy Spirit shape our life as a community.

1. Where do you see sin in the world? Do you see sin in your immediate surroundings (family, friends, church, school, etc.)? Where do you see sin in yourself?
2. Does talk of sin make you uncomfortable? Why? When we are sick, healing is often preceded by pain (for example, in surgery). Does this metaphor help you to understand sin better?
3. How do you understand God's holiness? What does God's holiness make you think of? How do you respond to it?
4. What is the light of God's holiness exposing in your own heart (see John 3:19-21)? How does God's holiness help you to see your sin?
5. How does Jesus' death on the cross bring us back into fellowship with God?
6. If you are a perfectionist, or you care deeply about what others think of you, how does Jesus' righteousness matter for you?
7. How does it feel to know that Jesus is advocating for you right now before the Father? How might this knowledge help you in your daily life?
8. Have you come into the light of God's holiness and received healing? What was hard about this? Was this easy to do? Were particular promises from God's word helpful to you when you came to Christ?
9. Jesus' sacrifice is the foundation of a life of good works and it sustains a life of good works. Does this change the way you think about obedience to God? Does it make you more likely to joyfully obey, rather than obey out of duty?

10. What virtues or practices should characterize our fellowship with one another (see 1:7) if we know that our fellowship comes from Jesus' death on our behalf?
11. How does Jesus' death reframe the practice of confession? Generally speaking, what should we confess to God and to others? What is good about confessing to God and to one another? What is hard about confession?
12. Jesus' primary command in John's gospel and in 1 John is to *love one another*. How can your life group love one another better, and love others in The Yard?
13. The Holy Spirit indwells you (John 14:6) and by grace produces the fruit of obedience to God in you (Gal 5:22). How does the knowledge that God abides in you help you to follow Christ? (See, for instance, Phil 2:12-13.)