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Walking in the Light
I John 1:5-7

A desert nomad woke up in the middle of the night hungry. He lit a candle and began eating figs from a bowl beside his bed. He took a bite from one end and saw a worm wriggling its way out, so he tossed it out of the tent. He bit into a second fig and found another worm. He threw that one away also. Reasoning that he wouldn't have any fruit left to eat if this process continued, he bent over, blew out the candle and quickly ate all the remaining figs. Many of us prefer darkness and denial to the light of reality and life. We will deny the worms are there and keep on eating, thinking that will satisfy the hunger of their soul. Ignorance is not bliss as the worms of the world will eventually make us sick to their souls.

The day after we first moved into our home on C.C. Landon I was exhausted from unpacking. Nothing was in its normal place. In the morning I stumbled out of bed toward the bathroom, not bothering to turn on the light as it would hurt my tired eyes. My mouth was feeling like the bottom of a canary cage so I wanted to brush my teeth. On the counter I found the tube of toothpaste. I squeezed out some of the white paste on my toothbrush, ran a dribble of water on it, and began vigorously brushing. Immediately I learned the value of turning on the light, while simultaneously discovering what it tastes like to brush my teeth with Dessitin. Ignorance is not bliss. Certain things we cannot afford to be wrong about. We need to walk in the light of the bathroom to help us see the correct paste to clean our teeth. We need to walk in the light of God to help us see the truth that will light our way, and lead us to experience joy in our life.

Walking in the light is all about being real, genuine. Walking in the light is about relationship and partnership and fellowship and all that

brings joy. In the first three verses John has been telling us that Christianity is about a relationship with a very real Jesus. Satisfying joy, ought to be a normal part of the Christians life. So now John begins to explain what that looks like and how to get there.

Read with me I John 1:5-7 and as I read I want you to be asking yourself this question; "What is John telling me about how I can experience a joy filled life?" READ (I John 1:5-7)

The message John says in v.5 and this is a message that came from God and John wants to tell us all about it. The message is that God is light. John does not say God is "a" light. John does not say God is "the" light. John simply writes. God is light. God has decided to equate Himself with light in a powerful word picture. It does not mean that light is God. It doesn't work in reverse. It simply means that if we want to understand more about who God is then we would do well to observe what light is, what light does...then we will get some insight into who God is and what God accomplishes. God is light.

What do we know about light? Light is one of the most amazing things that God created. In Genesis we read that right after God created the heavens and the earth, God created "Light". As our opening story explained, **Light reveals**. It helps us see as it lights up the darkness. It is because of the light in this room that I can see you. If there were no light I would be able to hear you, but not see you. Darkness hides but light reveals. I was trying to pull out a sliver from a finger last week. I tried and tried to get it out with the tweezers but I couldn't see well enough to pull it out, I had to take the hand to a place where there was better light. Light reveals and helps us see things that may have been there all the time but we just couldn't see it until the light came on. When hiking through the Ape Caves I try to stay as close as I can to the lantern because it reveals the way. It exposes the low ceiling that I might bonk my head on. It reveals the cliffs I might fall off of. It shows the walls I might run into. Light reveals dangers for me to avoid. Light reveals the

worms in my fruit. Light reveals the Dessitin I've been trying to brush with.

Light is the standard. Just like truth. God has chosen light to be the speed limit of the universe. Something the physicists tell us is that light travels at a constant speed. $C=186,000$ miles per second. That enough to go $7\frac{1}{2}$ times around the world in one second (Diameter of world= $7,900$ miles, $2\pi R$ is circumference $24,800$ miles) Light establishes the speed limit of the universe. God decided that nothing would exceed the speed of light. We read in v.6 as John exchanges the word light with truth. No one dare violate the speed limit of light. No one dare exceed the speed limit of God's truth. God is light and He reveals the truth about our marriages. Darkness may whisper in our ear. Give it up, you are not having fun here. The grass is greener and more satisfying over there. Dump him. Dump her. God's light of truth says. You made a commitment before me, you stick with them no matter what and trust that I will pour a joy into your life. There are certain truths from God that may seem very rigid and unchangeable and unpleasant, but God is truth and when you choose to say, "even though I want violate God's speed limit of truth, I'm not going to" Then later on when the light opens your eyes, you will be so very grateful you followed the unchangeable truth of God. God is the absolute standard by which we measure all things.

Light is energy Light keeps us warm. Its presence comforts us as its absence causes us to fear. It consumes darkness but is never consumed by darkness. Light is made up of incredibly small energy packets called photons. Light is made up of so many small little photon light packets that a flashlight with fresh batteries will shoot out a million-trillion photons in one second. Of course all of these are traveling at speed of $186,000$ miles every second. God knew we human's would need an energy source in order to live, for food and warmth. So he solved this problem in one huge, slow burn, nuclear fusing ball we call the sun. But now how to get just the right energy here where his most precious

creation lives on the earth 93 million miles away? Package up a photon and send it hurling through space at 186,000 miles per second. It takes 500 seconds for light to get from the sun to the earth 8-1/2 minutes. But thankfully we only get 1/billionth of the photons emitted from the sun. Any more would fry God's precious planet and any less would leave it cold and desolate. God knew the perfect placement and perfect transfer system for energy and He created light. All we are and have comes from Him. Light is energy. God is the source of life itself. He knows what we need and how much we need and how to get it to us.

Now physicists take light a step further and tell us that anything traveling the speed of light does not age. Time literally stops at the speed of light. It's hard to believe, but thousands of experiments have rigorously confirmed that these energy photons do not age. Quantum physicist Brian Green states that at the speed of light time ceases to flow altogether. All the events of time are compressed into the present, an unending now. The laws of relativity have changed timeless existence from a theological claim to a physical reality. I certainly don't claim to understand how past, present and future can all exist simultaneously, but at the speed of light they actually do. There is One who created, God knew it all along what the physicists are just now beginning to understand. He is the One who stated: I was, I am and I will always be. I am the light of the world. (Adapted from *More than meets the eye* by Richard Swenson)

If God is light and by walking in the light we have fellowship and experience joy. Now if joy is to be the normal intended by-product of experiencing life with Jesus. Then why is it that so many Christians don't experience that joy? Why do so many Christians have lives trapped in fear? Why are so many Christians filled with sour-faces, critical words, harsh tones, arrogant exclusive expressions, bitter hearts, unforgiving attitudes. Why? Verse 6 exposes our problem, our need. "We say we have fellowship yet we are really walking in darkness. We lie. The root Greek word there you might recognize is Pseudo. We are deceptive phonies,

Posers who are trying to fake our way through playing some sort of “lets look religious” game. Its fake and its not working. Our spiritual lives are dull and boring and lifeless and we continue to plod along in darkness.

There is a difference between having a relationship with God and being in fellowship with Him. John is writing this book to believers who have a relationship with God. The answer to the problem is not to tell them how they can accept Jesus. They have a relationship, but John is saying you may not be experiencing the joy and satisfaction in your spiritual life because you do not have fellowship. A relationship with God is about accepting Him, that gets you into His family. Having fellowship is about experiencing Jesus. It is possible to have a relationship with God but not be walking in fellowship with God. Just as its possible to be related to your brothers and sisters or parents but not always be close and enjoy them as family. Joy comes not from being related to Jesus but joy comes from experiencing fellowship with Jesus. If we are related to Jesus and we say even more that we are in fellowship with him, but in reality we are walking in darkness...we are a pseudo Christian. We are just playing the religious game.

While light reveals and illuminates and penetrates even the tiniest crack and is essential to sight, darkness does not receive light. Darkness does not reflect light or radiate light. Darkness reveals nothing, exposes nothing, understands no spiritual truth and is empty of spiritual insight. Walking in the darkness is opposite of what we ought to be doing walking in the light, behaving and thinking and responding as we ought to.

Right now this room is filled with light. How would you go about getting rid of the light? Could you shovel out the light and pour in the darkness? No. Darkness is the absence of light. Any place that has no light defaults to darkness. To walk in darkness is to walk or live our life as if there is no God. Its possible to be a Christian and yet walk in darkness by turning the light of God off. When you turn off the light, darkness comes flooding in. The darkness happens instantly.

How do we do this? How do we turn off the light and begin to walk, or stumble in darkness? One way people do this is to stop coming to church. At church the word of God is preached. The Word of Truth, the bible, is one of the sources of light. It exposes truth in us. It penetrates and searches our hearts. When we stop coming to church the Word of God no longer has an opportunity to make us uncomfortable. Hebrews 10:25 says, "Don't give up assembling yourselves together as has become the habit of some. Make sure you gather together even more now that the day of the Lord is approaching." We can also turn out the light of God by simply ignoring the Bible. If you want darkness to flood into your life, stop reading the Bible. If you want the darkness to sweep into your life, never apply the truth of the word to your own life. Secretly hope someone else is listening and will change. But for yourself never think that the truth might apply to you. Remember those who walk in darkness are self-deceived, they are fakes, posers and pseudo Christians. Blame others and never examine yourself. Never admit you could possibly struggle or have a problem. When you are around other Christians always appear that you already have everything you need.

But if you walk in the light, you will examine yourself in the mirror of God's Word that reveals who we really are; II Cor 13:5 "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith." Ask yourself. Am I walking in the light? Our my actions and not and not just my words revealing whether or not I'm are walking in the light. What kind of Christian am I? Is my desire to see how holy I can get or is my desire to see how worldly I can get and still maintain family? Is my desire to live out as much of God's truth as I can or is my desire to see how much I can get away with. Am I driven to spend time with Jesus because I long too or because I have to. When my sin is clearly made evident to me, what do I do with it? Do I have a desire to totally give it up and turn from it, so do I finagle a way to keep holding on to most of my sin, or put it away for a while leaving open the option to bring it back when I desire. Am I more pure in my thought

now then I was six months ago? Am I easier to get along with then I was last year? Am I more kind to others? Compassionate? Giving? Forgiving? Am I less harsh? Less critical? Less arrogant? More sharing? Less controlling and demanding? Do I listen better? Am I more humble and approachable. One who is walking in the light will examine himself and is willing to be teachable by God word to change and refine and refresh us.

One might be tempted to read this and think that walking in the light is all about living a perfect life, absolutely sin-free and perfect. That is NOT what walking in the light means. V. 7 “if we walk in the light, not only will we have fellowship God and each other, the very blood of Jesus will cleanse us from all sin.” We will sin while we are walking in the light otherwise v.7 would make no sense to need Jesus cleansing forgiveness. To say we are sinless. To claim or even suggest that we are perfect or sinless is blasphemy. V.8 “if we say we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. V.10 if we say that we have not sinned we make Him a liar.” Instead of denying our sin, denying our imperfections, denying our mess-ups, denying our struggles acting like everything is fine and perfect...we are instead to confess our sin. That is what it means to walk in the light. We walk in the light not by finally becoming perfect, but by hating the sin we fall into and naming it as ugly before God, agreeing that sin is ugly and then intentionally working to turn away from that sin and “the blood of Jesus, His son cleanses us from all sin.”

Walking in the light is walking in reality. It is understanding who God is and who we really are. John warns us in v.7 don't claim to be sinless while your walking in the light, because perfection just doesn't happen. That fact should not cause us to throw up our hands and say, “Well if I can't do it then why bother trying...woo-hoo lets go sin so that grace can come on down.” No, this fact ought to draw us into humility, into vulnerability, into dependence, into reality and genuiness. This fact

out to draw us out of our need to play the religious game of look at me I'm always perfect and never struggle and never have any problems. This fact ought to cause a large number of us to heave a huge sigh of relief that we can be real and forgiven and loved and accepted. One of the most serious problems among Christians is that we never admit anything is ever going wrong, or that we ever struggle or have our faith challenged. Darkness hides and keeps it secret so that fears and deception slide in. Light exposes and reveals, then truth and freedom pours in. So we continue to walk in darkness.

To walk in the light is to walk in reality. It is to understand who God is. To walk in the light is not behaving perfectly but allowing the truth of God's word to be a mirror reflecting the areas that need to change, a light exposing and revealing areas that need changing and being humble and teachable enough to say. "Yes God your right, by your strength and mercy and grace and help I am going to change that part of me that is desperate need of changing.

v. 7 says that when we walk in the light fellowship is going to occur with one another. I take that to mean fellowship is both our vertical relationship with God and fellowship in our horizontal relationships with each other. So that when we are real and genuine and teachable as we walk in the light, we will become more humble, more approachable, less blaming of other, less demanding less critical and basically far more easy to live with. And we will become filled with God joy and the joy will flow out from us to others. Our words will become a blessing to others. Our facial expressions will spread joy. Our kind actions will be a gift from God.

So examine yourself. Am I walking in the light? Perhaps you've realized for the first time that you have a relationship with God but have never experienced fellowship. Perhaps you have been crippled by thinking that perfection is the only trail to walking in the light and instead of accepting God's forgiveness and grace when you mess up you

bludgeon yourself with guilt and then build an even higher fortress of acting religious. But now you are seeing that to walk in the light means you don't have to hide, don't have to defend or blame others. Don't have to look perfect even when you know your not. You can let it come to the light and confess it and deal with it before God only to discover that you are much easier to love when you are not hiding, and you are much easier to get along with when you are teachable. Get into the light. Get the light of God's Word into you.

God you know us so well. You know how easy it is for us to pretend. You know how accomplished hypocrites we are. You know how quickly we run toward self-deception. You know how much we want to appear honorable and righteous and good. Please give us your grace and resource and faith to live and walk differently. May we come to you, the light, not with any of our silly masks, but simply who we are with a desire to be with you and love the things you love and hate the things you hates. We want a new way of living, a new walk that is no longer pretending, but we desire to reclaim our rightful walk that lives in reality before you.