

Introduction

This week while I was taking a walk with my wife we passed by a home where some boys were playing football. Four of the boys had t-shirts on and the other four were shirtless. That is pretty common in pick-up games. Players need to quickly identify who their teammates are and their location.

In professional team sports, opposing teams wear contrasting uniforms. The NFL, NBA, MLB, and FIFA all require strong contrast. Traditionally, in the NFL, white was the home team jersey, and the opposing team had to wear a dark jersey. That has changed somewhat, and now the home team chooses what jersey they are going to wear, and the visiting team has to wear the opposite. The Kansas City Chiefs wear their red (dark) jerseys for home games, and the opposing team must wear white or a similar light color. In sports this was done for several reasons. First, it was so that players could instantly identify teammates. In split-second decisions, particularly for the quarterback, he needs to know where his players are and where the opposing defensive players are. The contrasting jerseys have also made it easier for officials to make accurate calls, and for fans and broadcasters to tell the teams apart.

What does this have to do with the book of 1st John? In this book John gave ways to quickly identify who are believers and who are not believers. Just as with sports teams, there were several reasons why he gives a contrast between believers and unbelievers. In the first message I gave several purposes for the writing of 1st John. In John 5:13 he wrote, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” What things did he write? He wrote twelve signs or characteristics of a true believer. He wanted people to be able to know if they were saved or not. A person could examine his life and quickly see if he was a believer.

(1 Jn 5:13) “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

In 1 John 3:10, he wrote, “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.” It should be obvious to everyone whether someone is a child of God or not. They are wearing contrasting jerseys. The players can identify one another. The world can also tell if someone is a Christian or not. These various characteristics make it obvious. There is a contrast between the life of a believer and the life of an unbeliever.

(1 Jn 3:10) “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.”

Assurance of salvation was just one of the purposes for John writing this book. Gnosticism and Docetism were prevalent and there was much false teaching being spread around. John wrote this to expose and refute these strange doctrines. In 1 Jn 2:26, he wrote, “These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.” John wanted believers to quickly identify the deceivers and their teachings so that they would not be deceived. The contrasting uniforms that believers and unbelievers wear keep believers from being deceived. They can instantly identify those that are on the opposing side.

(1 Jn 2:26) “These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”

Typically, when I write something, I use an outline, and I cover one thing at a time. If there are multiple topics, I finish the first topic before beginning the next topic. I am systematic and methodical. John keeps all of his objectives before us throughout the book. In every passage he covers different objectives at the same time. He multi-tasks in his unique style of writing.

Our passage today is 1 John 1:5-2:11. You will notice that in verse six and seven, he wrote about walking in darkness and walking in the Light. In verse eleven, he wrote that one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness. All of these verses are connected, and John contrasts walking in the Light and walking in darkness. John gives three primary differences between believers walking in the light and someone walking in darkness. The first contrast is in fellowship. The second contrast is sin. The third contrast is God’s commandments.

Contrasting Walks: Light and Darkness

1. Fellowship
2. Sin
3. God’s Commandments

(1 Jn 1:5–10) “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. {6} If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; {7} 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. {8} If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. {9} If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. {10} If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

(1 Jn 2:1-2) “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; {2} and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.”

(1 Jn 2:3-6) “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. {4} The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; {5} but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: {6} the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

(1 Jn 2:7-11) “Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. {8} On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining. {9} The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now. {10} The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. {11} But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

1. Fellowship (1 Jn 1:5-7)

John begins by saying that this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you. Jesus taught the disciples about walking in the Light. He taught them that He is the Light, and those that follow Him will have the Light of life, and will not walk in the darkness. He taught them that the Light refers to the righteousness and that darkness represents sin. He taught them that the those who follow Him will not walk in the darkness, or in sin. John is simply passing on Jesus' message to us about walking in the light.

(1 Jn 1:5) "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."

(Jn 8:12) "Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

John then gives the first contrast of walking in the light and walking in darkness. He wrote, "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." A condition of true fellowship is walking in the light. A condition for having fellowship with God is walking in the light. When we walk in the light, Jesus cleanses us from all sin with His blood, and we can walk with Him. We also have fellowship with one another when we walk in the light.

(1 Jn 1:6-7) "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; {7} 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.

On the other hand, those who walk in the darkness, those who walk in sin, do not have fellowship with God. They lie and do not practice the truth.

There are many people who are deceived today. They think that it is okay to do whatever they want during the week, and then show up on Sunday and get their religious duties over with. They may look okay to the world, but Jesus made it clear that you cannot walk in darkness and have fellowship with Him. The statistics on the condition of the church are sobering. Most church goers, including those in leadership roles, do not have a Biblical worldview. They do not know the truth, and they do not practice the truth. They walk in darkness.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 7. He said that not everyone who says to Jesus, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of the Father. Many will say to the Lord on the day of judgment, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" Listen to what Jesus is going to say to them on that day. "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." If we are going to have true fellowship with God, we must walk in the light. We cannot practice lawlessness. If we are walking with the Lord, we will be walking in the Light.

(Mt 7:21–23) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. {22} Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' {23} And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

There are many people today that believe they are good with God, but do not spend time fellowshiping with God. There are many that do not assemble together with the saints to worship God. They do not have fellowship with one another. God tells us that if we are walking in the light, we will have fellowship with one another. This is an important and relevant message for people to hear today.

Why did John write this? Remember he had many different purposes. First, he wanted the believers to know that a condition of fellowship with God is walking in the light. Second, he wanted to refute the teaching of the Gnostics that said you can live however you want in the flesh, because it will not affect your spiritual life. They said the spirit was holy and the flesh was evil, and they were not connected. The third purpose was John wanted believers to know if they were saved, and if they are saved, they will walk in the light and have fellowship with God, and one another.

2. Sin

The second contrast that John writes about is sin. Those who walk in the light have been cleansed from all sin. How is a person cleansed from sin? We are cleansed by believing in Jesus. When we put our trust in Jesus, and His payment for our sin, we are cleansed from our sin. Notice that John said that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from ALL sin. All of our sins, past, present, and future have been paid for. It was a one-time sacrifice for all the sins of the world. There is nothing in your life or my life that He has not forgiven. When we believe and put our trust in Jesus, He forgives us and cleanses us from all sin.

(1 Jn 1:7) “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.”

In John 8, after Jesus taught that He is the Light, He said that they will die in their sins, for unless they believe that Jesus is the Messiah, they will die in their sins. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, but we have to believe in Jesus to receive the forgiveness of our sins.

(Jn 8:24) “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

Next, John wrote, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. Those who walk in darkness say that they have no sin. They are deceiving themselves, and the truth is not in them. Part of walking in the light is acknowledging and confessing our sins to God. If we deny that we have sin, we are deceived, and the truth is not in us.

(1 Jn 1:8) “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

In verse ten, John repeats this, except this time he put it in the past tense, saying, “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.” The truth is that all of us have sinned. Isaiah wrote that all of us like sheep have gone astray. Paul wrote, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The Word of God clearly tells us that we have all sinned. If we deny that we have sinned, we make Jesus a liar, and His word is not in us.

(1 Jn 1:10) “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

In my life I have not met anyone that denies that they have sinned. The most common thing that I hear is a comparison of their sins with the sins of others, and they think they are better than most. The problem is that God does not grade on a curve; He has a perfect standard because He is perfect. He is the Light, and in Him is no darkness. If we are going to be with God, we have to be perfect, like He is perfect. The only way for that to happen is for us to receive Jesus’ payment for our sins, and to be cleansed by his blood. There is no other way.

However, at that time, the Gnostics denied that they had sin. All material and flesh was evil, but that was not who they really were. John refutes this Gnostic belief, saying that those who believe this are deceiving themselves, and the truth is not in them.

Those who walk in the light have dealt with their past sins by believing and putting their faith in Jesus. Those who walk in darkness have never dealt with their sins, and are still in sin. There is an obvious contrast between those who walk in darkness and those who walk in the light.

In verse nine, John tells us how to deal with our sins. He wrote, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” We are forgiven when we place our trust in Christ. Because we still continue to sin, we must deal with sin on an ongoing basis. We have to continue to confess our sins. Those who walk in the light will continually confess their sins. It is the way of life for a believer.

(1 Jn 1:9) “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

When a believer misses the mark, which is what the Greek word for sin, hamartia (Strong’s G266), means. When someone that is not walking in the light, i.e., walking in darkness, they sin but they do not confess their sins. How a person responds to their sins is the second contrast between walking in the light and walking in darkness.

Next, John stated one of his purposes for writing, that they would not sin. Even though there is forgiveness and cleansing for our sins when we confess them, God does not want us to sin. John wrote so that we would not sin. That is God’s will for our lives, that we live a righteous and holy life and do not sin.

(1 Jn 2:1) “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;”

However, since we all sin, John continued, “And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” The Greek word that is translated as Advocate is *parakletos* (Strong’s G3875). This is the same word that Jesus used when He said that He was sending a Helper, the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever, that is the Spirit of Truth...”

(Jn 14:16–17) “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; {17} *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”

There are two words that can be used for another, *allos* (Strong's 243) and *heteros* (Strong's G2087). If the another is of the same kind, quality, and substance, the word *allos* is used. If another refers to a quantitative addition, but not of the exact kind and quality, *heteros* is used. Jesus used the word *allos*, meaning that the Holy Spirit is of the same nature, kind, and quality as Himself. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all part of the trinity. They are all part of the Godhead. Jesus was getting ready to go back to the Father, and would no longer be with the disciples to teach, help, and lead them. Therefore, the Father was going to send another Helper of the same kind, the Holy Spirit, to be with the disciples.

There are two types of stem cell transplants that people can have, an autologous transplant and an allogeneic transplant. An allogeneic transplant uses the stem cells from somebody else, oftentimes from a family member, but sometimes from an unrelated person. The donor must have a closely matched human leukocyte antigen marker. It must be of similar kind, so that the body does not reject it. The other stem cell transplant is an autologous transplant. Auto means self, so an autologous stem cell transplant means they use the stem cells from one's own body for the transplant. When I had a stem cell transplant in 2024, I had an autologous transplant. They carefully harvested healthy stem cells from my own body and then put them back into my body after they had killed all my existing bone marrow and diseased cells.

When the Father sent the Holy Spirit, this Paracletos or Helper was *allos*, or another of the same kind, to be with the disciples. Jesus did not leave the disciples as orphans; He sent them the Holy Spirit, who would be with them forever.

Jesus is not here in bodily form, but He is still helping us. He is helping us in different ways. He is seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. In this case, He is helping us in another way, as an Advocate with the Father.

(Ro 8:34) "who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."

Why do we need an Advocate? The accuser of the brethren is Satan, and he is always bringing charges against us to God. Jesus is our Advocate or legal defense before a holy and righteous Father. Jesus knows who has trusted in Him and who is not a believer, and He is an Advocate for us.

(Re 12:10) "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night."

Jesus was the propitiation or satisfaction for our sins, and not just our sins, but the sins of the whole world. His provision for sin is available to everyone in the world, not just the righteous. The Calvinists teach something called Limited Atonement, which says that Jesus only died for the righteous, but God tells us very clearly that Jesus died, not just for our sins, but the sins of the world. God made provision for anybody and everybody to have their sins forgiven. God does not want any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

(2 Pe 3:9) "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

(1 Ti 2:4) "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

However, if a person is not a believer and follower of Christ, he will die or remain in his sins. If someone has received Jesus as their Messiah and Savior, the blood of Jesus has atoned for their sins. Though our sins were as scarlet, He makes them white as snow.

(Is 1:18) “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.”

The second contrast between walking in the light and walking in the dark is sin. Someone walking in the light has received Jesus’ payment for their sins. And when they sin, they do not deny their sin; they confess their sin to the Lord, and are forgiven and cleansed. Their goal is aligned with God, that they do not sin, but when they do, they have an Advocate with the Father. Someone walking in the dark has not received Christ, and His payment for their sins. It is available to them, because Jesus died for the sins of the world. They are deceived, and do not confess their sins, and His Word is not in them.

3. God’s Commandments

The third contrast that John gives is in regard to God’s commandments. He wrote, “The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

(1 Jn 2:4–6) “The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; {5} but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: {6} the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”

Obedience to God’s word is a significant contrast. Is someone obedient to God’s word? Unfortunately, the majority of church goers do not have a Biblical worldview; only 6% have a Biblical worldview. Therefore, they don’t even know God’s commandments. Those walking in the light will keep God’s commandments.

If someone claims to be a Christian, and does not keep God’s commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him. My friend and fellow-pastor, Joe Warner, says there are three categories of people: believers, unbelievers, and make-believers. He said the largest group of the three is the make-believers. He said they hold to a form of godliness, but have no power. They are religious, but do not keep God’s commandments. John is referring to these make-believers. They are claiming to know the Lord, but they are carnal, disobedient, people who are liars, and the truth is not in them. They are really unbelievers, but think and pretend to be believers.

Whoever keeps God’s Word is walking in the Light, and the love of God has been perfected in him. If we are going to keep God’s Word, we have to know His Word. Jesus said in John 8 that true disciples continue or dwell in His Word, and know the truth, and the truth makes them free.

(Jn 8:31–32) “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; {32} and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

James wrote that knowing the truth comes from abiding or continuing in God's Word. It comes from reading His Word every day. It comes from studying and looking intently at God's Word. It comes from applying God's Word in our lives. It comes from memorizing and meditating on God's Word.

(Jas 1:22–25) “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. {23} For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; {24} for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. {25} But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

The third contrast that John gave is keeping God's commandments. Then, in verses seven through eleven, he gives an example. Jesus said that the greatest commandment was to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength; and the second was like it, to love our neighbor as our self. He said that the whole Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments.

(Mt 22:37–40) “And He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ {38} This is the great and foremost commandment. {39} The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ {40} On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

In John 13:34, Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you love one another.” This new commandment was not really new, as something they had not heard before. The Greek word for new that was used is *kainos* (Strong's G2537), which means to be made fresh. The word for new that refers to age is *neos* (Strong's G3501). When Jesus taught about wineskins, He used the word *kainos*. Wineskins needed to be made fresh before putting new wine in them. Jesus was giving a fresh reminder about love, but He was also indicating that they had to be made fresh before they could love someone with the love of God. They had to receive the love of God before they could love others.

(Jn 13:34) “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

In 1 John 4:19-20, John wrote that “we love, because He first loved us.” We have to know God's love before we can love others. Earlier in 1 John, he wrote, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” We have to be born of God and know God before we can love others. We have to be made fresh (*kainos*) before we can love one another.

(1 Jn 4:19) “We love, because He first loved us.”

(1 Jn 4:7–8) “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. {8} The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

Next, John wrote, “Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.” John refers to the “new commandment”, but you have to read the Gospel of

John to read where that new commandment was given. John is now building upon what he wrote in the Gospel of John, where he included this new commandment. This is another example of why scholars believe that the Gospel of John was written before the letters of John.

In the ten commandments, the first four commandments were about loving God, and the last six were about loving our neighbor. The Jews knew that loving God was first and loving our neighbor was the second most important commandment.

(1 Jn 2:7) “Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.”

On the other hand, John was writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Jesus and in believers, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is shining. When we believe in Jesus, He comes inside of us. He puts His Holy Spirit in us, and the first fruit of the Holy Spirit is love. Believers have an ability to love others with an agape or perfect love. It was a new commandment because believers have received God’s forgiveness, and have been given the Holy Spirit. Believers have been born again, and are new creatures. The old is passing away and new things have come. The Apostle Paul said the same thing in 2 Corinthians 5:17. It is a new and fresh commandment, because their lives have been made new and have been made fresh.

(1 Jn 2:8) “On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.”

(2 Co 5:17) “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

John now gives an example. He said, “The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” The greatest test of obedience to God’s commands is whether we love our brother, and it is also one of the easiest ways to tell if a someone is a follower of Christ.

(1 Jn 2:9-11) “The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now. {10} The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. {11} But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

In John 9, Jesus healed the man born blind. Afterwards, in His conversation with the Pharisees, they said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains. Jesus was speaking about spiritual blindness and sin. As long as the Pharisees believed that they were righteous and had no sin, then they would remain in their sin. If they acknowledged that they were sinners, and needed to be healed of their sins, then their sins could be forgiven, and they could then see. The blind man had believed in the Lord, and now his sins were forgiven. He was not just healed physically, but he was healed of his sins. When someone hates his brother, he is still walking in darkness; he is still in his sin. When someone loves his brother, he is no longer in his sins and is no longer blind. Loving our brother is a quick way to determine if someone is a believer and is walking in the light.

(Jn 9:40-41) “Those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and said to Him, “We are not blind too, are we?” {41} Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

Conclusion and Applications

John has given us three indications of whether we are walking in the light, or walking in darkness. The first identifier is fellowship. If we are walking in the light, we will have fellowship with God and with one another. On the flip side, if we are walking in darkness, we will not be having fellowship with God, or with others.

The second identifier is sin. Those who are walking in the light have acknowledged their sin before God and received Jesus’ payment for their sins. After they have received Christ and His forgiveness, when they sin or miss the mark, they continue to confess their sins before God, and receive forgiveness and cleansing. On the other side, those who walk in darkness, do not see their sin. They do not see that they are walking in darkness and sin. They say they have no sin. They do not confess their sins before God, and do not receive forgiveness and cleansing.

The third identifier is keeping God’s commandments. Those who are walking in the light keep God’s commandments; they keep or obey God’s Word. They keep the “New Commandment,” which is to love our brother. Those walking in the light love their brother. However, those who are walking in darkness do not practice the truth; they do not keep God’s commandments. The truth is not in them. They do not keep the “New Commandment,” and they hate their brothers. They are blind and still in their sin.

John wrote all of this with several objectives in mind. First, he was refuting what the Gnostics were saying, that they could live however they wanted and it would not affect their spiritual status. John said that the way we live our lives matters. We cannot live fleshly lives and have fellowship with God. He was also refuting what the Gnostics believed, that Jesus came to give revelation, not redemption. Jesus came to take away the sins of the world. He came not just believers, but for the sins of the world. His forgiveness is available to all.

Second, John was teaching believers how to walk in the light. He teaches us to confess our sins so that we can maintain fellowship with God and others. He was teaching us to keep God’s commandments, and obey His word. He was teaching us to put God’s truth in us, and to walk in it. He was teaching us to love our neighbors, which is the “new commandment” that Jesus gave us. These are important truths for all of us to know and to be reminded of.

Third, John was helping people know if they are saved. These were all evidences of a true believer, and God wants us to know if we are saved. He wrote, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” He wants to assure our hearts that we have eternal life.

(1 Jn 5:13) “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Our first application is to know that you have eternal life. It is about securing your salvation. When you stand before the throne room of God and the accuser of the brethren hurls his accusations against you, is Jesus your Advocate? Do you know Jesus? Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ? Do you believe that Jesus came and died for the sins of the world? Do you believe

that He was raised from the dead on the third day? Have you asked God to forgive you of your sins? Paul wrote in Romans 10 that “if we believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead and confess Him as Lord, we will be saved. If you believe and want to receive Jesus today, I invite you to pray something like this. “Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God and that You died for my sins. I believe You were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and to forgive me of my sins. I ask You to be my Advocate today. I confess You as my Lord today. I commit my life to You and to Your rule in my life. I pray this in Jesus’ name.”

If you prayed this, Jesus is in you. Let me read John 5:12-13. “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” If you received Christ, you can know that you have eternal life, because you now have the Son of God inside of you.

(1 Jn 5:12–13) “He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. {13} These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Our second application is to make a commitment to fellowship with God. God wants you and I to fellowship with Him. Are you fellowshipping with Him? Are you talking to Him? Are you reading His Word every day? Are you spending time worshipping Him? Are you confessing your sins and receiving His forgiveness and cleansing? If not, your fellowship with God will be hindered, because He is a holy God. There is no fellowship of light and darkness. How is your fellowship with Him? If you are not, ask the Lord to forgive you for not fellowshipping with Him.

Our third application is to make a commitment to fellowship with other believers in a local church. Are you a member of a local church? Are you faithfully attending and serving in the local church? Are you fellowshipping with the other believers? Where will you learn to love your brother? It is in a Bible-preaching church? Where will you be loved by others? It is in a community of believers, the church. I exhort you to be a committed member in a local church, and to fellowship and love your brothers. If you live in the Rome, Georgia area, we would love to have you come and fellowship with us.

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for inspiring John to write this letter to all of us. Thank You for Your word that instructs and equips us. Lord, when you created us, You created us to have fellowship with you. You love each of us, and You love our time of fellowship with You. You also love the sacrifices of a broken and contrite heart. Help us to go to you when we mess up. Help us to keep Your commandments, especially the new commandment, to love our brother. Help us grow in our understanding of what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves. Help us to walk in the same manner that Jesus walked. I pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Discussion Questions

- What are some excellent ways to fellowship with God?
- What are some ways for us to have genuine fellowship with others? Is it watching football game on TV with someone, or are there some other considerations to fellowship that must be considered?
- What do we need an Advocate?
- If we are going to have the truth in us and walk in truth, what are things we need to do?
- Why is the reading, studying, meditating, and applying God's word in our lives so important?
- Why do many people not study the Word of God? Is it just the job of a pastor, or is that something that all of us should be doing?
- If Jesus cleansed us from all sin, why do we need to continue confessing our sins to Him?
- Why is loving our brother such an easy way to see if we are walking in the light or in darkness?
- There should be a significant contrast between walking in the light and walking in the darkness? Is the contrast in the uniforms of the church and the uniforms of the world sharply contrasted today so that it is obvious to everyone which team people are on?

Contrasting Walks: Light and Darkness

Introduction (1 Jn 5:13, 3:10, 2:26, 1:5-2:11)

1. Fellowship (1 Jn 1:5-7, Jn 8:12, Mt 7:21–23)

2. Sin (1 Jn 1:7-2:1, Jn 8:24, Jn 14:16–17, Ro 8:34, 2 Pe 3:9, 1 Ti 2:4, Is 1:18)

3. God's Commandments (1 Jn 2:4–11, Jn 8:31–32, Jas 1:22–25, Mt 22:37–40, Jn 13:34, 1 Jn 4:19, 4:7-8, 2 Co 5:17, Jn 9:40-41)

Conclusion and Applications (1 Jn 5:12-13)

1.

2.

3.