

To Walk in The Light is to Apply Spiritual Science

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Date: 10 April 2011

[0 : 00] Let's turn back to 1 John 5-7 of chapter 1.

Let's read these again. This is the message which we have heard from him and declare to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1-5-7. I want us to think about this in terms of to walk in the light is to apply spiritual science.

Science in the sense of knowledge. To walk in the light is to apply spiritual science. And we mean by that simply that to walk with God in spiritual communion with him, we need to apply our knowledge of him and we need to apply the knowledge of his will in our daily life.

[1 : 34] There were those in the church and churches to whom John wrote at first who were suggesting that you could live a life in the spirit Godward and live life here however you liked.

With no real regard to the will of God revealed in the word. To have an almost disregard for the precepts of God.

And John shows that it is simply not possible for a person to live in true fellowship with God and to live a life of habitual sin.

The two ways are in fact in opposition. If we live unto God, we are not living unto ourselves.

If we live to the spirit, we are not living to the flesh. You remember in Galatians 5, verse 17 tells us that the flesh, I think the old version is the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh.

[2 : 53] And these are contrary to one another. Galatians 5, 17. But the word less there is actually, it's not a mistranslation but it's unclear.

Because the word less there means to earnestly desire. Or to jealously desire. And what is being said in Galatians 5, 17 is applicable to our introduction here.

There are two different ways. The way that seems right to man and spiritual. And the way that seems right to God and God's own people, spiritual.

And the spirit of God yearns jealously. And the spirit of man, living life his own way, yearns jealously to satisfy itself.

And that's the idea in Galatians 5, 17. And it's the idea that John has here in his mind. If we say that we're walking with God, then we ought in our hearts and minds and in our lives to be giving evidence of the same.

[4 : 14] We ought to be living by God's standards and not the standards of the world. It's not enough, you see, to feel we have fellowship with God.

And yet to go on our own merry way. That is simply not really true. If we are in fellowship with God, then we're not walking in darkness, but in the light.

We're walking according to his standards and not our own. It's perfectly possible, of course, for folk to be misguided and to think they are in fellowship with God whilst they do their own thing.

But that is an illusion. It's delusive. It's a figment of human imagination. You see, John is saying here, God is light.

And in him is no darkness, that is moral darkness. There's no moral darkness in him at all, not any. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we simply lie and we're not practicing the truth.

[5 : 28] The truth is for the believer, he or she is only happy in fellowship with God when he or she applies the spiritual knowledge he has in the things of God.

That's why we say to walk in the light is to apply spiritual science. We make use of the knowledge God has given us through his word and by his spirit to walk in the light as he is in the light.

So I want us to think about three things to help us in our way and to clarify our thinking in this matter. The obvious and first one is the necessary knowledge of God's nature.

It's here in the text. God is in the light. That's our starting point. We remind ourselves, you see, of who God is, of what he's like.

This is the message, says John, which we have heard from him and declare to you. You see, the logic of this is he's given us the message to give to you.

[6 : 45] And the message is about God's nature, who he is and what he's like. This is our sideways movement for a moment, but you'll see the relevance of it.

When you read your Old Testament and you look at the things they got up to in the religion of Baal, we've been touching on in the life of Elijah.

It's corrupt. It's perverted. And it is exactly what people like, naturally. Their idea of God, or the gods, suits their own appetites.

And we need, if we're to walk with God who is light and in the light, we need to know what he's like and what he likes.

And that's what John is about here. It's necessary to know of God's nature, to know what he's like. And we're told he is in the light.

[7 : 54] Verse 5 tells us, God is light. And in him is no darkness at all.

And in the original it's stronger than that. It says, and in him is no darkness at all. None. It's a devil negative. Not any.

None. That's the way he is. He is light. He is in the light. And light, of course, is a figurative term that tells us about God.

About his purity. And it tells us about the way he is in relation to us. He searches us and knows us.

He knows us in relation to his own purity and perfection. There is something about him that is altogether different than us, as we are in ourselves.

[8 : 57] And light is a helpful way of speaking, because it talks about purity. It talks about that which penetrates through and through.

And it says to us, God is in his sinless perfection, like the light, pure. You remember how the prophet Isaiah talked when he beheld the Lord high and lifted up.

And he describes the sinless angels around God's throne as veiling their faces. Sinless angels veiling their faces and crying out, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

So, the figure of light brings us near to thinking about the holiness of God, the dazzling splendor that is God's, essentially, that talks to us in its own way about his purity and sinless perfection.

He is light and he is in the light. Remember how, for example, in the Psalms, Psalm 104, and 4. We are told there, at the beginning, when we praise the Lord, who has enwrapped himself in light, as with a garment.

[10 : 26] And there again you have the idea coming through of God's awesome, sinless perfection, his dazzling splendor that talks about his purity.

Interestingly, in 1 Timothy 6, and verse 16, the Apostle Paul tells us that God is the one who dwells in light, whom no man can see.

He dwells in unapproachable light. There is something about the light that is around and about God, so to speak, in its dazzling splendor that keeps us apart from it.

It talks about his moral and spiritual perfection. It is a figure, and yet it is lisping to us about the reality that is God's.

He is the one who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man hath seen nor can see.

[11 : 42] And in my view of the Mount of Transfiguration, we get a little bit of an opening of the curtain on the Mount of Transfiguration.

You remember when Jesus was transfigured in Matthew 17, 6, you find there that he was transfigured before them and his face shone brighter than the sun and his clothing was dazzling in splendor.

It's like you get a little insight there. It's almost as if the veil is pulled back and you get a look in and there's Christ in his glory. Another angle on this comes from the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus when he was Saul, the Pharisee, bent on catching and imprisoning those who were following Jesus from a Jewish background.

And you remember he was struck down on the Damascus Road, Acts 9. And what was true of him is that he saw in the heavens above him a light brighter than the sun at noonday.

And he heard a voice from that excellent glory. Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

[13 : 14] And this figure of light is applied to God in many different ways and we get, as it were, God lisping to us about his dazzling splendor and his sinless perfection.

God is light and in him is no darkness at all, none. He dwells in light. You see, verse 7, but if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and so on.

And so, we have this emphasis coming through and John has it here, others have it too, as we've sought to emphasize.

And what goes beyond that is that the scriptures emphasize that he uses this image of light to reveal to us something about his nature, something about what he is and what he likes.

He is the thrice holy God. He's of purer eyes and to behold iniquity. And so, what I'm saying in all this is that the healthy view of God we need for fellowship with him.

[14 : 43] As simple as that. That's why keeping company with him requires us to have that knowledge knowledge and to apply that knowledge.

It is sometimes when we were younger we learnt the proverb that evil company corrupts good manners and it just meant that if you're in bad company you'll learn bad ways.

As simple as that. And if we company with people who have no love for the truth and who have maybe an antagonism to things of God then they affect us.

On the other hand if we have a love for the Lord we understand what he is like and what he likes. It stands to reason we'll have a carefulness about our company.

We'll want to improve upon our opportunities of fellowship with God. And remember years ago spending time at sea and in a confined workplace with five others who had no love for the things of God at all and you're with them day in, day out day in, day out and they had their own agenda they wanted to expose your weaknesses they wanted to pour scorn on what you professed of Christ and that kind of influence has to be guarded against.

[16 : 28] It is contrary to fellowship with the Lord and so what I'm saying here is we need to guard ourselves in relation to walking in the light as he is in the light.

we need to apply the knowledge we have of God in order to guard ourselves against what will take us away from fellowship with him who is light and who is in the light.

the more we understand what he is like and the more we are concerned to like the things he likes the more we will enjoy fellowship with him.

So we are to think about the knowledge we have of what he is really like and apply that in this matter of fellowship. In fact we are not going to develop this but if you think about it some of the classic situations in the Bible about men of God who had a mere fellowship with God perhaps nearer than most Daniel himself fell down as dead when God manifested his presence.

Ezekiel was the same struck down as dead Isaiah we quoted from woe is me I'm undone Peter when he saw the miracle of the fish the great catch depart from me O Lord for I'm a sinful man I'm not really fit for your fellowship this is understanding the nature of the God who's the God of our salvation and it's as we understand him we are careful then to apply this knowledge that's really our second point the knowledge is applied to walking in the light it stands to reason you see when we understand what he's like and what he likes that we want to do the thing his way in order to enjoy fellowship with him

[19 : 04] John says he is of course but if we walk in the light verse 7 as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another but that fellowship with one another us believers is dependent upon fellowship with God we go back to the beginning of the section we're looking at if we say we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we're simply telling lies to ourselves and we're not practicing the truth so that fellowship with God is first and fellowship with one another in the true sense is dependent upon our real fellowship with God and that's what John is saying here the fellowship therefore of

Christian believers that is true fellowship with one another that is true is dependent upon our fellowship with the Lord I can't mind who said it but someone said it is correlative and concurrent with fellowship with the Lord it's got to be like that it is as we walk in the light as he is in the light we enjoy fellowship with him and with one another such fellowship then must be influenced by the truth of God I know of course I know this very well we use the word fellowship a bit superficially the word fellowship koinonia is about fellowship in the spirit of God it is fellowship in the truth of God it is fellowship as we said a moment ago in knowing what God is like and in knowing what he likes and our fellowship with the

Lord has to be related to his terms for fellowship you see if you think about it when our Savior spoke on the Sermon on the Mount he talked about forgiving we are to be forgiving we are to have a forgiving spirit as your father in heaven forgives you find that in Matthew 6 12 generosity is to be part of a believer's practical experience be like your father in that your father is generous to the just and the unjust your father is the giving God James chapter 1 verse 5 you see what I'm saying here there are things that should be true of us that are true of us because they're true of our heavenly father that's part of knowing what he's like and it's part of liking what he likes keep in step says

Paul to the Galatians with the spirit how do you guard against the works of the flesh of the sinful nature he doesn't just say don't do this don't do that don't so many of us here were brought up we don't Sabbath was all about don't you're smiling it was all about don't you can't you're missing but the apostolic emphasis on what we do in order to keep us from what we shouldn't do and when Paul in Galatians 5 I've mentioned there already speaks about the works of the flesh and the works of the spirit his focus is on keep in step with the spirit if you live in and by the holy spirit keep in step with him walk in the spirit in other words the best way to work out this knowledge you have of the

Lord and to apply it so you can walk in the light is be on the positive keep in step with the spirit and you will not go far wrong seems to me that's the most helpful way to see this and what is to mark us therefore is that we like the way God does things and we want to do things the way God does them just earlier on I was reflecting on the problem of little groupies in the church of cliques and the problem that can bring God doesn't like cliques how can

[24 : 58] I say that am I saying something I shouldn't say dare I say that he doesn't like ethnic groupings although many think he does he doesn't like that attitude because it excludes and he doesn't exclude okay let's have a scripture James chapter two verse one following don't hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons that just means don't get into the favoritism thing don't get into the clique syndrome don't hold the faith you see the problem that James was confronting in his little letter was that people were folk came into the congregation and they were looking really stylish and oh yeah get that person in and the shabbily dressed person comes in you sit at the back out of the way

God's not like that you hear what I say he's not like that and we're to be interested in being like him and liking what he likes don't hold the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ see I've shifted it don't hold the faith with regard to personal favoritism don't hold the fellowship of Christ with regard to personal favoritism beware of it he doesn't like it therefore we shouldn't like it either and then thirdly the knowledge of purifying ourselves is needed see what he says but if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of

Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sin this is about facing up to our deficiencies as regards true fellowship it's about admitting that we can go wrong it's about admitting that we can get into areas of thinking and speaking and acting that are simply wrong for us as those who have a profession of fellowship with him who is light and who is in the light and the things that are wrong within us breach that fellowship I don't know that people Christian people really dwell much on this at all I don't think they think that when they go wrong and do wrong and think wrong it affects their fellowship with God it does it must if

God is God if he is like we have described him and he is and more then it stands to reason he will have no track with darkness in us listen God is light and in him is no darkness at all none so it stands to reason that if there is darkness in us that's not dealt with then it affects our fellowship with him we may not think it we may not like to think it but it's reality and we need to have the spectacles of revelation on this he's saying not me there are areas in our lives that are darkness and not light and they need to be dealt with they breach the fellowship that could be ours with the

Lord the heart can become cluttered with schemes and interests which are spiritually harmful to us James to go back to him he's intensely practical James talks about irreverent speech he talks about the unbridled tongue it's a fire a word of iniquity in fact he even says it's set on fire by hell that's why it should matter to us when we let fly and we do wrong and sin James also deals with heartlessness regarding the needy and wrathfulness the wrath of man verse 21 chapter 1 of

[30 : 32] James the wrath of man does not work the righteous character that God lives I remember reading years ago of Auguste Vazard he was the first minister in Creef and he had a very short fuse and he could become volcanic and one of the struggles he had was with his temper and the scripture that kept coming back to him again and again is the wrath of man does not work the righteousness that God lives in his people and you see whatever our deficiency is we need to see it seize upon it acknowledge it and be purified from its defiling influence actually for the gardeners among us James talks about rooting out the moral weeds from our lives we need to root them out we need to clean out those moral weeds in verse 21 of chapter 1 and here you see in case you think

I've gone off on a tangent I haven't at all verse 9 if we confess our sins if we come clean if we own it he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and that's why we need to be serious about needing to apply for cleansing and renewal it is a scholarly question in New Testament scholarship about the relationship between being forgiven our sins in Christ when we believe the gospel and the ongoing need for cleansing and if you'll take my advice you'll not try to do what scholars have failed to do to understand the two sides but to accept both and accepting the latter that we need to go back and ask to be cleansed is important it's important to our fellowship with the

Lord it's important and you probably have heard me maybe never thought about why is he saying it this way but when I pray sometimes instead of saying cleanse us from our sin I'll say apply the benefits of the death of Christ to us and why I do it that way is simply because that's what we're asking we're asking to be made aware anew that the Lord is cleansing us by applying to us the saving benefits the purifying benefits of the death of Christ and why do we say that listen listen if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us and the word there is a present to go on cleansing us from all sin verse 9 the blood of

Jesus Christ we read earlier on cleanses goes on cleansing from all sin and we apply afresh because we're told to do that that we might know that cleansing and it's something that's got to be done specifically that's why I mentioned specific areas of sin we've got to come clean we've got to own it Robert Canglish in his meaty commentary on 1st John says we're to confess our sins retail and not wholesale and that means for the retailers you look at individual items you look at individual sins and areas of sin you confess them you don't just lump them all together in a wholesale manner but we're to do it convinced that

God's arrangement is that whatever darkness has caused an estrangement between him and us whatever has breached the fellowship will be removed and we will enjoy again his fellowship and fellowship in truth with one another and therefore we're to regard highly the precious word that the blood of Jesus Christ God sent goes on cleansed that's why we apply again cleanse us from all sin that's why we were singing in the psalm wash me cleanse me purify me I'll be whiter than the snow we want to be delivered so that we will enjoy his fellowship again never let us imagine that we will outgrow the need of applying for the benefits of the death of

[36 : 39] Christ to be upon us to renew us in fellowship and to as it were take away what has caused a breach this is the way we know this is the way we apply the science of the Bible spiritual science in order to enjoy fellowship on the vertical and therefore on the horizontal if we are to walk with him and to enjoy true fellowship with him we must agree with him and we must submit to his terms thus we can say what we were singing in thy laws path make me to go for I delight therein my heart unto thy testaments and not to greed incline this is the message which we have heard from him and declared to you that

God is light and in him is no darkness at all none if we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness we lie and do not practice the truth but we might add if we come clean if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sin may he bless to us then his word Amen