

Week 2

Fellowship With God

Day 1

1 John 1:5-10: 5 *This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. 6 So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. 7 But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. 9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.*

John does not pull any punches in this passage. If we have fellowship with God, we are living in the light. If we don't have fellowship with God, we're living in darkness. And if we claim to live in the light but actually live in darkness, we're liars. Which of the three speaks to your reality? What does it look like to live in the light despite darkness being all around? We don't have to look beyond Jesus. He lived in perfect obedience to God, who is light. When we are growing in our relationship with him and being obedient to what he asks of us, we are living in the light of God. Don't mistake darkness for light. The darkness can look attractive but its path leads to destruction.

How can you move out of the dark spaces in your life and into the light?



Day 2

James 1:16-18: *16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. 18 He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.*

John 3:19-21: *19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."*

God is consistent light and everything about him is good. Do not be swayed by people who say there are other sources of light and goodness; those things don't exist outside of God. The phrase "coming down" in James speaks of a continual outpouring of the gifts of goodness and perfection that God is bestowing upon us. They never cease or run out. And God never changes. He is the one who was, who is, and who is to come. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. To live in the light is to live in truth. To live in the darkness is to live for fear of being exposed. Light is freedom; darkness is a burden. Jesus came so that we could experience life to the fullest and that is a life that's lived in the light.

How have you experienced fulfillment by living in Jesus?



Day 3

Psalm 32:1-5: *1 Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! 2 Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty, 3 When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. 4 Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. 5 Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.*

Hebrews 12:1-2: *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.*

We've talked a lot this week about living in the light versus the darkness; living according to God versus living according to the world. If you find yourself in darkness or chasing after the things of the world, that does not mean God has rejected you. He is a loving Father who wants to help his children. He knows everything about us. He knows more about us than we know about ourselves and he loves us completely. That is why he sent Jesus to the cross, so that we would not have to live in the darkness any longer. Your past does not have to set the precedent for your future when you turn to God. God does not just fix things that are broken, he makes them new.

Is there something from your past that is hindering you from drawing near to Jesus? Bring it to him and ask him to take it away from you. He wants nothing to come between you and him.



Day 4

Psalm 51:1-4: **1** Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. **2** Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. **3** For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. **4** Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.

Romans 10:9-10: **9** If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

Has there been something on your heart that has been weighing you down? Is there unconfessed sin that you've been holding onto in the hopes that it will just disappear? Are you carrying the burden of living in the darkness? That's where David found himself when he cried out to God in his despair of living in the darkness. This is David's response after he committed adultery with another man's wife, and then had that man essentially murdered in battle to cover up his original sin. It is no use hiding what's already known to God. As we saw yesterday, when we confess our sins and live in the light, God forgives us.

Is there a sin that has come between you and Jesus that is preventing you from experiencing a life of fullness? Confess it to him and ask for forgiveness. There is true freedom at the cross of Jesus.



Day 5

2 Corinthians 5:16-21: 16 *So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! 17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun 18 And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. 19 For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. 20 So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.*

Biblical scholar Colin Kruse writes, "to be in Christ means to belong to him through faith, and to belong to him means living in the sphere of his power, being united with him through the Spirit, and to have become a part of the Christian community by baptism." When we accept Christ into our hearts, acknowledging that we are sinners in need of a savior, our old life dies and we are born into a new life in Christ. Part of this new life is reconciling with people who have either wronged us or have been wronged by us. That is the essence of the gospel as Paul outlines here. God sent Jesus to reconcile people to himself. In turn, when we experience that reconciliation with God, we are to go and both reconcile with people and point them to the new life in Jesus that is available to them. Verse 21 is one of the great and humbling truths of the Bible, that Jesus, who never sinned, took on all the sin of the world upon himself, so that we could be right with God. What kind of effort does it take you to make things right with others? Now imagine that effort times every wrongdoing done by every person who will ever exist. That's what Jesus faced on the cross.

Is there someone in your life who you are at odds with? Is there a phone call that needs to be made to reconcile with someone? Do that right now. Don't wait.



To hold a grudge is to carry around unnecessary baggage. Ask God to give you the words to say and be free to live at peace with everyone.

