

1 John

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February 17, 2021



1 John 1:6-7

Vs. 6

- In verse 5 we saw that to say “God is Light and in Him there is no darkness at all” speaks to the moral quality of God. The light is pure and clear. Our God desires to be known so as we look at Him there is no darkness, no shadow, nothing is hidden. There is no deception, no closeted secret malevolence. God *IS* good.
- As those who follow Him, we are to reflect the Light of our God and make His attributes our own. In John’s day the Gnostics argued that they had advanced so much spiritually that sin no longer had any relevance to them. Biblical law no longer pertained to them. They were free to live as they chose on this earth without apologizing for anything. They argued that their spirits were above the stain of sin, however they lived their lives.
- Do not think that this tension between God’s Word and this opposing line of thinking has nothing to do with our modern, contemporary world. The Nazi’s at no point saw the deaths of 6 million Jews and 6 million other Slavs, Gypsies, homosexuals, political dissidents, and infirmed people as a sin. They truly believed they were doing the world a favor by eliminating such “vermin”. In Russia, Stalin wanted a ship canal built connecting the White Sea to the Baltic Sea, but lacked the heavy equipment to build it, so he emptied out his prisons for the labor. That it cost as many as 250,000 lives was inconsequential. The benefit of the dam outweighed the cost of lives in a culture where human life meant nothing and the state meant everything. And in our own time and place, we now live in a “woke” culture where what was once good is now evil, what was once truth is now a lie, and “sin” exists only when the new rules of this new culture are transgressed. John’s call for people to be saved and to be a reflection of God’s morality is evermore relative to our day to day lives.

- The Word John had received that he says he now shares with us is that if we say that we are Christian, that we are walking with the Father and the Son, that we have fellowship with Him and yet are in fact still walking in moral and ethical darkness of the Christless life the world offers, then we are liars and the Truth is not in us. This is entirely consistent with the Old Testament declaration from God that “You shall be Holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy” (Lev. 19:2; 20: 7, 26). This does not mean that we must be perfect before we can have fellowship with God. If that were true then none of us would ever qualify to take the first step. It does mean that as we walk in His Light we will see how terrible our own is as well as the sin around us, and how desperate is our need to be free of it. It means the closer we are to God and His Light, the better we can see sin and evil and its horror.
- John also adds that if we are actually walking in the darkness, we cannot practice the Truth, we cannot do the work nor live the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ. The meaning of the Greek verb used here for **walk** is taken more from Hebrew. It encompasses the whole of a person’s life: how one speaks, thinks, lives, acts, and interacts with people. Every attitude, every decision, every relationship, every thought, every spoken word – all of this is meant by how we **walk**.
- The Christian life is *never* merely an intellectual exercise. Yes, it does involve the “renewal of the mind” (Romans 12:2) but it is proven, manifested, made real in the practice, by the *doing* of the faith. Christ did not merely teach what His Way is, He *showed* us His Way. The Truth of Christ is a Way to be followed and obeyed.
- It is in the disobedience where we “lie”. Here it is not that we are simply distorting the facts, the lie is that we are living a deceived and deluded life and thereby distorting the truth of what it means to be disciple of Jesus Christ. A person who thinks he has a relationship with Christ while he is yet walking in darkness is living disobedient to the Way and so lies and does not practice the Truth.

Vs. 7

- “But if we walk in the Light...” : A) we have fellowship with one another. Thus the source of our fellowship is not race or geography or denomination or any other earthly qualifier, but rather the Truth and Way of Jesus Christ. As we **walk** we are bound together by those who walk as we walk, live as we live. B) As we walk together, one of the cords that binds us is the common moral code that we live by under the Lordship of Christ. As we walk in the Light we are able to see each other more clearly and can help bring one another closer to the Light whereby the darkness within us is chased away and we are able to extend grace easier for we know that our sister and brother can see into us as well and that neither of us can claim any moral superiority for all cleansing comes from the Light as we walk closer and closer to Father and the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- As we walk in the light and have fellowship together, the blood of Jesus “cleanses us from all sin.” A) This recalls the blood sacrifices in the Jewish purification rituals. Here though, the perfect Lamb is none other than the Son of God Himself, Jesus Christ. B) The Greek word for *cleanses* is a present tense Greek verb that denotes continuous action. A better translation might be that “the blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing.” Here we see that God’s grace and mercy and forgiveness through Christ is an ongoing answer to our sin. As we walk in the Light, continuous fellowship and cleansing is ours. C) The Greek word used here for “cleanse” is **katharizein**. Originally it was used to describe the ceremonial washing of people or items for worship of the gods. Over time the word came to have a moral connotation describing the qualifying goodness of the one who comes before God (Ps. 24:3-4). What John is saying is that “if you truly walk in the Light and are experiencing its cleansing power day by day, goodness, righteousness, and Holiness are being added to your life making it possible for you to continually draw closer to God.” The blood sacrifice of Christ thus not only atones for all of our past sins but equips us with Holiness and makes us more like Christ every day. Now we are able to have a closer relationship with God and with people, and John will later make it clear that there can never be one without the other.