

Small Group Guide

Walking in the Light | 1 John 1:5 - 2:11

Before You Meet

Encourage group members to read 1 John before gathering. Consider reading it in a different translation than you normally use. Write down any verses that stand out to you on a notecard or in a journal.

Key Takeaways

God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. This is the foundation of the entire passage. Light and darkness represent more than physical realities — they represent the difference between life and death, truth and deception, obedience and rebellion.

Walking in darkness is not just a condition — it is a choice. John identifies three specific ways people deny sin and remain in darkness: denying the power of sin, denying the presence of sin in their lives, and denying the practice of sin.

Walking in the light requires honesty and humility. Coming into the light means admitting you are a sinner, trusting that Jesus is your advocate, and believing that he paid the full price for your sin.

Love is the visible evidence of walking in the light. A life genuinely changed by Christ will show an increasing love for God and for other people. Hatred, gossip, and division are signs that someone is still walking in darkness, no matter what they claim.

Fellowship is not optional. The *koinonia* John describes is a shared life with God and with other believers. It is built on honesty, accountability, and love — not performance or appearances.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Think about a time when you moved from a dark room into a brightly lit one. What was that experience like? How does that physical experience connect to what John is describing spiritually?

2. The sermon challenged each person to ask honestly, "Where am I walking right now?" Without going into detail you are not comfortable sharing, how would you generally answer that question for yourself today?

Digging Into the Text

3. John says in 1 John 1:5 that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. Jesus says in John 8:12 that he is the light of the world and that whoever follows him will not walk in darkness. What does it mean practically for your daily life that Jesus is the light?
4. The sermon described three ways people stay in darkness: denying the power of sin, denying the presence of sin, and denying the practice of sin. Which of these do you think is most common in the church today? Which do you personally find most tempting to fall into?
5. John writes in 1 John 1:9 that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness. Why do you think it is so hard for people — even believers — to confess sin honestly? What makes confession feel risky?
6. The sermon pointed out that Satan is called the accuser, and that he accuses believers before God day and night. Jesus, by contrast, is our advocate. How does knowing that Jesus is standing for you before the Father change the way you think about your sin and your standing before God?
7. John says in 1 John 2:9-11 that anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness. How does our love — or lack of love — for other people reveal where we are actually walking?

Applying the Truth

8. The sermon described how one group member's love for God gradually produced a growing love for people, including people far from God. Have you experienced something similar in your own walk? What did that growth look like?
9. John writes in 1 John 2:6 that whoever claims to live in Christ must live as Jesus did. Jesus spent time with sinners, tax collectors, and outcasts. What would it look like for your group, your family, or your personal life to live more like Jesus did in that way?
10. The sermon warned that church splits and division happen when believers hide in the shadows instead of walking in the light with one another. Is there a relationship in your life — in the church or outside of it — where you have been hiding in the shadows instead of walking in the light? What would it take to step into honesty and love in that relationship?

Practical Applications

This week, choose at least one of the following:

- Read 1 John all the way through in one sitting. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you honestly where you are in your walk with God.
- Write down one verse from 1 John on a notecard and place it somewhere you will see it every day. Work on memorizing it by the time your group meets again.
- Identify one relationship where there has been tension, distance, or unresolved conflict. Pray and ask God to give you the humility and courage to take a step toward that person in love.
- Spend time this week in honest confession before God. Do not rush through it. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind anything you have been minimizing or hiding, and receive the forgiveness and cleansing that 1 John 1:9 promises.
- Find one practical way to serve someone outside your normal circle this week — a neighbor, a coworker, or someone your community might overlook.

Closing Reflection

The sermon closed with this challenge: step out of the darkness and into the light. That step is not a one-time event. It is a daily decision to walk with God, to be honest about sin, to trust in Jesus as your advocate, and to let his love grow in you until it overflows toward the people around you.

Close your time together in prayer. Ask God to reveal where each person in the group may be hiding, and ask him for the courage to step into the light together.

For Further Study

- Psalm 27:1 — Reflect on what it means that the Lord is both light and salvation.
- Isaiah 53:1-6 — Sit with this prophecy and consider what it cost Jesus to be your advocate.
- Romans 5:8 — Meditate on the timing of God's love — that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.
- Romans 12:1-2 — Consider what it means to offer yourself as a living sacrifice and to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.
- Matthew 9 — Read the account of Matthew's calling and the dinner with sinners. Notice where Jesus positioned himself and why.