

Walking in Darkness

God is so Awesome / Jason Graham

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1 John 1:1-9 (NIV) ¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ²The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴We write this to make our joy complete. ⁵This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. ⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

What is Walking in Darkness?

I really struggled with this scripture because I used to believe that walking in darkness meant struggling with sin. It disturbed me most because that did not seem to be congruent with other scriptures that promised that there was no condemnation for those who are in Christ, but I absolutely don't want to go through scripture trying to prove why scriptures don't mean what they really say. Obviously, that can lead us down a dangerous path.

Matthew 4:13-16 (NIV) ¹³ Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali-- ¹⁴ to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles-- ¹⁶ the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

John 1:1-18 (NIV) ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" ¹⁶ From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

John 3:16-21 (NIV) ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

The Conclusion

Walking in darkness is **refusing to believe in Christ**—not struggling with sin. Of course, it is important not to sin:

Romans 6:1-2 (NIV) ¹ What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

And, after saying his piece about walking in darkness, John immediately goes on to say:

1 John 2:1-2 (NIV) ¹ My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

If you get a glimpse of true darkness (gross darkness on people), then the distinction between a believer struggling with a sin and an unbeliever walking in darkness is quite clear.

Isaiah 60:1-2 (NIV) ¹"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you.

Why Even Bring It Up?

Why would John ever bring up the topic of walking in darkness then—to a bunch of believers? Why would he warn them about this?

Because the whole book of 1 John was written to encourage the church during a time when an antichrist spirit had been unleashed and was wreaking havoc through the church by the devices of people who had seemed to be part of the fellowship of believers.

1 John 2:18-23 (NIV) ¹⁸ Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. ²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. ²¹ I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. ²² **Who is the liar?** It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son. ²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Who is the Liar?

What liar? The liar he was referring to in the previous chapter:

1 John 1:6 (NIV) If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

1 John 2:22 (NIV) Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist--he denies the Father and the Son.

John makes it clear that his warning about walking in darkness was not even directly pointed at this body of believers—THEY KNOW THE TRUTH! He said it all because of these antichrists who had been with them (had said they had fellowship with Jesus), but now deny that Jesus is the Christ. They are the liars who was warning about.

We Are Free—But Not THAT Kind of Free

John puts forth great effort to make it clear that although he is writing all these things to warn them about these antichrists, and although we have an advocate when we sin, we shouldn't sin. Why? Because we are free from sin. We are children of God. Because truly knowing Jesus leads to obedience.

1 John 2:3-6 (NIV) ³We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. ⁴The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Why?

We Are Still Under Law

Romans 8:1-2 (NIV) ¹Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

This new law set us free from the law of sin and death.

Not THAT Kind of Free?

Galatians 5:13-14 (NIV) ¹³You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. ¹⁴The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

This new law—the law of the Spirit of life—does still require certain behavior from us. We MUST love.

Romans 13:8-10 (NIV) ⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

What if I do Sin?

Then you have an advocate with the Father. You have someone who stands up and DEFENDS you when you sin: Jesus Christ the Righteous One.

1 John 2:1-2 (NIV) ¹My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

The Courtroom of Heaven

The above scripture, along with this one from the book of Revelation paint an interesting picture of a courtroom kind of scene:

Revelation 12:10 (NIV) Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

In this scene there is:

- The Accuser: Satan
- The Judge: God, the Father
- The Accused: us
- The Advocate: Jesus Christ the Righteous One

Satan accuses us of our wrong doing (and of lies too I'm sure), the Father hears the case, we Confess, Jesus DEFENDS us.

What do we Confess?

Well first of all, we confess Jesus!

Romans 10:8-10 (NIV) ⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are **justified**, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Hebrews 13:15 (NIV) Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name.

There are more scriptures in the New Testament that speak of Confessing Jesus than confessing sin. But we do also confess our sins. But why? To be saved? NO! That has already been taken care of by confessing Jesus and believing in our hearts.

We confess sin after salvation to be purified, forgiven (to remove a guilty conscience), healed (made whole), to have fresh life, a clear conscience.

1 John 1:8-9 (NIV) ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

James 5:15-16 (NIV) ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

What does Jesus say?

This one is JUSTIFIED, guilty but blameless.

Romans 3:24 (NIV) and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 10:10 (NIV) For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

There is more to this that I feel like I can't write down yet.