

## Sermon Notes

To help you create powerful sermons on the Apostle John's First Epistle

Please note: The translation referred to most often in these sermon notes can be found on the Web at: <https://www.discipleshiptraining.org/firstjohn> .

**Theme of sermon(s):** “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” (v. 1:5) So, how do we walk in God's light?

**Introductory Comments:** One of the primary themes of First John, if not THE primary theme of First John, is found in chapter one, verse five: “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Because of this truth, the Holy Spirit, writing through the hand of the Apostle John, strongly encourages us to walk in that light (v. 2:1).

So, what does it mean to “walk in the light”? How do we experience God's light? We have identified 16 answers to this question from the text of First John. We present those here to you along with some commentary for your consideration.

### 1. **Sharing our lives with Jesus by submitting to the leading of the Holy Spirit**

In verse 6 of chapter one, we are implored to share our life with Him, and we are told that when we walk in darkness, that is not happening. If we wish to walk in God's light, then we are to accept His offer to let us walk with Him as we walk through life. We revel in the fact that Christ's Spirit lives in us, and we enthusiastically submit ourselves to His Holy Spirit's activity in our lives. He **IS** active in our lives, and He uses His word in the Bible as a primary means of communicating with us. As we are told by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: His activity in our lives is a compelling activity in which He uses the Bible to teach us, and to rebuke us, and to correct us, and to train us in those things that God approves of, so that the servant of God (and that would be **YOU**) may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. So, if you want to walk in the light of God, you will often spend time praying over God's word and allowing the Holy Spirit to use it to direct you in the paths of God's light. (vv. 1:6-7, 2:7, 2:14, 2:24 & 25)

### 2. **Avoid participating in darkness**

If we want to walk in God's light, we will shy away from participating in darkness. Instead, we will seek to live in the truth of His light. So, how do we successfully oppose the strong pull of darkness in our lives? Most of the time, this is a process that calls for patience and a process in which we build a clearer vision of who Jesus is, and this clearer vision comes from finding Jesus in the words God has spoken to us in His Bible. As we see Jesus more clearly, we will find it increasingly easier to trust Him and then to walk with Him in the light and have victory over the pull of darkness in our lives. (vv. 2:14, 2:20-21, 3:2)

### 3. **Don't let us deceive ourselves by thinking it is okay to do our own thing**

If we want to walk in God's light, we will NOT deceive ourselves by allowing ourselves to think it is okay to walk in darkness—and remember, living our lives apart from dependence on God and the truths of His word, is walking in darkness. Are we depending on, trusting in,

the truths of God's word, or are we deceiving ourselves into thinking it is okay to do our own thing? Make no mistake about it! It is NOT okay to live a life opposed to the truths God has laid down in His word. Be encouraged by this declaration from Psalm 138: 2, where it tells us that God has exalted His word even above all His name (meaning above His reputation, His status and stature, His authority, and His identity—not to mention, even above His miracles). To ignore God's word in directing and empowering your life, to treat His word with apathy, is to walk in darkness. (vv. 1:6, 2:14, Ps 138:2)

**4. Seek the Holy Spirit's conviction of sin in our lives**

If we want to walk in God's light, we will continually expose ourselves to the light of God. This means that we will consider the conviction of the Holy Spirit to be our friend. We will desire those times when the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin—which means He convicts us of living our lives with a spirit of independence apart from God. The worst thing a Christian can think is, "Never mind, God, I've got this." Thinking that we don't need God's help and guidance and provision for even the "little" things in our daily lives is the essence of sin. That spirit of independence and self-sufficiency *IS* what sin is all about. Jesus said He never says anything He doesn't first hear the Father saying, and He doesn't do anything other than what He sees the Father doing. Jesus was the most "dependent" person who ever lived, and we are called to live like He lived. So, desiring and continually allowing ourselves to be exposed to the light of conviction where the Holy Spirit shines the light of God on those times when we choose to live independent from God—that exposure, even though it is painful to our soul, is our friend. And we should desire it. We should pray for it. We should be grateful for that light of God shining into our lives. (vv. 1:6, John 5:19 ff, John 16:8-9, John 12:49-50, Ps 139:23-24, Gen 3:1-7)

**5. Seek fellowship with others who are seeking to walk in God's light**

If we want to walk in the light, we will seek fellowship with other believers who are walking in the light (v. 1:7). Spending time with them in the word together, encouraging one another in the truths and practices of walking in the light. (Bible study, prayer, confession, encouraging words from Scripture, praising God together, etc.) (vv. 1:7, 2:12-14, 2:20-21)

**6. Seek refuge and forgiveness and restoration from Jesus' blood**

If we want to walk in God's light, we will seek refuge and forgiveness and restoration from Jesus' blood when we fall short of walking in the light. This seeking refuge in the blood of Jesus *IS* a way to walk in the light of God. (Maybe it is the **best** way to walk in the light of God.) (vv. 1:7-2:2)

**7. Agree with God that we fail to walk in the light**

Agree with God that we fail to walk in the light as we should. Don't miss the fact that this acknowledgement of our failure *IS* walking in the light! (vv. 1:8-10)

**8. Rejoice in the cleansing power of the blood of Christ in our lives**

Rejoice in the fact that the blood of Jesus washes away any disapproval from the Father and restores us to a position of the full favor of God. (vv. 1:8-9, 2:1-2)

**9. Thinking like God thinks**

Thinking like God thinks is a way to live in the light of God. God thinks you fail to walk in the light. God thinks Jesus walked in the light for us (in our place since we couldn't). God thinks we are completely approved in His sight because the blood of Jesus washes away all the guilt of our failures. (vv. 1-10-2:2)

**10. Accept that Jesus turns away the wrath of God from us**

We walk in the light of God by accepting that Jesus turns away the wrath of God from us (which would otherwise be on us because of our failures to walk in God's light) and instead, replaces that would be wrath with God's favor shining upon us. (vv. 2:1-2)

**11. Be self-sacrificing and devotedly caring for our Christian brothers and sisters**

We walk in the light by sacrificially loving and caring for our Christian brothers and sisters. If we disregard and dismiss our Christian brother or sister when we see that they are in serious need, then we are in the darkness and we are becoming increasingly acquainted with the darkness, and we aren't paying attention to the fact that we are sinking away from the light, because the darkness is blinding us. (vv. 2:9-11, 3:1, 3:4, 3:11-20, 4:7-9, 4:15-20)

**12. Do not pursue the self-absorbed values of the world**

We are not walking in the light when we are being self-absorbed. When we intentionally seek to look at things we should not be looking at, or when we give in to the lustful cravings of our body, or when we pursue an ostentatious lifestyle, or when we pursue popularity or worldly status, then we are not walking in the light, but we are walking in the darkness. (vv. 2:15-17)

**13. Know and trust in Jesus the Christ, God's only begotten Son, who came in the flesh**

Jesus is God's only begotten Son, and He has come in the flesh, and He has been anointed by God the Father to be the one who rules over all of heaven and earth. Furthermore, Jesus Christ and God the Father are so inseparable that when you have one, you have the other. If you listen to any voices that claim any of these truths about Jesus are not true, or if you even listen to the voices whose ideas ultimately contradict the fact that Jesus came in the flesh, then you are walking in darkness and you are sinking away from the truth. (vv. 2:22-23, 4:1-6, Phil 2:1-11)

**14. Focus on this: God prefers your benefit over His own**

We are walking in the light when we focus on the fact that God prefers our benefit over His. He demonstrated/proved this in the extreme when He sacrificed that which was most precious to Him (His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ) to be the payment for all of our sin, so that we might have the status and standing and approval the same as Christ in His sight, so that we now also deserve all the benefits that Jesus deserves. Our benefit is God's will and plan for us. (vv. 3:16, 4:8, 4:12, 4:16-18, 2 Cor 5:21)

**15. Find yourself desiring God more than yourself, then you will do the things God desires**

You are walking in the light when you find yourself desiring God more than yourself, and you notice that from that desire you find yourself actually doing the things God has charged

us with. (vv. 5:1-5, John 15:1-17)

### **16. Seek our hope only in God**

We are walking in the light when we seek our hope only in God. We are walking in darkness when we seek our hope in the things of this world. We must hope only in the provisions God has given us through the life and death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, if we are going to walk in the light, we must guard ourselves from thinking anything else can meet our needs. (vv. 5:21, Ps 73:25-28)

**Please Note:** For additional ideas and sermon material on the Apostle John's First Epistle, you might find it useful to consider some of the questions in our Group Discussion Guide for First John (which you can find here: <https://B4worldview.com/DiscussionQuestionsForFirstJohn.pdf> ). You might find it useful to pay particular attention to the outline presented in Session 10 of that Group Discussion Guide.