

## The Path to Fellowship: Walking in the Light

Fellowship is vital for our spiritual lives. Through biblical fellowship we encourage one another and build each other up in Christ. We bear each other's burdens and point one another to God and His ways. True biblical fellowship is only possible, however, when we walk in fellowship with God. And so how do we do that? How do we walk in fellowship with God? In our passage today, John helps us understand that the path to fellowship with God is by walking in the light.

**Opening Discussion:** Do you believe that true, biblical fellowship with each other is only possible if we are in fellowship with God? Why or why not?

### Read 1 John 1:5-10

1. The message that John proclaimed is that God is light and that there is no darkness in him. What does this mean?
2. What are the false claims about sin that John confronts in this passage?

Brian said:

If I think I have no sin, I have to be so self-deceived. . . .To think that I have perfectly obeyed in every thought, word, and deed or to think that I've loved God with my whole heart and my neighbor as myself requires all sorts of self-deception. I would have to overestimate my own goodness and underestimate God's high standards. The dangerous thing about this kind of self-deception is that it will keep us from doing what we actually need to do to have fellowship with God. And that is to be honest about our sin. John says that if we want to have fellowship with God, we must walk in the light as God is in the light and the way we do this is not by minimizing our sin or denying it, but by being honest about it.

3. Most likely none of us would claim that we never sin. However, we might minimize or deny it. What are ways that we can minimize or deny our sin at times?
4. Practically, what does it mean to walk in the light (v. 7)?
5. Look closely at verse 9. What is the core thing John that encourages us to do? And how does this relate to walking in the light?

6. Based on what you understand this passage to be teaching, how would you summarize what it takes to walk in the light? Does it mean we never sin? Why or why not?

Brian said:

Here's how I understand why confessing our sins is so important. Let's suppose we are on a family vacation and as some point one of my boys wrongly gets mad at me and says some unkind things and storms out of the room. And over the next couple of days, he doesn't say a thing about it. He doesn't apologize. What would things be like during those days? Strained. Uncomfortable. Distant. That boy would still be part of the family, but we wouldn't be in fellowship. What would bring him back into fellowship would be if he would come and talk to me and acknowledge what he did. If he would do that, I could forgive him and our fellowship would be restored.

7. Do you think this is a helpful illustration of what John is talking about in this passage? Why or why not?

8. Is it your practice to regularly confess your sin? Explain?

9. Brian mentioned the following suggestions for making confession a lifestyle: (1) Confess as soon as you are aware of your sin; (2) Practice the prayer of examen; (3) Use communion Sundays for self-examination; (4) Make a sin list; (5) Use Psalm 51 to give voice to your confession; and (6) Confess your sin to a trusted friend. Which of these would be most helpful to you right now?

#### Practicing the Rhythms of Rooted this Week

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**Prayer:** This week practice one of the suggested approaches to confession that Brian mentioned.