

# KNOWING THAT WE KNOW HIM

WALKING IN THE LIGHT | 1 JOHN 1:5-10

There is a big difference between who God is and who we are.

There is also a big difference between who God is and how we think about God. We still hear the ancient whisper, "God is holding out on you." He is a God of ten thousand rules. Very few of them make sense. If we don't pick and choose or ignore his voice altogether, we may miss out.

The Biblical Story offers a compelling counter-narrative. In the pages of Scripture, God who is a vigilant shepherd, who cares deeply for wayward sheep, risking life and limb to rescue them from danger and lead them to lush pastures. He is a gracious Father who not only knows how to give good gifts to his children but always gives the right gift, in the right way, at the right moment. He sent his Son into the world not as a thief who would kill, steal and destroy, but as the one in whom we might have life and have it to the full.

We were created to live and thrive in a dynamic relationship with our Creator, and nothing is more devastating to our overall well being than our misguided attempts to quietly push him aside and make life work without him

John opens his short letter to the churches in Asia Minor with a compelling invitation. "We 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." He quickly adds, "We write this so that our joy may be complete."

As compelling as John's invitation may be, he leaves us wondering, "How can people like us possibly enjoy a rich and meaningful relationship with the Father and the Son?" John tells us, "We need a deeper understanding of who God is and the ability to be brutally honest with ourselves.

## **A GENTLE REMINDER (v. 5)**

*<sup>5</sup> This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.*

1. What are some of the things that come to mind when you think about the contrast between light and darkness?
2. How does the image of "light" capture the heart and character of God?
3. Why is it essential for us to remember, "in him there is no darkness at all?"
4. If we describe God as "Light" in whom "there is no darkness at all," how might we describe ourselves?
5. What happens when we compare and contrast ourselves with each other rather than comparing and contrasting ourselves with God?

## **THREE FALSE CLAIMS (vv. 6, 8 & 10)**

*<sup>6</sup> If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.*

*<sup>8</sup> If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

*<sup>10</sup> If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.*

1. What do you think it means to walk in darkness?
2. Why can't we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness?
3. What happens when we claim to have fellowship with him while knowingly and willfully continuing in sin?
4. While very few of us would claim "to be without sin" or that "we have not sinned," most of us minimize and make excuses for our sin.
  - a. What are some of the sins we tend to minimize or excuse?
  - b. According to John, what happens when we minimize, deny or make excuses for sin?

## **TWO VITAL PRACTICES (vv. 7 & 9)**

*<sup>7</sup> But 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.*

*<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

1. What do you think it means to walk in the light?
2. What happens when we walk in the light?
3. What are some of the God-given means for walking in the light?"
4. Why do we often run for the shadows instead?
5. When we hear the words, "confess our sins" we automatically think about being honest with God. James pushes us a bit further by encouraging us to "confess our sins to one another." Why do you think it is essential to be open and honest about sin with each other?
6. What does John tell us we can expect when we "walk in the light" and "confess our sins?"
7. We expect John to say, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with the Father and his Son." Why do you think he tells us, instead, "we have fellowship with one another?"
8. John talks about both "forgiveness for sin" and "cleansing from unrighteousness." Compare and contrast the two.
9. How would you describe your level of transparency with God, with one or two close friends, with your small group?
10. What are some practical steps you can take to be more transparent?
11. What are some results we can expect when we are more transparent?