

We Must Walk In the Light, Just as God Walks In The Light

Description

A study related to the SDA
Sabbath School Lesson for 2021, 2nd Quarter
The Promise: God's Everlasting Covenant
Week 13
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This week's lesson is the final lesson in this series and is entitled, "The New Covenant Life," and looks at some of the immediate blessings we can enjoy in this life after entering into the New Covenant with God. These blessings include joy, a life free of guilt, a new heart, eternal life, and a mission in life.

So today, we wanted to do an overview of these same blessings! First, joy.

The lesson quotes 1 John 1:4 which reads,

"And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (1 John 1:4).

Really, in order to see why John is saying that our joy may be full, we have to read the entire epistle. But we will read the verses immediately following this one to get the gist of the letter. 1 John 1:5-7 reads,

⁵ This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

This really sets the tenor for the rest of the letter. That is, in God is no darkness at all. He does not ever lie, and only practices the truth. This is the message that John is bringing to us that will fill us with great joy! We can totally trust God because we can know for sure that He is only about the truth. God invites us to walk in this same light and to do so in the same way that He does. By doing this, we will have fellowship with one another and the merits of Christ's blood will cleanse us from all sin. According to Romans 3:25, this would be from all past sin – sin committed during the time when we walked in darkness.

Romans 3:24-25 says,

²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were ****previously**** committed, – Romans 3:24-25 (NKJV)

Obviously, if we walk in the light as God does, we would be practicing the truth like He does. There is no sin in thinking and acting in accordance with truth.

And the cool thing is, if we stop sinning as is admonished here in 1 John, we can then have actual fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7). This is very profound. The only way to love one another is to walk in the same light God walks in, to never lie, and to only practice the truth. The only way to truly have fellowship with another person is to have no darkness at all within us. All darkness is caused by a lack of love stemming from believing a lie.

1 John 2:3-6 reads,

³ Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

So, fellowship is really only possible if we walk in the light, just as God walks in it. Truthfully, if we are sinning at all, we really don't have true fellowship with anyone. Not even our spouse, our children, or our closest friends.

This is clearly stated in the next few verses in 1 John 2, It reads,

⁹ He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. ¹⁰ He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. ¹¹ But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

These verses state that if we love our brother and abide in the light, there is no cause for stumbling in us. We will have nothing to feel guilty for.

This leads us to the next blessing we can enjoy today by entering into the New Covenant with God, as mentioned next in Monday's lesson; that is a guilt-free life. Truly, I think we all know deep down that the only way to enjoy a guilt-free life is by not doing things that cause guilt. Obviously, if we are not sinning against God or our fellow man, we have nothing to feel guilty for. Now, this life of living without guilt is only possible after we have received righteousness by faith, that is, right doing resulting from walking in the light as God does. By God's grace, He has chosen to teach us how to walk in the light as He is in the light. Once we accept and do this, Jesus will atone for our past sin and impute righteousness to us, again, once we have chosen to walk in the light God has given to us. In this way, God cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

Tuesday's lesson discusses the new heart we will receive by entering into the New Covenant with God. Of course, if we still harbor sin in our heart at all, if there is any darkness at all in it, we couldn't possibly have a new heart. We receive a new heart by faith – faith in the light – that choosing to live sinlessly like Jesus did is the only way to eternal life for us and others.

Which brings us to Wednesday's lesson, "New Covenant and Eternal Life." It is true, the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Paul here is saying that if we choose to sin, death will ensue. This means that if we want to live eternally, it is necessary to not sin but to instead walk in righteousness, which is to walk in the light – to walk in the truth. Every time someone sins, they put their own wants, desires, or even their fears or other feelings, ahead of others. When we sin, we form habits to sin more – to discard what is best for others more and more. Selfishness is thus developed, which is a lack of love for others, and that lack of love is really hate, which leads to death. As 1 John 3:14-15 says, "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." Sin leads to death, so perpetuating and spreading sin is perpetuating and spreading death. The whole lesson of God barring access to the tree of life after Adam and Eve sinned is that sin and eternal life cannot coexist since sin brings death. So long as we are sinners, we cannot have eternal life. Sin and selfishness need to be replaced by righteousness and selflessness in order for us to be able to inherit eternal life. And in order to be cleansed from sin, we need to be purified through a love of the truth. Truth is the foundation, love is the motivation. We must be perfect as God is perfect (Matthew 5:48), to walk in the light as He is in the light. There is no plan B.

This leads us to Thursday's lesson, "New Covenant and Mission." This message of joy brought to us in 1 John is good news. It is righteousness by faith. We must have faith in the power of righteousness and truth, we must transform our characters according to this truth with the help of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This is not something theoretical, it is, in reality, the only way. It is the way Jesus showed us and continues to show us through fresh messages of truth given by the Holy Spirit. These benefits of the New Covenant are reaped when we cooperate with God. And cooperating with God means living the life of Jesus. Jesus' life was not one of self-help and self-improvement. Yes, he did continually improve himself, but not for the sake of himself. His interest was in saving others. What it means to live the life of Christ and to have His mind, his way of thinking, includes the all-consuming interest in saving others, even at the expense of ourselves. This is true selflessness, and this is true cooperation with God. It isn't just cooperating with God to overcome the temptations we must face each day, it is cooperating with God in God's own mission of saving the world. Ellen White said,

"Heavenly intelligences are waiting to co-operate with human instrumentalities, that they may reveal to the world what human beings may become and what, through their influence, they may accomplish for the saving of souls that are ready to perish. Christ calls upon us to labor patiently and perseveringly for the thousands perishing in their sins, scattered in all lands, like wrecks on a desert shore. Those who share in Christ's glory must share also in His ministry, helping the weak, the wretched, and the despondent." Counsels for the Church, p. 59

People perish in their sins because they do not know how to walk in the light, or why it is imperative to do so. If we want to ever enter the kingdom of heaven, we must become worthy citizens today, and show others the way too. This is our all-important mission.

If you have been touched by the messages in these videos and from the other videos and articles we share with you, would you consider joining us in this mission? Maybe start talking about these principles in your church, share them with your friends and with your family! Let's be servants of God, soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's hasten the return of Christ together!

We will close with a few verses from John 15 that summarize the lesson for this week. Jesus says,

⁵ “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

⁹ “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

¹¹ “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.