
Inductive Bible Study of 1 John 1:5-2:2

John now explains what fellowship with God looks like in everyday life. Because God is light, His people cannot claim to know Him while choosing to live in darkness. At the same time, believers do not have to hide or deny their sin. Through Jesus, we can bring our sin into the light, confess it, and receive forgiveness and cleansing.

Step 1 – Observation: *What does the passage say?*

Read 1 John 1:5-2:2 slowly at least three times, using more than one translation if possible. On the first reading, follow John's flow of thought. On the second, mark repeated words and contrasts. On the third, notice each claim, its result, and the answer John gives.

Observation Prompts

- Circle every use of if we say, if we walk, if we confess, and if anyone.
- Underline every reference to light and darkness.
- Box every use of sin, sins, and sinned.
- Mark the words truth, lie, deceive, word, forgive, and cleanse.
- Draw a line from each claim to the result or correction that follows it.
- Put a star beside everything God or Jesus does for sinners.

Read the Passage and Record What You See

1. What message does John announce in verse 5? Write only what the verse says before explaining it.

2. List the three claims that begin with 'if we say' in verses 6, 8, and 10.

3. What does John say is wrong with each of those three claims?

4. What contrasts do you see between verses 6 and 7? Include both the actions and the results.

5. According to verse 9, what are we called to do, and what does God promise to do?

6. Why does John say that he is writing these things in 2:1? What possibility does he immediately acknowledge?

7. What names, descriptions, and actions are connected to Jesus in 2:1-2?

8. Which word, phrase, or sentence is surprising or difficult to understand?

Step 2 – Interpretation: *What does the passage mean?*

John applies the message that God is light to the life of every believer. He exposes the danger of claiming fellowship with God while walking in darkness, denying the presence of sin, or denying that we have sinned.

John is not teaching that Christians never sin. He calls believers not to sin, but he also tells us what to do when we do sin. Walking in the light means living honestly before God, confessing our sin, and continuing to depend on Jesus.

Questions to Explore

1. What does the statement ‘God is light’ reveal about God's character? What does it mean that there is no darkness in Him?

2. John uses walking as a picture of how a person lives. What is the difference between walking in darkness and walking in the light?

3. Does walking in the light mean that a believer never sins? Use 1:7-2:2 to explain your answer.

4. What is the difference between saying 'we have no sin' in verse 8 and saying 'we have not sinned' in verse 10?

5. What does it mean to confess our sins? Why is God described as both faithful and just when He forgives?

6. How do 2:1-2 hold together the command not to sin and the hope believers have when they do sin?

7. What does it mean that Jesus is our Advocate with the Father? Why does John call Him 'Jesus Christ the righteous'?

8. What does Jesus being the atoning sacrifice for 'the whole world' communicate about the reach and sufficiency of His work?

Word Study Suggestions

- **Light:** Greek phos - light, truth, purity, or what makes something visible.
- **Walk:** Greek peripateo - to walk or conduct one's life; an ongoing way of living.
- **Confess:** Greek homologeo - to acknowledge openly or agree with the truth.
- **Cleanse:** Greek katharizo - to make clean or remove defilement.
- **Advocate:** Greek parakletos - one called alongside to help, represent, or speak on another's behalf.
- **Atoning sacrifice:** Greek hilasmos - the sacrifice through which sin is dealt with and God's righteous judgment is satisfied.

Step 3 – Application: *How should I respond?*

God does not call us to hide our sin, excuse it, or pretend it is not there. He calls us to step into the light. In the light, our sin can be honestly confessed, forgiven, and cleansed through Jesus Christ.

This passage should lead us to honest examination, but it should not leave us trapped in shame. John calls us away from sin while reminding us that Jesus is our righteous Advocate when we fail.

Personal Reflection

1. Is there an area of your life where what you say and how you live do not match?

2. Is there a sin you have been hiding, minimizing, excusing, or blaming on someone else?

3. What specific sin do you need to confess to God? What step of repentance or obedience should follow?

4. Do you continue carrying shame after confessing your sin? How does knowing that Jesus is your Advocate change the way you respond when you fail?

5. What is one practical step you can take this week to walk more openly in God's light?

Summary Truths

- God is completely holy and true; there is no darkness in Him.
- Our claim to know God should be reflected in the direction of our lives.
- Walking in the light does not mean pretending to be sinless. It includes honesty, confession, repentance, and obedience.
- When we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us.
- John calls believers not to sin, but he does not leave us without hope when we fail.
- Jesus Christ is our righteous Advocate and the atoning sacrifice for sin.

Optional Memory Verse

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9 ESV

Prayer Prompt

“Father, You are light, and there is no darkness in You. Give me courage to step into the light and be honest about my sin. Keep me from hiding, excusing, or denying what You want to change in me. Thank You for Your promise to forgive and cleanse me when I confess. Thank You that Jesus is my righteous Advocate and that His sacrifice is enough. Help my words and my walk agree as I follow You. Amen.”

For Further Study

- **Psalm 32:1-5**
 - What happened when David hid his sin, and what changed when he confessed it?
- **Psalm 51:1-12**
 - Notice what David asks God to forgive, cleanse, renew, and restore.
- **John 8:12 and Ephesians 5:8-14**
 - Compare what these passages teach about following Jesus and walking in the light.
- **Romans 3:21-26 and Hebrews 4:14-16**
 - Consider how Jesus makes forgiveness possible and gives us confidence to approach God.

Homework for next week

Read 1 John again

- Circle every use of “know” and write a one-sentence purpose statement for the letter.

Prepare for the next lesson

- Read 1 John 2:3-14 and mark: know, commandments, love, hate, light, darkness, children, fathers, and young men.