

# Walking in the Light

by J. Glyn Owen

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of walking in the light, which means consistently living in accordance with God's moral character, and warns against the consequences of neglecting the light.*

**Duration:** 38:58

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:7, Psalm 51:9-10, 1 John 1:5-7

**Topics:** "Walking With God"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the cardinal Christian affirmation that God is light. He emphasizes the practical implications of this doctrine, urging listeners to bring their lives before God for judgment. The preacher highlights the need to cast off the works of darkness and live according to the truth. He references 1 John 1:5-7, which states that fellowship with God requires walking in the light and being cleansed by the blood of Jesus. The sermon emphasizes the inseparable connection between doctrine and duty, belief and behavior, as taught in Scripture.

---

## Transcript

Let us now turn in the word of God to the first epistle written by John. I would like to read from the first chapter verses 5 to 7. And this will be the basis of our message tonight. Following the very challenging word of the Lord that has already gripped our consciences and I'm sure our hearts.

1 John chapter 1 verses 5 to 7. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you. That God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness we lie and do not live according to the truth.

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light. We have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin. Doctrine and duty, belief and behavior are inextricably bound together in scripture.

Nowhere is that principle enunciated with greater clarity and with a more forceful application than in these particular words. First of all the inspired apostle John presents us with a major Christian doctrine. He tells us that God is light.

And with the next breath as it were he proceeds to tell us something of the very practical implications of this fact. And the two divisions of our message tonight will be found there. First of all we shall look at the

cardinal Christian affirmation that we have in this text.

And then the practical apostolic application of that great and basic Christian doctrine. First of all then we shall look at this cardinal Christian affirmation. Let me read it again.

This then says John is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you that God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. Now this is a cardinal Christian statement on many counts.

First of all because of its subject. It is a statement concerning God. And since the nature of Christianity as such, as well as of its ethical and moral demands, are alike determined by the person and by the nature of God.

This is essentially a cardinal statement. If it tells us about God and about his nature it is of primary significance. Secondly it is a cardinal Christian statement because of its source.

It comes here from the pen of an authorized apostle of the Lamb. A chosen and appointed emissary of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. And in the strict sense the apostles have no successor.

They accompanied the Lord, they lived with him, they heard him, they touched him, they handled him, they witnessed his life and his resurrection. And as such they have no successor. And this is a word that comes from the pen of an apostle of Jesus Christ.

It's not, it's not a statement that comes from the lips of a philosopher. Not even a theologian. It is a word that comes from the pen of an apostle.

And he tells us that he heard this message himself. This is the message we have heard from him. It did not originate with the apostles.

The apostles declared this word that they heard it from the very lips of the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. This then is something that comes from the self-revelation of God in his son Jesus Christ. Moreover it's crucial and its basic importance is evident from the substance of the statement itself.

It describes the essential nature of God. The reference is not to any supposedly ephemeral or conceivably changeable aspect of God's being, but rather to what God is, and what God has eternally been, and what God will forever be. It refers in other words to God's essential nature.

Something that cannot change. Something that will be the same forever in God because God is unchangeable. And the statement is that God is light.

And in him is no darkness at all. Not a shadow, not a semblance, not a suggestion of darkness. He is light and he is nothing but light.

He is absolutely light. Now what does this mean? Light may very well be a synonym for knowledge. You remember the Apostle Paul for example uses it as synonymous with knowledge in one or two places.

May I just refer to one. Paul uses it in that sense when he tells the Corinthians how God has quote, shined into our heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

Knowledge is light. And if you know you walk in light, ignorant of darkness. Now if John meant by this statement, if he meant to refer to God as the all-knowing God, the omniscient God, then the point is this.

He would have us realize that there is nothing hid from the eyes of him with whom we have to do. He knows our down-sitting and our up-rising. He knows our incoming and our outgoing.

He knows our thoughts. He knows all about us. He's an all-knowing God.

God is light. If that was John's mind or in John's mind. Again light could be a synonym for God's glory and majesty.

Paul uses it in this sense. He does so for example when he writes to Timothy. And suddenly he breaks out to speak of the blessed and only potency.

The king of kings and Lord of lords. Who only has immortality. Dwelling in light which no man can approach unto.

God is dwelling in light which no man can approach unto. That is the glory and the splendor of his great white throne is such that you may speak of it as light that is unapproachable. All this word light may have reference to God's holiness.

God's moral character. And in John's writings it would appear. But in John's writings it would appear to be fairly obvious that this at any rate is the predominating force.

Ah he may have at the back of his mind the notion that God is an all-knowing and omniscient deity. Yes. And that God is a God of glory and of majesty.

Yes that may be so. But in this context it's quite obvious. The main thing is this.

God is morally light. There's nothing shady about him. There's nothing doubtful about him.

Everything that God is, God is light. God's absolute moral purity and excellence is such. As makes it wholly impossible for him to come to terms with anything that is evil.

With anything that is doubtful. With anything that has the least semblance of imperfection. God is light and he can have no truck whatsoever with that which is inconsistent with his being.

The burning light of his holy nature flashes in open and consistent opposition to and condemnation of anything that can be termed morally shady. Ah a cardinal Christian affirmation. Now we are living in a day and in an age when there are all kinds of views of God abroad.

And one of the most important doctrines that would appear to be almost forgotten is this. That the God who is revealed in the law and in the prophets and in his son Jesus Christ is a God who is light. Now this is not all the truth about God.

God is also love. It was my privilege to take part in the service here. Was it yesterday morning and then we were dealing particularly with certain aspects of the divine love.

And this is so. This is true. But now we're looking at this and this is equally true.

God is light. His love does not cancel out his light, his moral character. Now come with me and let us look at the practical apostolic application of this very cardinal doctrine of our Christian faith.

That sublime albeit terribly challenging revelation concerning God's nature is no mere piece of theological furniture for our creedal shelf. We all have a shelf on which we shelve our beliefs. And when people ask us what we believe we kind of take it out and we say yes yes I believe this and I believe that.

But they don't apparently influence our lives over much. Now this is not a doctrine to be put on the shelf. It is a far reaching doctrine this and we've got to apply it to every detail and every aspect of life and living if we are to know fellowship with God.

Failure to come to terms with its truth cannot other than shut a man away to the mere shadows of a real Christian experience. It is impossible for a man to have fellowship, communion with God unless he is prepared to come to terms with this cardinal statement concerning God as the God who is light. Now let's examine this in a little detail.

First of all I would like you to notice what we may speak of here as the regular profession of Christians. What is the profession of a Christian? What is our Christian profession? Well John puts it in these words. We say that we have fellowship with him.

Now there are many ways of putting our Christian profession into words. We can crystallize our profession in many ways. This is one.

We say, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, men and women who have been born again of the Holy Spirit, Christian people, we say that we have fellowship with him. I put it like this. In professing to be Christian, we profess that we have been reconciled to God by the blood by the death of his Son.

Time was when we were afar off, but the distant have been made nigh by the blood of Christ. Time was when we were alone perhaps in the depths and mire of sin, but by the infinite grace of God we have been lifted up from the pit. So the distant have been brought near, the low have been lifted up, and in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus we have already been received into the arms of God and to the throne of God.

We have been accepted of him. In him we are accepted. Not only that, we have been given a new nature.

And the spirit of adoption has been sent into our hearts whereby we cry, Abba, Father. And you see what's happening. The moment a man has come to this, he begins to enjoy fellowship with God, and as he begins to enjoy fellowship with God, so also with all who belong to the family.

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray saying, Our Father. And I can never say, Our Father, unless I recognize the children as my brethren and sisters. And this is, this is the basis of Christian fellowship.

I claim that I'm right with God. Sin has been put away. His spirit has been given me.

I'm a child of God. I've the right of a child of God, and the privileges of a child of God. Here I can call upon him.

He speaks to me. He chastises me. He comforts me.

And the father-child relationship has begun. And so also on the plane, on the horizontal, of the horizontal. Now, this is a regular profession of Christian people.

You may not put it in so many words, but this is what it means to be a Christian. Now look with me next at the regulating principle in such Christian fellowship. And let me read again verses six and seven, which comprise my text.

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin. The regulating principle in this life of fellowship is brought out there.

Amos asked long ago, can two walk together except they be agreed? And the answer is obviously no. There must be some sort of agreement if people are to live together and to share life together. John states categorically that God and man can only get on together when that relationship is safeguarded in all its phases by the antiseptic of God's holiness.

This must be the dominant and the regulating principle throughout. What is consistent with God's holiness, I must cherish and love. What is inconsistent with God's holiness, I must abandon and turn my back upon and learn to hate.

It is God who determines the terms of our fellowship and not ourselves. Now this is something that we need to shout in our own ears. Not in other people's perhaps, but in our own.

The conditions of fellowship with God are to be determined by him and not by us. You see, sin has turned us upside down and topsy-turvy. We think of ourselves as the all-important people who must decide the terms of everything.

No, no, no. It is God who is the Lord. And we must gear ourselves to the nature and to the being and to the character of God and especially to God as light.

Now that brings me to the revealing application of this regulating principle that we have here. You apply this principle faithfully to your life and it will lead you to an ever deepening, ever widening, ever more and more enriching knowledge of God and fellowship with him. But you neglect it.

And self-will comes in its place and self-sufficiency and some of the other sins that my brother has been talking about. You neglect this. And you'll find that in a moment your fellowship with God has become remote.

And your awareness of the presence of God becomes less and less. Faith begins to wilt and love grows cold. And religion becomes a matter of going through the routine.

But the heart has gone out of it. The soul is gone, even if the shell remains. And heaven only knows there are far too many Christian men and women that are simply living on a shell tonight.

Who are not really walking in a life of fellowship with God. Because sin and self and Satan have somehow managed to come in between. Now look at this.

There is a profession which in the light of this principle is clearly false and futile. Listen again to the text. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie.

John doesn't beat about the bush. We lie. And we do not the truth or we do not live according to the truth.

Since God is light and God doesn't change. Since God is light says John and there is not a semblance of darkness in him. Then any man who is consistently walking in darkness simply can't be in fellowship with him however loudly he says it.

And how many times he may say it. He simply is not says John in fellowship with God. He may have had knowledge of God.

He may claim to be this, he may claim to be that. But fellowship with God a man cannot be enjoying if he is walking consistently in a way of moral darkness. For God is light and in him there is no shadow at all.

God does not come down to have fellowship with me when I am in darkness. By continually walking in darkness as a matter of fact and consistently walking in darkness I prove that my sympathy is not with the light but rather with that darkness. Now let us make a point clear here.

Let it be clearly noted that John is not demanding sinlessness as a proof or basis of genuine fellowship. That's not the point. The Bible says categorically there is no man that sinneth not.

1 Kings 8 46 and Ecclesiastes 7 20. There is no man that sinneth not. John is not talking about sinless perfection.

What he is saying is this. When a man is walking consistently on a plane of moral shadiness or darkness. That man cannot claim that he is in fellowship with God.

Because God is light. Are you walking in shady territory? My friend however loudly you proclaim it. And however many times you say it.

It is an active lie. Fellowship there cannot be between a man walking in darkness and a God who lives in the light and has no truck with darkness. Now as sure as there is a profession which this regulating principle exposes as false and futile.

So also is there a practice which it commends as right and rewarding. Oh I'm glad to come to this. But you see we've got to walk through the way the scriptures lead us before we come to the main thing haven't we.

They've got to come in through the vestibule into the holy of holies of scripture all the time. Otherwise we miss the splendor of it. Now listen to this.

But if we walk in the light. As he is in the light. We have fellowship one with another.

And the blood of Jesus Christ his son keeps on cleansing us from all sin. What does it mean to walk in light? Well you'll notice that this is a walk again. Not an occasional trip into the light.

Not an occasional deed of light. But walking in the light. The reference is to consistency.

A consistent mode of living. A mode of behavior. In principle walking in light means tuning in to the moral character of God.

It means in principle this. That I deliberately restore everything in my life to the bar of God in his holiness. And as a matter of principle everything is referred to him.

So that what I do is not just what I desire to do. Nor what people expect me to do. Nor what according to custom other people do.

But it is this that I have concluded in the light of the bar of the great white throne itself. God in his light appears to demand this of me. And because God requires it in his word and in his holiness I do it.

And if God proscribes it I don't do it. Now this is what it means to walk in the light. Oh how many Christians, young Christians particularly there are.

And they wonder why things have gone wrong and why fellowship with God has not become. You know my friends this is the principle. Now in principle it's because something's gone wrong here.

They harbour sin and they walk in the darkness. And they don't want to acknowledge that such and such a thing is wrong. And they don't want to leave it.

And yet they expect God who is light to have fellowship. And to open his heart to them. Now that's impossible.

In practice thus to walk in the light is a necessary. Albeit sometimes very painful discipline. It may well involve us in an excruciating crisis to begin with.

But it will most certainly necessitate a self effacing discipline thereafter. To bring your life out into the open. And for the first time to take the lid off and beg the almighty God.

Assess everything that's going on in the inner sanctuary of your soul. As well as in outward behaviour. To submit everything to God for the first time properly and honestly and sincerely.

You know it's an excruciating moment. Yet I believe that for many in this convention there can be no blessing whatsoever. Until you come to this point.

You may listen to the best preaching that has ever been heard in the world. And the spirit of God may be here to bless the people sitting next to you. And all heaven may be opened upon other people.

But my friend you will be like a stone. Until you open up your heart and all its sins and all its dark things. To the all seeing eye of God and say.

Lord I know you can see through it anyway. But I open up and I submit. And I ask your judgement upon the whole business of my life.

Now John speaks in his gospel of coming to the light. Coming to the light. In the sense of course this is what it means to become a Christian.

This is the condemnation says John that light has come into the world. And men love darkness rather than light. This is why many people don't come to the light of the gospel.

They don't want their hearts to be exposed at all. But there are many who have gone through that initial experience and then have tried to cover up. Oh my dear friends don't let us judge Watergate too harshly.

I'm not taking sides I don't know anything about it. And I don't want to pass judgement on anybody. Every man is innocent until he is proved guilty as far as I'm concerned.

But I know one thing that there is something in the human heart from the fall that wants to cover up. From the time our parents try to hide behind a shrub in the garden and then put on an apron leaf. Men and women when they sinned against God somehow instinctively hide and try to cover up and put the lid on.

Are you doing that? And you've managed it, you've got away with it. You've even been made a Sunday school teacher or superintendent. You've been promoted even in the church despite the things that are going on in your heart and in your life.

And you've got away with it. You've put on the mask and people have fallen for it. But God knows you and you know that.

And you can't appear. Listen my friend. If these were the last words I shall ever utter from the pulpit.

I beg of you in my master's name. Come to the light. There is no way into fellowship with a holy God until you expose your soul to him and ask his assessment of every solitary deed.

When you have time read the eighth of Ezekiel. And you will see how God took hold of his prophet by the lock of the head in a vision. And took him on one occasion and let him see the kind of things that God could see were going on in the hearts of the leaders of the children of Israel.

You know it's a most remarkable vision, it's a most frightening one. I don't know of any chapter to humble a man like the eighth of Ezekiel. Ostensibly these are, these are the leaders of religion.

Ostensibly these are the holy ones. But the Lord says to this, to the prophet come on he says come on and there is a hole in the wall. And if you dig carefully you can see through the hole and you can see what's going on in the inside.

See what my people are doing in the dark he says. And the prophet wasn't sent there by the news of the world or any other such journal. On an illicit errand.

To look into other people's affairs where he had no business. May I say it quietly. God has the right to be looking into your bedroom as well as your breakfast room.

And he's doing it regularly. He knows what's going on. And he's God.

Lord. The holy one of Israel. The God of glory.

And he will not change and come down and compromise with sin. If there is to be fellowship between me and him. I must ascend from the pit.

I must turn my back on evil. And through Christ and by the spirit and the word I must ascend. There is a way for man to rise.

Come to the light. Oh my friend this would be a great night for you if you took the lid off your life. And submitted everything that's going on to the judgment of God for the first time.

Now will you dare do that. But wait a moment. That's not enough.

When you do that you will have to do what Paul speaks of in Romans chapter 13 verses 12 and 13. Casting off the works of darkness. It's a very dangerous thing to bring your life open before God.

And to ask him to assess the things that are going on. Because he is going to put his finger on this and upon that. And you see having brought them out to his judgment.

Now I must treat God as real. As God. And therefore in accepting his assessment of what's going on.

I must be prepared to cast off the works of darkness. What are they? Well the word of God is clear about that. I can't go after the list tonight.

If you'd like to read Colossians 3 verses 5 following and a few passages like that. You do so at your leisure. But the word of God will tell you.

And the spirit of God will tell you. There are works that belong to the kingdom of darkness. They are initiated by the world, the flesh or the devil.

And they are things that are inconsistent with a God who is our God. Now then. God addresses us as men and women that are regenerate by his spirit.

And he says look. By the grace I've given you. By the word I command you.

By the promises of my covenant to you. Cast them off. And as if you would cast a reptile from your right hand.

You and I must be bold enough and courageous enough to get rid of them. And then is it all over? No it isn't indeed. It's only begun.

Now we must walk like that. And what may be a crisis at this moment of my bringing my life for the first time honestly and sincerely before God in this sense. And what may really break my heart when God comes down and gives his verdict upon certain things.

I must not only get rid of them and cast off the works of darkness by the grace that he has promised. But I must learn henceforth the discipline of walking in the light. When I was converted I didn't have very many Christians.

Christians died. But there was one dear lady known to some in the tent here tonight. Who was a great mother to me.

And one of the many things she taught me was this. My boy she said I'll never forget her. Keep short accounts with God.

I didn't know what it meant at the beginning. I never learnt that jargon. And so I had to question her what do you mean keep short accounts with God.

Well she said see to it that twice a day at any rate you ask him to give his verdict on things that are going on. And if you can't go on with peace in your soul don't go. Oh my beloved are there some of you among us here in Keswick tonight who are disappointed with a Christian life.

You heard the gospel preached and perhaps an evangelist told you that the whole Christian life is nothing but a bed of roses. I'm sorry if that were so and you were not told the truth at the beginning. But here you are you've made a profession you've set a going and it's turned out very much dissimilar from what you expected.

May I ask you honestly. Could it be because you're walking in darkness. You're setting a standard for yourself that is inconsistent with the holiness of God.

Or you're accepting a standard set by a society that is decadent and evil. Which is contrary to the standard set by almighty God. Then in his name I bid you.

Oh come to the light. God is light. And in him is no darkness at all.

There's no hope to eternity of getting God to compromise with sin. If you want to know the sweetness of it and the joys of it and the bliss of it and the glory of it. My friend you've got to come into the light.

And you've got to stay there. And in that light of life to walk. Till traveling days are done and then at last you'll see him.

In light unapproachable here. But for which you will be equipped by then. I'm through but I want to say this.

Please, please, please don't treat this as a sermon. If this is not a message of God to your soul tonight. There's something wrong somewhere.

And I bid you with all the earnestness of my heart. Heed it. As nothing short of the word of God.

To you his ransomed child. And it is spoken with a love of God. In your ear.

So let it be. Amen. Now let us pray.

Purge me with hyssop. And I shall be clean. Wash me.

And I shall be whiter than snow. Hide thy face from my sins. And blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart. Oh God. And renew a right spirit within me.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the love of God. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Be with us all ever more. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/21/SID21957.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-glyn-owen/walking-in-the-light/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**