

# The Discipline of Darkness - 4

by Jack Hibbs

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*Jack Hibbs explores the complexities of darkness in the Christian experience, emphasizing the importance of discernment and reliance on God's light during trials.*

**Duration:** 59:04

**Scripture:** Ephesians 5:6-11

**Topics:** "Discipline"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the prevalence of contention, jealousy, and outbursts of wrath in today's society. He emphasizes that as believers, we have been called out of darkness and into the light, which brings about a change in our thinking. The preacher also highlights the importance of guarding our eyes and being mindful of what we allow ourselves to see, as our eyes are the window to our soul. He concludes by urging listeners to be aware of the dangers of the night and to raise their children in a way that helps them navigate the darkness.

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## Transcript

The disciplines of darkness. What about and what causes so often our Christian experience to be hindered or in a sense retarded in its advancement? Rather than going forward, we begin to slip back. Or what about our walks and how they're challenged? And listen, just because you may be going through a dark time as a Christian does not necessarily mean that you're in a bad place.

We need to understand that tonight. Isaiah and Matthew. Matthew chapter 28, looking at verse 18 to verse 20.

It is the very theme of this series. Jesus is going to speak to us in a moment. It says there, and Jesus came and spoke to them saying, that is all of the disciples and the apostles.

He said, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I've commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

And that's what we're doing right now. In fact, every time we do come together in the Bible, that's exactly what we're doing. Now flip on over to Isaiah chapter 50.

Isaiah 50 verse 10. Isaiah 50 verse 10 says, who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servants? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on him. Tremendous word.

Maybe you remember growing up as a kid, I know I do, of being afraid of the dark. Is it just flat-out normal, I think, for kids to be afraid of the dark? I mean, I thought I was the only weirdo in my house because I had an older brother and an older sister and they were not about to lead on that they were afraid of the dark. I was always the one, I have now found out, I was always the baby saying, leave the light on.

Any of you have young kids that do something like that? None of you. That's great. So I am the weirdo.

That's just super. Leave the light on. I wanted the hall light on or I wanted the bathroom light on or I wanted a nightlight on as a little tiny kid and there's something about the comfort of a light on.

There's something about darkness that is natural to the human nature that's not good. Man is naturally afraid of the dark, mankind that is. And so again, I just remember growing up thinking about that and being concerned about that but I wasn't too far off as a kid about being afraid of the dark.

Look, in light of this week, and let me tell you, was not Sunday afternoon awesome? Oh, I'm not talking about the salvations and the souls and the worship. I'm talking about the earthquakes. Whoa, man! That was something.

We prayed, sat down to eat and about five minutes after that everything starts moving and you're... The earth is shaking and I remember way, way back in the Sylmar earthquake, if any of you were around on February 9th, 602 AM. What year was that? Anybody remember? 1960? 71? And my goodness, I lived in Orange County at the time but everything shook and from that moment on I remember finding my grandmother's Bible and I remember sleeping with the Bible and this is what my logic was. I remember this clearly, that if I have a Bible with me and an aftershock hits, God will not let me die because I'm holding the Bible and that's what I honestly thought and I slept with that Bible for a long, long, long, long time.

Never read it but I slept with it. And things that we think of, why? Because first of all, the Bible talks about darkness so I wasn't too far off as a little kid being afraid of the dark. The Bible speaks about darkness.

The Bible says that there's a great difference between darkness and light and so tonight as we talk about these things, we need to remember that this is a broad brush approach to the fact that there are things that are dark and sinister. There are things that, as a believer, we can trip up and get into that is very dark and wrong and then there's also the darkness, as it were, of the soul that comes against us and we may not have done anything wrong but because, in fact, we are walking with Jesus and we're drawing close to Jesus, I hear it from many of you. You've come from a church before that didn't teach the Bible and now you're coming here and you're getting the Word of God and then six months into your time here all these things happen in your life and you're wondering what's going on.

The Word of God is being made to be part and fiber of your life. Trials come. We can say that the the dark night of the soul comes, meaning that God seemingly stops speaking to us.

We check all the bases. We take the pulse. We see that we're doing everything right but all of a sudden the heavens are like brass.

God, where are you? We cry out and there's no answer seemingly. He's there. In fact, we are actually growing more in those moments than at any other time and we need to remember that.

Darkness by nature is a fearful thing but the Bible makes it very clear that we can power through it. Acts chapter 26 verse 18 speaks regarding this and darkness. The Bible says concerning the going forth of the gospel, that is to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins.

The Bible speaks about light and darkness, the power of Satan and the power of God and God's motive is all to bring you and I to a saving faith in Christ and Satan's desire is to keep you blind to the love of God and alienated from God. Colossians chapter 1 verse 9 says that we ought to be filled with the knowledge of his will and all wisdom and spiritual understanding that you may walk worthy of the Lord fully pleasing him being fruitful in every good work and increasing, that's the word illumination, in the knowledge of God. Illuminating knowledge we are to be as Christians increasing.

That's why we're here tonight in the middle of the week. We have come in the middle of the week, we've come from our jobs, we've come from our homes that we might continue to be enlightened and that's what the Holy Spirit does, it's a supernatural thing. Ephesians chapter 5 verse 17 says therefore do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is.

So these dark things that we talk about regarding Scripture are unavoidable things in life. There are people today who don't know God, they're walking in darkness as the Bible. There are Christians who may have backslid away and they're walking in darkness and then there's again the attack against the believer whereby a sense of darkness has come upon us and yet it's a good thing in the sense that we are advancing.

A great quote I want to give you, I read it today, it says what God has spoken to us in the light we must never forget in the dark. Isn't that a great word? What God has spoken to us, what God is speaking to you right now about the relationships or the situations in your life, what's going on in your life, what God is speaking to you in this sense in the light, remember it. That's why the Bible says I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not what church? Sin against you oh Lord.

What God has spoken to you in the light, we'll find out what that means tonight. Remember in the darkness when those dark times come. So look with me number one, jot it down in your note-taking if you would, it is this, that number one, the disciplines of darkness, number one starts with this, that we need to learn the difference between the two, that there is a light and that there is a dark.

According to the Bible there's a spiritual difference between light and darkness. I'm gonna give you a lot of verses tonight, are you guys up to it? Are you guys up to it? First John chapter 3 verse 8 says, he who sins is of the devil. The word means he who sins is one who lives a life of sin.

In other words, practices sin. This is what you live for. You live to rip people off or you live for this thing or you live for that thing and God's not ruling in your life.

He who is, he who sins of the devil for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested or that he's come that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin.

Now look that's that word again practice sin. You say, well Jack I've sinned from time to time. We've all sinned from time to time.

This word means to practice a life of sin. In other words it's your lifestyle. So understand that well.

For his seed remains in him and verse 9, excuse me, for whoever has been born of God does not sin but his seed remains in him. That is does not practice sin and he cannot sin because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed or made manifest.

Whoever does not practice righteousness, there's that word, is not of God nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you've heard from the beginning that we should love one another not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brothers righteous.

Do not marvel my brethren if the world hates you. First John is speaking about a lifestyle practice. Are you one who dismisses sin easily? Then you don't have an understanding of the two differences and where they come from regarding God's righteousness and what he wants you to live and act like versus Satan's plan to destroy and to deceive.

Romans chapter 1 verse 18, for the wrath of God is revealed, the word in Greek by the way is the present tense, the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness because what may be known of God is manifest in them. That's a great statement that means that God has revealed himself to all people internally, the conviction of God's existence for God has shown it to them for since the creation of the world his invisible attributes are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made even as eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse. In other words people who claim to be atheists down deep inside they know they're lying against the truth.

It's remarkable. Isn't it remarkable? Some of them are atheists, they don't believe in God. And as soon as it comes out of their mouth, in their mind they're wrestling with what they just said because they know down deep inside that they've just spoken untrue.

It's awesome. I love that. Anyway, I'll keep going though.

Verse 21, because although they knew God they did not glorify him as God nor were they thankful but became futile in their thoughts and in their foolish hearts were darkened. Verse 22, professing to be wise they became fools. Wow.

And then this verse, 1st Corinthians 4.5, 1st Corinthians chapter 4 verse 5 says the Lord will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. God knows everything and the difference between the two is monumental and as Christians we need to learn this. And I got to tell you right now it's not going to be a popular thing to have yourself taught in the Bible these things because the moment, listen, the moment you begin to live out a true faith that is alive means that you are going to stand up against the tide of somebody.

Hear me out. Are you guys awake tonight? I need you to be awake tonight. If you take a stand you are going to upset some people.

The Christian does not take a stand to upset people. The Christian takes the stand, number one, based upon the Bible. Number two, it needs to be rooted in love because there are people who are going to fight against what you believe and they're going to kick against what you believe.

Just know this, if what you believe is biblical and you are conveying that in love then eventually they will either say no for one last time or they will say yes because they have found out that what you're saying is true. It's pretty powerful stuff. The light and the dark will always coexist.

Understand this as well, you can't have darkness without the presence of light. You say, wait a minute, that's an oxymoron. If there's light then there won't be any darkness.

I understand what you're saying but that's not the context in which I'm saying it. You cannot have light without the possibility of darkness existing in this realm, in this world. Now we'll see by the time this message comes to an end that in eternity there is a place where there's absolute darkness and there's a place where there's absolute light and I don't know about you but I'm afraid of the dark so I know where I'm going.

Man, that's important. The discipline of darkness, number two, is this, recognize what's in the dark. What's in the dark? Now the other night our little dogs went off barking.

They don't bark much unless somebody's around or something. So they started barking and I have one of those real powerful light beam things that shine out my backyard, a handheld thing, a million, one million candlewatt flood lamp. Turn that thing on.

You don't dare touch the end, it's hot. And I'm looking in the yard. We have raccoons that come in our yard and they can hurt little dogs and all that kind of, or me.

And so I'm looking, I'm looking, I'm looking, I'm looking. Why? Because I want to know what is in the dark. I don't go looking for what's out there but when something approaches me or something's making a ruckus I need to know and recognize what's in the dark.

According to the Bible, what are those things that live out in the dark? And I'm going to go through this quickly though you, I'm sure, can fill in the gap. First of all, the Bible tells us that it's all manner of sin that lives in the dark and has a bead on us, as it were, that we are in its sights as Christians. Maybe you're a brand-new Christian.

You just came to the Lord this last Resurrection Sunday and you're here tonight. And you said, Jack, you know it's only been a few days but I've seen this happen and it's like what you said, that I would begin to have a mind change, I'd be thinking different and I'm here tonight. And that's awesome.

On the other hand, you recognize immediately also that there's now a battle with the things that you once did and there's a part of you that still wants to do them but now there's a war going on on the inside. First of all, I want to welcome you to the family of God because where there once was never a war inside, now there's a big war inside. Isn't that beautiful? Cheer up.

You've been blessed by God. What you once never struggled about when your friend said, hey, let's go do this, you went, all right, I'll drive. Now it's your friends are saying this week, hey, let's go do this and you say, I don't think so.

And you've even thought about making up some story to not go with them because of the war inside. That war inside is that spirit worn against the flesh. That's a good thing.

So that's, in a nutshell, things like pride or hatred, violence, immorality, lies, gossip, all the stuff that is native to the flesh. Now there's a war. We need to recognize what's of the dark.

Christians, listen, I believe, not you per se, the church in America by and large cannot even recognize those dangerous, sinful, dark things that go bump in the night because so many Christians this evening around the world, wherever, are not rooted in the Bible. They can't even recognize any longer or discern what is right or wrong. And we see Christians in the name of Christianity endorsing things and embracing things that is clearly opposite to Christian doctrine.

And yet they think they're doing the right thing. Be careful. Know your Bible.

Galatians chapter 5 verse 19 says, Now the works of the flesh are evident, at least they should be, which are, here they go, okay pause right there, what I'm gonna read to you right now, it's in the Bible. Tonight will you trust God enough to say he's right even though with what I read you might be involved in doing right now? Listen, this is the cool thing. For example, what I'm about to read, if you're involved in any one of those things, A, your thought will be, oh man I can't believe that.

You should stop thinking like that and realize, oh God what do I do? Help me. Why? Because you will be choosing to follow the darkness or the light, okay? So the works of the flesh are evident, which are these, adultery. Now that means having sex with somebody else's husband or wife and you also are married or one of them, one of the mix is married.

God says this is the works of the flesh. This is what people who don't know God do. They commit adultery, fornication.

Fornication is sex or a sexual immorality outside of marriage. Uncleaness, ungodly conduct. Lewdness, dirty things.

You could easily put pornography in lewdness. Idolatry, worshiping things. Finding, that word actually means finding your identity in things.

Sorcery, which is an interesting word. Sorcery in the Greek, it's, the old English put it as sorcery and that's totally makes sense if you lived in the 1600s, 1700s. It makes perfect sense because incantations and all was used.

I should say drugs was used with incantations by voodoo, witch doctor type weirdness, okay? But the word is very awesome and you know it very well in Greek. The word appears actually in your Bible in Galatians 5.20, pharmakai. You recognize that? Pharmacy, pharmaceutical or hallucinogenic drugs.

God says that's what the world does. Very powerful thing by the way that unlocks the door into the spirit realm. Hatred, that's hatred to the point of I want to kill that person and if you could kill him you would if you wouldn't, if you weren't get caught.

You know that feeling? Don't, oh yes now you're so quiet now. This plagues the human heart. Contentions, always got to fight about something.

Jealousies, outbursts of wrath. Do we not live in an outburst of wrath kind of age? Violence. Set up the YouTube, set up the camera.

I'm gonna beat that guy up or like this poor girl who we saw in the news this week where she was put in a coma by someone kicking her with steel boots. Set up the camera. I'm gonna perpetrate this crime.

Unbelievable stuff. The Bible says the works of the flesh is selfish ambitions. That's climbing over people to get to the top for your self-gain.

Dissensions, breaking relationships up or friends up or against the unity. Heresies, false doctrine, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, that's wild parties, the word revelries and the like of which I tell you beforehand just also I told you in time past that those who practice these there's that word. Those who do these things as a lifestyle will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Why? How can the Bible say that? The Bible simply identifying the works of the flesh which are these. Look at verse 22, but in contrast now we shift from the darkness to the light but the fruit of the spirit is love. Joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such there's no law. Meaning that you don't need to, you don't even have to have a law established or posted in front of such person because in the internal processes of their hearts, heart and mind, God's in control. Church did you hear that? God is controlling them so you don't have to watch over them.

Our Founding Fathers said if America ever gets away from a religious understanding then we'll have to create more and more laws. We have more laws today, are you listening? We have more laws today than ever and more lawlessness. Laws do not make people righteous.

A person deciding to follow God makes a person righteous by faith and a community safe to live in. A county safe to live in. A nation safe to live in.

Don't think for a moment, well we need a new law. Well no, we need to stop making laws, we need to enforce the laws we have and you know what, if I was a dictator of the universe I would have Bibles given to every prisoner, okay, that goes to jail, you got to have a Bible and oh no, call the ACLU but I would put the Ten Commandments back in class. That's what I would do.

You can't do that. Our Founding Fathers thought it was just a fine thing to do and since we took them out crime's gone through the roof. Many of us are old enough to remember that one year we went to school, we stood, put our hands over our hearts, said the Pledge of Allegiance, had the Ten Commandments on the wall and we had prayer in school and I went to a secular school.

I remember when the astronauts were in peril and the President of the United States said everybody gather together, school campuses gather together, auditoriums were packed. We went to the auditorium on the basketball court and we were led by somebody on the administration in a prayer for the astronauts who were in trouble out in space. Can you imagine that happening today? Hey astronauts! Tough! Amazing! I said, Jack how old are you? Very, very old.

But the Gospel attacks spiritual ignorance. Matthew chapter 4 verse 15 says that the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali by way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light and upon those who sat in the region of the shadow of death, light has

dawned. Man, that's awesome.

Every time somebody says I want Jesus, they're coming from darkness into light. It's incredible, it's awesome, it's wonderful. Number three, the disciplines of darkness is this, avoid those dark things.

Avoid them. Okay, this is where it gets fun. Avoid them.

According to the Bible, how do you and I avoid those dark things? The Scripture is very clear. We need to be loading up our hearts and our minds with Scripture over and over again. Truly, truly, I want to announce this, if anything ever needed a washing, all right, it is our minds.

It's our minds. We hear so much stuff that if you're not careful you'll hear it enough where it doesn't even bother you anymore. We'll think about things that are not right.

The lyrics to a song may be incredibly offensive to God. And here's the fun part, as a Christian, the Holy Spirit, I, you know, I may be a person who thinks that this rap song or whatever is oh, that's a cool song. And you're listening and you might even be mouthing the words and you have no idea.

And then all of a sudden, God gets a hold of your heart and says, do you hear what you're saying? Now, first of all, let me make the record clear. I don't listen to rap songs. You don't have to listen to rap songs to hear junky words.

Just turn on any country western radio station. But, you know, I left my money, left my honey and, you know, met some girl and stole their shotgun and whatever. You remember when you were younger, before you were a Christian, you had all these songs, you'd sing these songs, and now that you're Christian, it's like, I didn't know I was singing that song.

Well, listen to this. Stuff gets in our head. And if it was ever true, it's true now, and that is we truly need a brainwashing.

We need it. We need it. Oh, you Christians are brainwashed.

I pray to God I am. Wash it some more, Lord. The Bible says that we need to have our minds renewed daily in the Word of God.

Daily. Daily. That's why we encourage one another to read the Bible daily.

Hey, I gotta tell you, and for those of you who are tuning in right now, do this as well. Go to our website on the front page of our website at Calvary Chapel Chino Hills. Go to the front page, down to the left-hand side, click on there, and it says listen to the Daily Bible.

Listen. You can click it on and listen to the guy read it to you. Close your eyes and listen to that.

I tell you, by the grace of God, I want to encourage you. I'm going to say this not to boast. I'm going to say it for you to join me.

I get up in the morning, I listen to that in the dark. I got my cup of coffee, I listen to that in the dark. And then I pray it.

I pray what the guy is reading to me in the Daily Bible. Then, when that's done, I went to iTunes and I got Thomas Nelson Publishers, the Bible. I sit in the dark because I get up very early.

I sit in the dark and I click on that. And it's so, it sounds profound, but it's not. It's easy.

That guy will just take you through. I go through ten chapters of the Bible a day with my cup of coffee. I'm listening to it.

God begins to develop a theme in my mind as I'm listening. Like I've been going through right now all of the things of the blessings of the twelve tribes of Israel. And so I've been praying, oh Lord God, I pray that you would bring that blessing upon my family, upon my son-in-laws, upon my daughters, upon my wife.

I am so excited to find out what I'm going to hear tomorrow morning so I'll know how to pray. Try it, will you? Do that. It's so fun.

You can't wait. Why did I bring that up? I have no idea. Oh, about the Bible.

Hiding it in your mind and in your heart. Very, very important. The Bible says in Ephesians 5.11, it says, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

For it is a shameful thing to even speak of those things which have been done to them, done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light. For whatever makes manifest is light.

Therefore, he says, awake you who sleep. Arise from the dead and Christ will give you light. 2nd Corinthians 6.14 says, do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

Oh, some of you youngins need to hear this. But Jack, he's so cute. Get away from him.

Trust God. Oh, but Jack, she's such a cutie. Get away from her.

Pray. But I'm gonna lead her to the Lord. And what if you don't? I'll tell you what, she's so cute and so sweet and so nice, she'll lead you into her world if you don't lead her into yours.

Listen. See, what do you expect me to do? Be patient, trust God, and pray. If that's the one for you, listen, if that's the one for you, pray and ask God to make it happen.

But don't you make it happen. Because if you make it happen, somebody else can make it unhappen. What do you expect me to do? Just grow up lonely? I'd rather grow up patient, waiting on God, than marry and be miserable for the rest of your life.

And then the world says, well, just divorce him if it doesn't work. Hello? You'll be doubly miserable for the rest of your life. I'm not kidding.

I'm telling you, please take that from my heart. I'm not being paid extra to tell you that. Spare yourself some grief.

Trust in God. Let the Lord bring to you that one. Don't be unequally yoked.

For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness, and what communion has light with darkness? See the difference? Avoid the things of the dark. When somebody calls you up and says this or that, or when when you see this, if you're driving down the freeway and there's a billboard, look the other way, or whatever it might be. You have to fight that.

This is a great example. I've used it often. It's so excellent, especially the young people that are here tonight.

But check this out. Genesis 39, just write it down. It's not going to be on the screen.

Genesis 39, starts at verse 9. You know the story. It's Joseph. He's in Egypt.

And, man, I don't know how to tell you except just straight up. The Bible says that Joseph was extremely exotic in the Egyptian culture. He was a Hebrew.

And if you've ever been to Israel, Hebrew men and women, they're usually all of complected, lightly all of complected skin, and they can have anywhere from black hair to a reddish hair to a blonde hair, whatever. Usually wavy. And here's the weird thing.

Light blue or light green eyes. It's very interesting looking. Joseph was extremely out of his culture in his looks.

The Bible says he was handsome and smart. And the Bible says he was a well-built man. He's a slave to Potiphar.

And his wife, Potiphar's wife that is, keeps flirting with him. Hey, sweetie. She was... And look, you know how Satan works.

She must have been a real cutie pie. So she's winking at him. The Bible says she cast longing eyes at him.

I guess women know what that means. She keeps hounding him. Lie with me.

Lie with me. Verse 9 says, No one is greater in this house than I am. My master, which is her husband, has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife.

How then could I do such a wicked thing... Notice this. And sin against God. He was practicing the presence of God, which steers you out of darkness and into the light.

Constantly. Didn't Job say, I've made a covenant with my eyes not to look upon... Okay, a young woman. So check this out.

And though she spoke to him, to Joseph, day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. One day he went into the house to attend to his duties and none of the household servants were inside. She caught him by his robe and said, Come to bed with me.

But he left his robe in her hand and ran out of the house. What do you think of that? A person who walks in the light says, God give me that strength. Thank you, Lord.

Awesome. Joseph rocks. A person in the darkness says, What a dope.

Well, man, boy, that guy blew it. Darkness and light. How you respond determines if you are on an avoidance course or not.

Will you avoid or will you hit? Number four, the disciplines of darkness means this. Know the dangers of the night. Know them.

You don't have to, listen, you don't have to experience them to know them. Parents, listen. Well, we believe in raising our kids up and letting them find their own way.

Do you know that is disaster? I understand that. I understand that if you grew up without any spiritual upbringing whatsoever, but just basic morality, you don't leave your children to themselves. Well, we don't, you know, we don't turn or point our children in any religious persuasion whatsoever.

Listen, I'm warning you, you're making a big mistake. There's a reason why the Bible says, teach the Word of God to your little kiddos. There's a reason.

Know the dangers of the night. According to the Bible, what are the dangers of walking in darkness? Listen, in Matthew 622, Jesus said, the lamp of the body is the eye. I want you to think about that for a moment.

The lamp of the body, why does he put it that way, is the eye. Because you see this thing right there? This thing's very important for a bazillion reasons, but one of them is it takes in stuff constantly. Your eye is constantly taking in.

You may not even be thinking about anything. Guess what your eye is doing? It's storing data. It's a conduit.

It's the window. It's the window of your soul. It's looking all the time.

And what it looks at matters. What are you looking at? What do you let this thing see? Isn't it amazing that a child naturally will hide their face from something scary or evil, sinister or dark? I remember my daughter, I don't know when it was, could have been ten years ago, it doesn't matter how long ago it was, but she, I don't know if I ever told her this, I don't know if Lisa and I ever told her this, but one time my daughter or daughters, I don't remember, but one of them said, oh this is a really great movie. It's scary.

You want to watch it? I said, I'm not watching it. I can't watch scary movies. I'll tell you the reason why.

And this is, I don't know if I've ever told them, but my wife and I, Lisa and I, from the days that I've been an early Christian, God has allowed me to be exposed to some stuff in people's lives that you don't even want to know about. I've seen stuff that Hollywood, somebody in Hollywood must have seen it because they put it in the movie. In ministry, I've seen stuff where it's like, this is not of this world.

God be here now, be here big. So when somebody says, you gotta come watch this movie, it's scary. I don't need that.

I don't need to go there. There are dangers in the night. I mean spiritual night.

And Jesus says, what your eye takes in, it matters. If therefore your eye is good, the word means focused or solo, single on what is good. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

He says, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness? A filthy light, meaning what is being exposed to your eye, what does it do? Church, listen, listen, we live in a very, very dangerous age. What are you allowing to see? What are you taking in? That goes, listen, it's processed in your brain, it affects your emotions, it goes into your thought process, it begins to work on the type of person you are.

The Bible says in another place, to the righteous, all things are righteous. In other words, a kid will see a cloud and they'll say, that looks like Bozo the Clown. Or look at that cloud, it looks like Mickey Mouse.

That's how the righteous see things. Isn't that a nice thing? Isn't that pretty? Oh, look at that, what a wonderful. To the ungodly, everything's filthy.

Look, it's Mickey Mouse. Doesn't look like Mickey Mouse to me. You know what it looks like to me? And out comes some horrible thing.

Everything they see is dirty. To the ungodly, everything's ungodly. How is it that we live in an age where child porn is protected under the First Amendment? Because we have strayed so far from God, that to the ungodly, everything is ungodly.

And what happens is they take what is evil and begin to call it good. It's art. One more time I hear that stuff.

It's art. The woman walking down the street in Dallas on the news takes off her clothes, this pop singer, rapper person. You know her defense is in court right now? It was art.

What in the world is going on? It's a departure. It's dangerous. Proverbs chapter 1 verse 10.

You guys okay? You're awful quiet. All five of you are doing great. That's wonderful.

Proverbs 1 10 says, My son, any fathers in here? Write this down. Any sons in here? Write it down. Proverbs 1 10.

My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. If they say come along with us, let's lie in wait for someone's blood. Let's waylay someone harmless soul.

Let's swallow them alive like the grave and whole like those who go down to the pit. We will get all sorts of valuable things and fill our houses with plunder. Throw in your lot with us and we will share a common purse.

My son, do not go along with them. Do not set foot on their paths for their feet rush into sin. They are swift to shed blood.

How useless to spread a net and full view of all the birds. These men lie in wait for their own blood. They waylay only themselves.

That's a reference to the end of the age and judgment. Things that go on in the dark after the fear of God's removed from the heart of someone. It's very important.

Number five, discernment or I should say discerning. Either way, the disciplines of darkness is to discern the right path to take. According to the Bible, what are the benefits of walking in the light? Here we go.

It's this. Freedom. Can you write that down? Freedom.

What are some of the benefits? Number one is freedom. Romans chapter 13 verse 11 says, and do this knowing the time that now it is high time to wake out of our sleep for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent.

The day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. What a great word.

And let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry or in drunkenness, not in lewdness or lust, not in strife or envy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust. That's talking about being free. Listen, everyone, being free and applying the Bible so that you stay free, meaning this, whatever God has brought you out of in your life or whatever is those things or that thing that has a tendency to snare, grab or trip you up, avoid those things at all costs.

Now, I need to see how many Christians are here tonight. Raise your hand if you're a Christian tonight. OK, put your hands down.

For us who raised our hands a moment ago, there is something that we know super special that we better avoid. I'm going to admit that for you. If it's drinking, if you have a tendency to deal with your problems by reaching for the bottle because that's one of your learned response behaviors, you saw your family, your mom, your dad deal with troubles by reaching for the bottle.

That's a learned response behavioral act. When daddy yelled at mommy, mommy picked up the bottle. Or when daddy or mommy yelled at daddy, daddy picked up the drugs.

So the tendency has been embossed upon your mind and heart that when life gets rough for you, even now that you're a Christian, the temptation comes and says, either go to the Bible or you grab a pill. Go to the Bible or grab the bottle. You have to make a decision.

Are you with me? You understand that? Listen, to stay free, discipline yourself to reach for the Bible. Number one, how do you do that? Get the alcohol, that's your thing, out of the house. Well, I have it for medicinal reasons.

Buy aspirin. Get it out of your house. No excuses.

Seriously. Or whatever your thing is. Can you not leave the internet alone? Do you keep going to pornography? Take the computer and eBay or sell it now.

Get it out of the house. Give it to a friend. Throw it.

Take a baseball bat. Kill it. That happened in this church.

Not here. It happened to somebody in the church. Went home and killed their computer with a baseball bat.

I'm serious. 1,200 bucks, 1,200 bucks. 1,200 bucks is nothing compared to saving your marriage or saving your kids or whatever it is.

Freedom. To be free is to exercise disciplines that allow you to stay free. Secondly, unity.

1 John 1 5. This is the message which we have heard from him and declared to you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and we walk in darkness, we're liars or we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.

Listen, Christians, though the people of the world where we once lived, that's not who he's talking about. When you go to work tomorrow, your neighbors, they don't know God. You know, holidays, you've got to be with unbelieving neighbors.

I know it stinks. Or not neighbors. Unbelieving what? Relatives.

Thank you. Family. It's like, oh man, it's Christmas.

You got to be with these people. I understand that we all have to do that. But that's not what that verse means.

It's talking about those who claim to be Christians and do unchristian things. The Bible says, watch out. Have no fellowship with that.

We'll hear in a moment. But do have fellowship with those who do walk in the light. Revival is number three.

1 John 1 7 goes on and says, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. This is not the practicing of sin.

Now, this is the believer admitting and understanding. I fight with sin every day. You might have a sinful thought, a lazy thought, sinful action, lazy action.

It's not our lifestyle anymore. We don't live like that any longer. But we do have sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, that's as a believer to the Lord, he's faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Isn't that great? Number six, the disciplines of darkness is this.

Walk in the light. What do we do? We walk in the light. According to the Bible, we are commanded by God to walk in the light.

I can hear my mom right now on my head. Maybe your mom too or your dad said, Jack, make sure you're home before dark. The Bible tells us in 2nd Corinthians 4 7, for it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness and he has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence and the power may be of God and not of us. The amazing thing is that God has called us out of darkness into the light. I told the people, the new converts on Sunday when we went over to the tent together, I told them, you're going to experience a change in the way that you think.

How do I know that? Because it happened to me. You're not in your head, it happened to you. And out there, they know, you know what? They're going to go out into the world and there'll be a change of thought taking place because they have come out of darkness and heading into the light.

It's an amazing thing. In John 12 46, the Bible says, Jesus said, I've come as a light into the world and whoever believes in me should no longer or does not abide in darkness. How great is that? Number seven, we have to hurry.

The disciplines of darkness is number seven, this, keep yourself safe. Keep yourself safe. What do we do about that? Well, according to the Bible, how do we keep ourselves safe? It's this way, by keeping ourselves in a continuous state of fellowship with the Lord.

Matthew chapter five, Jesus said, verse 13, you are the salt of the earth. He went on to say that you are the light of the world. He put that on us.

It's amazing. So here's how we do it. Mark it down.

I could give you a thousand verses. I'm going to give you one big one. First Thessalonians chapter five.

First Thessalonians five one says, but concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, this is cool. Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, that is regarding the Lord's return. When's he coming? What's gonna happen? They're all asking.

Paul says, hey, calm down. Concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, everybody pay attention. You have no need that I should write to you.

Profound statement. Paul is saying, concerning the times and the seasons, when that time comes, yet future, he said that 2,000 years ago, you will have no need for me or anybody else to write you and tell you we're in the times and the seasons. He says, you're going to know.

Woo. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. Read the fine print.

For when they say, not you, they say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. They shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness so that this day should overtake you as a thief.

You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not in the night nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober.

For those who sleep, sleep at night. He's talking spiritual sleep, dead. And those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

He's not talking about alcohol, though that's not good to partake of. He's talking about those who are enamored and lost in the things of the world. They are intoxicated with the dumb things of life.

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. Wow. Jude verse 20 says, but you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Verse 21 is a reference to the Lord's return. Man, I tell you, if you believe what the Bible says, that Jesus could come at any time or you could choke on your burrito and go see him at any time.

You're concerned about that. You want to be ready about that. You're living with the sense of eternity in your minds, and it's going to affect the way that you live.

Here we go. Number eight will be done. The disciplines of darkness is this.

Remember, heaven is full of light. It's where you're going. So listen, we should start practicing the light.

John chapter 1, verse 4. In him was life, Jesus, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. Some see Jesus, some don't see Jesus.

Lots of verses. Time doesn't allow. How about this? Ephesians 5, verse 6. Let no one deceive you with vain, empty words.

For because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them. For you were once in darkness, but now you are the light in the Lord.

Walk as children of the light. Okay, I'm going to give you a couple more verses. This is fun stuff.

Jesus is the light. How much of the light? Watch this. Revelation 21.

I love this. This is the past. John says, I saw, verse 22.

Revelation 21, verse 22. John says, I saw no temple in it, in heaven. I saw no temple in heaven.

For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, that's Jesus, are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it. Think about that.

In heaven, and you look up in the sky, there's no sun or there's no moon. For the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light and the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light.

And the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day. There shall be no night there.

That's heaven. That's where you're going to be. Man.

Revelation 22, verse 5. There shall be no night there. They need no lamp or no light of the sun. For the Lord gives them light and they shall reign forever and ever.

Last verse. John 8, 12. Jesus said to them, I am the light of the world.

He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. So listen, Christian, this is good stuff. We're all done.

You can close your Bible. This is good stuff because here's the thing. Whatever's coming against your life, whatever's hitting you and I up and attacking us, we can say, hey, wait a minute.

I'm a child of God. I'm walking in the light. Watch.

Hear me out. If you are being tempted to think or feel you're alone, that God has abandoned you, that there's no hope. Has God forgotten me? No.

You are, listen, you are growing strong. You are growing excellent in the grace of God. And God has in his sovereignty allowed you to sense that darkness.

Don't sin. Don't panic. Check all the bases.

Lord, I'm keeping my nose clean. I'm in the word. I'm walking with you.

What's wrong? Let me tell you something. Are you listening? This is very cool. When anything is wrong, he will tell you and he will tell you quick.

Are you with me? When you do something wrong, he goes, hey, when you say, Lord, is there something wrong? I don't feel you. I don't sense you. It's like the heavens are brass and I don't I don't feel you anymore.

Did I sin against you, God? If he doesn't answer you in about a minute, let's go all the way out to like two minutes. If he doesn't answer you, my friend, then you just you need to say, Lord, OK, then. I understand that by faith, I'm going through a dark time and give him the strength to make it through.

Let me tell you something. I went through a two year period when I didn't hear God speak to me like I love you, Jack. He gave me messages and the anointing of the teaching, but it was like, God, where are you? Jack, I told you where I'm at.

I dwell within you. And you're going to have to come to the grip of believe in his word or believe in your feelings. Feelings will rip you off, man.

So check this out. On the other hand, now you may be in this in the darkness where you have gotten away from him and you say right now, Lord, have I done anything wrong? And before you even form the sentence, you know what it is. Lord, have I. Right.

The Bible says all those who are his kids. He disciplines them. If a person claims to know Jesus and lies, cheats and steals and feels nothing and makes plans to do more of it.

They never knew him. The child of God who knows him and does such a thing as a miserable person in this world, the Lord will see to it. If you're miserable tonight, God bless you and all of your miserableness.

It's because you belong to him. Stop goofing off and come on home. If you're miserable, if you're doing bad things and you're not miserable tonight, then you know what you're as lost as as as lost can be.

And if tonight you've checked all the bases and it still feels dark, my friend. Put on your put on your boots. It's a great day.

God's teaching you a wonderful thing and there's going to be some tremendous victories. You're right on target. Father, we just pray right now.

That as we just close out this service in worship, that we would be making decisions individually right now in our seats. Father, some of these decisions will be made. Maybe Lord, thank you for this moment.

Thank you for the encouragement. God, I'm going to stay the course. Some tonight might be Lord, I'm coming home, coming back.

I need you, Jesus. And some tonight might be. One that.

A confession is in the heart of someone tonight that they are an idolater. Or a violent person. A covetous person.

An adulterer or a fornicator. Or a drug user. My friend, you need to know tonight that God is busting you right now because he loves you.

We do not condemn you. God doesn't condemn you. Satan, he's working on condemning you.

You need to say yes to Jesus right now while you've got that chance. And you tell him about it right now, right in your seat. He's listening to your mind right now.

If you're saying yes to Jesus at the end of this song tonight, you come and get a Bible up front here. There'll be people here to pray with you. To love on you.

Church, the hour is late. God has given us warnings. Nations in turmoil.

Violence everywhere. Earthquakes happening. Even, my goodness, 7.8 in Indonesia yesterday.

All these warnings. Wake up. For our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

In Jesus' name and all God's people said, amen. Church, let's stand in worship right now as Gia leads us in worship.

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