

1 John 1

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of walking in the light through confession and transparency to maintain fellowship with God and others.

Duration: 35:29

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 1:5, 1 John 1:6-10

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a man named George who had a moment of realization and decided to make things right. He had initially taken out his frustration on a child and then on his way, but he felt convicted and went back to apologize and reconcile. The speaker emphasizes that this story does not guarantee financial blessings every time someone confesses, but it serves as a reminder that God speaks to us through various means. The main message is that God wants our lives to be open and transparent, just as Jesus' coming into the world revealed the true nature of humanity. The speaker also encourages keeping short accounts with God and others, as it leads to blessings and spiritual growth.

Transcript

We turn to 1 John, chapter 1, please. 1st chapter of 1 John. While you're turning, I'd just like to express thanks to the saints here at Sioux City for the fellowship of the Conference, for all the hard work that has gone into it, to all the loving attention to hospitality and to meals and all the rest.

It really is very refreshing to be privileged to participate in a conference like this, and we're really deeply grateful. A couple of prayer requests in connection with the work at the school I'd just like to leave with you. One is that our beloved Cook has been with us for 7 years, and she feels she can't go on any further.

She wants to, but can't, and so we're looking for someone to take care of a family of anywhere between 100 and 200 next year. And, of course, there's a lot of help. It's mostly, would be mostly supervisory work and managing the kitchen.

Another need is a librarian. If you know some devoted Christian who's looking for work in the field of library science, we'd like to know about it and get in touch with her. And you might pray about those two needs at the moment.

1 John 1, verse 5, This then 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. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not 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 Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

I'm thinking particularly of verse 5 where it says, God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. Verse 7, 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 cleanseth us from all sin. I think if a young person were to come to me today and ask me what one of the most important lessons to learn in the Christian life would be, I probably would be tempted to say that in going on for God, that one of the important things is to walk in the light.

And by that I mean to keep short accounts with God and with our fellow men. I really think it's one of the great secrets of Christian living and one of the things of first importance to us today. Now the Bible says here, God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

What do you think of that? God is light. What do you mean God is light? Well that's a good question. In what sense is God light? I think the Bible helps us to understand this.

According to the Bible, light is that which doth make manifest. Light is that which reveals. You picture this room in utter darkness and then you come and you snap on the light.

What a difference. Everything is hidden up to that moment that you snap on the light and everything is made manifest. Isn't it? You might say this, that when this room is flooded with light, everything is out in the open.

No secrets. Nothing under the counter. No hocus pocus.

Everything is crystal clear. Everything is transparent in that sense. I believe that this is all included in the thought here.

God is light. There's nothing hidden. Nothing hidden with him at all.

There doesn't have to be, does there? God is absolutely pure. God is absolutely holy. Did you know it was wonderful that God came and visited our planet in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and of him it was said, that was the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world.

It was a wonderful thing when the Lord Jesus came into the world. Up until that time the room had been in darkness, relatively speaking. Relatively speaking the room had been in darkness and all of a sudden a man comes into the scene, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is that which is the true light, which lighteth every man that comes into the world. What does it mean? Well, light makes man effect and you know the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world showed us up for what we really were. That's what it did.

The coming of the Lord Jesus into the world showed us up for what we really were. I might illustrate that this way. You never know what a crooked stick is until first you see a straight one.

Do you? You never know what a crooked stick is until first you see a straight one. Well, thank God that 1900 years ago one who was absolutely straight came into the world and it showed me how terribly, and that was the sense in which this light beaming upon the world showed us all exactly what we were. That was the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world.

And you know the life of the Lord Jesus is wonderful. I never tire of reading and studying about the Lord Jesus in the Gospels. The Lord Jesus is absolutely unique.

The Lord Jesus is the only one who could ever live and say to those about him, when they came and they said to him, who are you anyway? He said, I am absolutely what I said to you from the... The Lord Jesus is the only one who could say, look, I am what I say. Well, that isn't true with me and with you. We're kind of a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Is this about me, what I really am? And then there's that about me, what I want you to think I am. And they're not always the same. What I really am and what I want you to think I am.

I have a person and then I have a person. But you know with the Lord Jesus there was no difference. There was no difference between his person and his personality.

And when you met the Lord Jesus and talked with him and walked with him and watched him, you knew him, you knew exactly what he was. He was absolutely transparent and there was nothing hidden. But I believe that all of this is included in the thought, God is light and in him is no darkness at all.

Isn't that wonderful to think of a life in which there's no darkness? Look into your own heart, dear friend. Any darkness there? Any locked closets there? Any unforgiving spirit there? Nothing like that with God. Nothing like that with God.

With God everything's out in the open. God is light and in him is no darkness at all. And what the scripture is saying here is that if I'm going to walk in fellowship with God, that's the way my life is.

If I'm really going to make progress for God, I can't go around unforgiving things in my life. I've got to drag the wretched monsters out and call them by their real name and confess and forsake before God and before my fellow men. It's really searching, isn't it? I suppose that would be another S to add to our brother's series.

Searched. Searched. To walk in the light means to bring everything out into the open.

Godward and manward. Have you ever known a person, have you ever known a Christian who had a very, very sensitive disposition? And maybe someday, even in conversation, he said something to you and then the minute he said it, he realized he didn't mean it. Or someone who spoke unadvisedly with his lips.

Maybe he flew off the handle. And it didn't take very long before the Spirit of God came to him and said, look brother, in him is no darkness at all and if I'm going to walk in fellowship with God, I have to drag everything out into the open. Godward.

You know, there's an interesting word used in the New Testament in this connection. The word is the word blameless. Have you ever noticed that word? It's an interesting word.

The Apostle Paul said that even before his conversion, touching the law, he kept the law perfectly all the days of his life. No, it doesn't mean that. But I think it does mean this, that the Apostle Paul, as a Jew, before God, when he realized that he had broken the law of God, he quickly went and offered the sacrifice that was required by the law.

And that put him in a position blameless before God. Now, on Christian ground, it says in connection with the elders or the bishops of an assembly, a bishop must be blameless. What do you think that means? Does that mean a bishop never sins? Does that mean the bishop never flies off the handle? Does that mean the bishop never makes a mistake? No, it doesn't mean that at all.

But it means that when an elder of a local assembly does any of those things, he's blameless. And this is what it means to walk in fellowship with God. God is light.

In him is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

First of all, this must be God-worthy. Our lives must be sensitive towards the Lord. It's easy for us to become hard and cynical and even bitter and cold.

It's hard going through life and seeing all that you see and getting the terrible revelation of what human nature is in yourself first and then in others. It's hard not to become hard and spying. And what the Lord teaches us is that we mustn't be hard.

The moment that we're conscious that anything has come into our lives to break fellowship with God, that thing must be dragged. What is it? Oh, you say perhaps it's impure thought. Yes, it could be impure thought.

It could be sins of omission. It could be secret sins. It could be pride or discouragement or worry or unbelief or envy or any of these things.

And I'll tell you, when you study the life of the Lord Jesus and his moral glory, it makes you realize with a shock how unlike him. And so when the Lord brings this to our attention, the thing for us to do is to come before him and bow very low before him. He loves it.

He loves it. What do you mean he loves it? I mean it with all my heart. God loves it.

The sacrifices of God are a broken. And if you want to see it, act it out and practice, just read the 32nd Psalm or the 51st Psalm and then you'll find out why David was a man after God's own heart. I'll tell you a wonderful thing to me to read those Psalms and hear that dear man before the Lord crying out to the Lord.

I do believe that those Psalms are punctuated with tears, with hot human tears. Because David empties his soul before God and confesses his sin against God. I tell you, this is the pathway of life.

Sinlessness? No, there's no sinlessness for us down here. Blamelessness? Yes, that's a different thing. It's inevitable that offenses will come.

And it's inevitable in our lives that there are going to be things that are run Christlike. What do you do when you become defeated and frustrated and discouraged and then just give up? No, you don't. You come before the Lord like David came before the Lord and said, against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in my soul.

Dear friends, I'm persuaded that the reason for tremendous loss of power in our lives individually and in our local assembly is our failure to keep short. I'm persuaded if we could come together and make things right before God and one another that the Lord would come in in a tremendous burst of power and that we'd see blessing beyond our fondest thoughts. But this confession is not only Godward, it's manward as well.

And you know, I hope I don't shock anybody by saying this, but it seems to me that that's the hardest part of it. Do you find it easier to confess to God than you do to yourself? And I fight. The Spirit of God comes to me and says, look, you were wrong.

I want you to make it right. And I grit my teeth at all that stubbornness. And I hope with the passing of time that the thing will just subside and I won't have to.

I wonder, have you ever known that? Have you ever known the Spirit of God striving with you to go to a brother and say, brother, sometimes some years ago when I spoke to a brother in the Lord, I shouldn't have said it. I really told him all that was on my heart. And some months later I was on a train going to a church.

And God knows that it's such a humiliating experience for us to go to one another like this, that we think twice before we fly off the handle the next time, don't we? God has his ways of producing holiness and sanctification in our lives. He certainly knows how to do it. I remember dear George Verwer, a young friend of mine, following Gates in Gospel Literature Distribution.

He was there in a mountain of correspondence. It was just then his little boy, Benny, toddled into the room and Lord Verena came in. George said that five minutes later he folded them into his arms.

Rather amusing, he went back. I don't mean to tell that story that every time you confess something you're going to get a fellowship check of \$250, but the Lord spoke to him. The Lord is what the Lord wants us to do.

God is light, in him is no darkness at all. And God wants us, he wants him to be consistent. A book called Continuous Revival works.

And I thought it was very nice the way the author said that we should not only keep the roof off our house, but the walls down as well. We should not only keep the roof off our house, but keep the walls down. In other words, clear lines of communication to God and clear lines of communication.

Mind you, this would cover an awful lot of areas in human life today. Areas such as stealing, taking what doesn't belong to us. There can be no fellowship with God until something like that is not only confessed, but until restitution is made.

Don't you believe the Bible teaches restitution? I think it does very clearly in the book of Philemon. Paul didn't say that now that Onesimus was saved there was no more indebtedness there. He never said that.

If anything, Paul acknowledged the indebtedness and said, charge it to me. And you know, as we gloss over things in our lives and we think, oh well, it's past, I've confessed it to the Lord and that's the end of it. I tell you, there's a leakage of power among men with our brethren and even with the unsafe.

You know, sometimes Christians do things that are wrong with the unsafe. And you think, well I wouldn't dare go and confess it to them because they know I'm a Christian and I wouldn't dare confess it to them. They're ungodly.

Why, you know, that's the very type of thing that God uses to break their hearts sometimes. Because that's what they're not in the habit of doing. And sometimes just our unwillingness to bow low and to confess the wrong that we have done, and they know it all the time, those are the things that hinder blessings.

Gossip, criticism of others, hypocrisy, dislike of other people are unkind words. Why, when you think of the harm and the hurt that has been done in the world, and just think of how hard it is, especially the inheritance. You know, some of us like to pass it off that we've inherited certain kinds of dispositions.

Well, it is a sad thing. I will say this, it is a sad thing to realize that there are Christians in the world, and to them it's a matter of pride that they've robbed it. Seven angels from heaven swore against me.

Everybody makes mistakes. Everybody hurts. And the pathway of blessing is to keep short accounts.

I won't do a thing. You know, I read an interesting book some time ago. It's called The Doctor's Casebook.

Who went to a doctor with a very severe case of anemia. And the doctor examiner, he took the blood count and all the rest. And yes, yes, yes, she had a very bad case of anemia.

And what she needed was to go up into the Alps, into a hostel up there, and have a few weeks of quiet and rest and vacation. But in order for her to go up to one of these government hostels, she had to go to another doctor to get her permission. And so, in the meantime, I think three or four weeks had passed by.

And she went to this doctor and he said, And guess what is it? Well, she said, I have anemia. And she said, my doctor says I should go up to the hospital and I should get some care. And so he said, well, let's examine you.

And so he examined her. How are you feeling now? She said, I'm feeling much better now. He said, I think I'll send that doctor to examine her.

And then they sat there and they talked about it a while. And he said to her, has there been any crisis in your life? And she thought for a while. She said, the only thing I can think of is that I held a lifelong grudge.

And she said, I gave it up. And Dr. Paul Tournier, one of the recognized doctors of Switzerland, says that that's what cured her anemia. Do you believe that? God knows that it's hard to do that.

God knows that it's hard to make things right. You know, the thing of it is, it must not only be a once affair, but it must be a continual affair. It must be the attitude in which we live.

Wonderful thing to have a conscience that's sensitive towards sin and a spirit that's so willing that rather than grieve the Spirit of God, and rather than displease the Lord, to have a spirit that's willing right now to make the thing right. I wonder if the Lord might be speaking to some of our hearts this afternoon. I wonder if I can look back in my life and think of what kept me awake at night when I think of all the things that I didn't say and would like to have said.

And I find that I'm cherishing a hard and bitter spirit in my heart toward a brother in Christ or a sister. God is saying to me, look, I'm light. And in me there's no darkness at all.

Everything out in the open. If you want to walk in fellowship with me, that's the way. In this connection, there's something else important that we should remember, and that is this, that once we have confessed and forsaken and made restitution if necessary, God forgets, and we ought to forget as well.

You know, I find, Mr. Powell spoke about guilt complexes and the psychiatrist being overloaded with people with guilt complexes. I find in talking to Christian people, a lot of people who have gone to the Lord and confessed their sins and gone to one another and confessed their sins, and their sins have been forgiven, but those dear Christians can't forgive. Well, I believe that by faith, as you claim forgiveness from God, as you receive forgiveness from your fellow man, you must accept it that way and go on.

Now, think what this would mean in the home. Think what it would mean in the home if a husband and wife and parents and children were to walk day by day. Things are going to happen.

Things are going to happen. There aren't going to be explosions. You might as well, and you know what the explosions you do, and you know how they break fellowship in the home.

But just think how wonderful it would be if we were so broken and so soft and so tender before the Lord. Mind you, this is the way of the flesh. If we were so broken and so soft, we'd be able to go to one another.

I'm sorry, I don't think that's bona fide. Not if I was wrong. I was wrong.

Think what it would mean in the assembly. You know, I believe that every functioning assembly is a miracle. I don't like to use personal references, but we have a group of men at school, a group of teachers there, and every Tuesday they meet around the table and they discuss the policies of the school.

They've been going on for 17 years now without a good fight. You know what I mean? How? How do you do it? By simply going in and bringing everything out on the table and keeping short accounts with one another. This involved apologies from time to time, and I won't tell you who made them, but I'll tell you it's wonderful.

We're recognizing that we're just human beings saved by the grace of God, that we make mistakes and we say things we shouldn't say, and we do things we shouldn't do, but we want to walk in fellowship with God, and so we drag it out in the open. Think of what it would mean at work and in school and in every department of life if we could just be so wide open before the Lord and before those. May the Lord speak to our hearts through this, especially through this verse, through his own words.

If God is light, in him is no darkness at all. If we're going to walk in fellowship with God, everything's got to be out, exposed to the searchlight of his holiness. May the Lord help us.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7682.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/1-john-1/>

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