



LIFE, LIGHT, AND LOVE: A STUDY OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

WEEK TWO - GOD IS LIGHT

Read: 1 John 1:5-10, 2:1-11

The statement that God is light was not something John had thought up; it is a recurring theme throughout the Old Testament and continued into the New. We read in the first book of Genesis that in creation, God created light to dispel the darkness that was over the earth. He subsequently created the lights in the sky: the sun, moon, and stars. God is the source of light. We read in Proverbs 2:13, Exodus 10:21 and Psalm 88:12 that darkness is the antithesis of God. Evil is represented by darkness and goodness by light.

Read the following scriptures: [Psalm 119:105](#), [Isaiah 9:2](#), [Psalm 43:3](#), [Psalm 56:13](#) and [Psalm 27:1](#).

- These are a sample of Old Testament scriptures: write down how light is represented in each of them.
- What picture of the Godhead emerges from these?
- Many children are afraid of the dark; they want a light on when they go to bed so they can make sure there is nothing to harm them. We often have security lights outside our homes, so we are alerted if they are triggered. Clearly, light is preferable to darkness. What about our lives; have you experienced times of darkness? Have you given God the opportunity to come in and let his light shine into your situation? It may be physical, mental, or spiritual darkness but whatever the cause remember that God is light.

In Study No1 we looked at: **God is Life** and in John's Gospel chapter 1 we read: *"In Him was life, and the life was the LIGHT of men..."*.

When we have God's life in us as Christians, then we experience God's light. Verses 5-7 of chapter 1 say: *"God is light and there is no darkness in him at all. So, we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness. We are not living in the truth. But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses from every sin."*

These words of John are clear with no room for any argument. Some people claim to be Christians but don't attend church. They say you don't have to go to church to be a Christian. Verse 7 says that we have "*fellowship with each other*" if we are living in the light of God's presence. We need therefore, to find fellowship with other Christians and in 'normal' times, it is in church, but we can meet in homes, or online, and **Matthew 18:20** tells us: "*Where two or three gather together because they are mine, I am there among them.*" It is essential to have a spiritual base and for us that maybe Hull Minster or St. Mary's, where we need to be part of that that group of Christians. At present many people are struggling because we cannot fellowship together in church in our normal fashion, so we must find alternative ways.

- How difficult have you found it over the last few months, not having the opportunity to be together?
- We miss being able to sing and share over a cup of coffee after the service. This lack of fellowship leaves a gap in our lives. How has this affected you?

If we want to walk and grow in the light of God's life, then we must be proactive. We must make time to be in God's presence in quietness and prayer. Spiritual growth doesn't just happen. God is waiting for us. He made the first move in sending Jesus to die for us. We say in our Communion service: *He opened his arms of love upon the cross and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.* The Old Testament means of forgiveness was through the sacrifice of animals but in this New Covenant, God has provided a once and forever sacrifice at Calvary. In our communion service we take bread and wine as a remembrance, or as a symbol of the death of Jesus. The good news is that yes, he was buried, but on the third day he rose again! He later ascended into heaven.

Physical death means no more growth in our bodies. If we want to keep spiritually alive then we must provide for our spiritual needs and feed on God's word, regularly pray, and whenever possible, have fellowship with like-minded people.

John tells us we **must** do four things:

- a) Keep God's commandments (verse 3)
- b) Love our fellow Christians (verse 10)
- c) Stop loving this evil world (verse 15)
- d) Continue to live in fellowship with Christ (verse 29)

This week we will look at the first of these: keeping God's commandments.

It sounds simple. Of course, we want to keep God's commandments, but let's remember what Jesus said in **Matthew 22:37-40**: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest*

commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

- What do you think it means to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind?
- Do you fulfil this commandment?
- Do we love our neighbour as ourselves?

When we think about this, we realise that we need the light of God to search our hearts and minds. Do we love God more than anyone or anything? Do we really love our neighbour as ourselves? We certainly can't achieve this in a hurry, but we can pray and ask God to put under his spotlight those things on which we need to start work.

- Write down the things that immediately spring to mind in the light of this commandment. Then highlight the first area that needs to be dealt with. Be patient with yourself just as God is patient with us.
- As you work through these things, always keep in mind that God loves you – as the Americans say: period! Nothing you do can stop him loving you. What a wonderful thought.

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

Prayer: Father, thank you that Jesus is the Light of the World and as your children, we no longer need to walk in darkness and fear.

