



Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)

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STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15



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The ASSURANCE of Our SALVATION Part 5

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory

John 17:1-5 (NASB)

¹ Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,

² even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.”

³ “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

⁴ “I glorified You on the earth, having

accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”

⁵ “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

We have been considering the way in which we see in these **five verses** the particular glory of the Father being revealed in salvation, and now we take a step forward and come on to consider the way in which our salvation has actually been produced. We have looked at it in the eternal Council and as God planned it, and as he set aside and separated his Son for the work.

We now look at something of the detail of the way in which this was planned and conceived and was put into practice, so that we are looking especially at the glory of God in salvation as it is revealed in the person of the Son. And again, the same thing will strike us, namely, this emphasis upon the *glory*. It all has to do with the glory of the eternal Godhead. We have seen the glory of the Father, and we are now looking at the glory of the Son, and here again in an extraordinary manner we have before us this wondrous panorama, as it were, of the whole movement of salvation with regard to the Son Himself.

Now this is something which is staggering not only to the mind but even to the imagination. The whole sweep of salvation is unfolded here and displayed before us from glory back to glory and it is all in the compass of these few verses. So, we approach a subject like this with a sense of awe and wonder and adoration.

And as we do so, shall we not honestly admit that perhaps one of the greatest lacks in our modern Christianity—and here I speak not only of the church in general, but also, if we are to be quite honest, even of many of us who claim to be evangelical—that perhaps the greatest lack in our worship and practice of the Christian faith is the absence of a sense of wonder, a sense of adoration and a sense of worship.

I have no doubt at all that this is very largely to be explained by the fact that we are so subjective. I have said this ever since we started considering this section, and I propose to go on saying it, because it seems to me to be one of the great lessons which we do need to learn especially at this present time. We are all too interested in our own moods and states and conditions; we are all too psychological and introspective, and too concerned, therefore, about the benefits that the Christian gospel and salvation have to give to us.

And the result of this is that we miss something of these great glories of the gospel as it is unfolded in the New Testament itself. This comes out very clearly if we listen to one another; have you not noticed how there is a tendency to be talking about ourselves? We are always telling people what has happened to us. ‘**Testimony**’ today generally means what we have experienced, or what has happened to us. How rarely do we speak about Him!

Now there is the lack and the need. If you read the lives of the saints who have gone before us in this world, you will find that they spent most of their time in talking together about Jesus Christ. Their testimony was a testimony to Him, and to His praise. Their emphasis was upon Him. They spoke about this wonderful Christ and the glory of His person, whereas we always tend to talk about ourselves, the things that we have found, the happiness that we have discovered, or some experience that we have had. And I think if we are honest we will find that the emphasis is always more or less centered upon self.

We have deviated very far indeed from what was so true of the saints of the centuries. Take, too, your hymn books and read the great hymns, especially, perhaps, the hymns that were written before the middle of the last century. (The subjective element seems to have come in just about then.) Start with Isaac Watts and come down the great succession and you will find they have this glorious objectivity. They rejoiced in their experiences, yes, but

the note you find outstanding in their hymns is always their praise of the Lord, their glorying in *Him*. With Isaac Watts, they surveyed the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died. That is the predominant thought. They always spent their time in worship and adoration and in the glorification of Him.

It seems to me that this is the note that we must recapture, and that there is no real hope for revival and true awakening until we come back to this. And the way to do that is to study the Scriptures, to spend our time in reading and meditating upon them and then in humbling ourselves in worship and in adoration before such a marvelous truth. Now I am saying this not merely in a theoretical manner for I am anxious to be extremely practical. No, I advocate this because, apart from anything else, the real cure for most of our subjective ills is ultimately to be so enraptured by the beauty and the glory of Christ that we will forget ourselves and will not have time to think about ourselves at all.

Now that is a good bit of psychology. The trouble with our generation, and let us not be too hard on ourselves, is that we are living in a very difficult age. We have had to face problems which mankind has scarcely ever had to face in such an acute form, and such an age always tends to produce morbidity, a concern about oneself. We are living such a ridiculous type of life that our nerves are tired and frayed, and as a result we are all of us concerned about self, and the great problem is how to get away from it. The high road to that is to be so absorbed by someone else, something outside oneself, which is so glorious and wonderful that, without knowing it, we forget all about ourselves. This can happen as you look at some marvelous scenery, or fall in love and forget yourself; well, multiply that by infinity and look into the face of Jesus Christ and catch something of His glory, and I assure you that most of the ‘mumps and measles of the soul’ will automatically be cured, and you will find yourself in a healthy condition, mentally, spiritually and even psychologically.

But even more important than that is the fact that God has caused these Scriptures to be written in order that we may know something about this great salvation, ‘**so great salvation**’, as the New Testament describes it in [Hebrews 2](#). I wonder whether we modern Christians realize the greatness of this Christian salvation as we ought, because if we do not, the way to do so is to learn something about the greatness of the glory of the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

That is the way to measure the greatness of the salvation, not just by something that happens to us. Let us deliver ourselves from that! For if we are going to

measure our salvation by what has happened to us, I suggest that finally we have no answer at all to give to the Christian Scientists, nor to the psychologists. If you make it subjective, you are still in the past. No, the way to measure the greatness of this salvation is to look at the greatness of the Person and His glory and to realize something of what He has done.

Now this is the very thing that is shown to us in these verses. Look at the movement, beginning at [verse 5](#): **‘Now, Father,’** he says at the end of His earthly life, **‘glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.’** That is the starting point. You just try to consider and contemplate this amazing and glorious Person before He ever came to earth. You do not start with the Babe in Bethlehem, that was not the beginning of His life. He *came* into this world, He was not born into it in the way that everybody else has been born into it. He came from the glory. He entered into this world from another world, and what He Himself says here is precisely what is said everywhere else in Scripture, that He came out of the eternal, everlasting glory of the Godhead. He also says here that He shared that essential glory of the eternal God from all eternity—**‘glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.’**

Once again, we must admit that we are trying to look at something which transcends the reason and the grasp of our finite minds. But it is the teaching of the Scriptures—the eternal triune God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet but one God, and this Son of God, the Second Person in the Trinity is sharing in all the fullness of that glory. As the author of the epistle to the Hebrews puts it, **‘Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person’**—that is the description of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the effulgence of the glory of the Father, the express image of His person.

Paul, in [Philippians 2:6](#), expresses the same truth when he says, **‘...although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God.’** He is, to use an old phrase, self-substantial, co-equal, co-eternal with the Father. He is the eternal Son in the eternal bosom of the Father, one with God, the Second Person in the blessed, holy Trinity. **‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’** ([John 1:1](#))—that is it. He shared in full the ineffable, indescribable glory of the eternal Godhead. That is the way you start thinking about the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, then, the next step, obviously, is this: He prays that God the Father will glorify Him again with that glory which He had with Him before the world was, the implication being that something has happened to that glory. And that is precisely the teaching of the New Testament. In order to become man, He laid aside this eternal glory which He had with the Father in heaven.

Let us be careful here, and let us be quite sure that we know exactly what we are saying. I am not saying that He laid aside His deity, because He did not. What He did lay aside was the glory of His deity. He did not cease to be God, but He ceased to manifest the glory of God. Perhaps the best way of understanding this is to consider what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration when He was transfigured before Peter and James and John. A kind of radiance came upon Him, surpassing anything that had ever been seen before by those disciples. Now contrast that with what He normally appeared to be. Or again, take the case of Saul of Tarsus going down to Damascus. He suddenly saw a light in the heavens brighter than the shining of the sun itself, and he saw it came from a face, that of this glorified Jesus of Nazareth ([Acts 9](#)). Now you see exactly what is described here.

Again, contrast that glory with what we are told about Him when He was here on earth: **“For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.”**³ **He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him”** ([Isaiah 53:2–3 NASB](#)).

People would look at Him and say, who is this person? **‘Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?’** ([Mark 6:3](#)). He had laid aside the glory, He had not laid aside anything of His essential being or person or of His essential deity. But neither had He held on to it, He had not clutched at the manifestation of His glory, He had laid that aside as one would a cloak and had come in the likeness of man. Indeed, I must go much further than this, because this is the wonder of it all. He decided that His glory should be veiled by flesh.

Think of it like this: the glory is there still shining in all its power, but a veil of flesh has come over it so that mankind cannot see it. Take an Old Testament illustration. In the wilderness, Moses went on to the Mount and spoke with God, and when he came down his face was shining. The people saw the glory and it was so bright that he had to put a veil over his face; the glory was still

there but it was hidden from them. Something like that happened to our Lord. Yes, but he not only came as man, nor is it only true to say that His glory was veiled by flesh.

It is not true to say simply that the eternal Son of God was made flesh. We are told that He was made **‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’** ([Romans 8:3 NASB](#)). Indeed, He not only came into this world as a man, He took on Him the **‘form of a servant’** ([Philippians 2:7 NASB](#)). It would have been a wonderful and astounding thing if this eternal King and Prince of glory had come on earth and lived in a palace as a human king with all the pomp and glory of an earthly kingship—but not at all!

He was born as a babe in very poor circumstances. Mary and Joseph did not have the money to offer the usual offering. They could only offer two turtle doves when He was born. He worked as a carpenter and He had to earn His living. He did not have a home He could claim for Himself, or a place to lay down His head. He took upon Himself the form of a servant and was dismissed and derided by the so-called great ones of this world of time; He stooped as low as that from the height of the glory from which He had come. Thus, here on earth, in a sense, He had not that glory and He asked His Father to restore that glory to Him.

There is no better way of saying all this than to put it in the words of **Charles Wesley’s** hymn—and how foolish we are to think that such hymns were only meant for special seasons of the year!

**Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, the Incarnate Deity.
or again:
Mild, He lays His glory by;
Born, that man no more may die.**

Look at these paradoxes, these tremendous contrasts, but it is all the simple and literal truth. He thus mildly lays aside His glory and comes right down to earth, takes on human nature, lives as man in the likeness of sinful flesh and in the form of a servant. In these things, we behold the amazing descent from the glory.

The next thing we are told is that we must look at His work here on earth, which really is that of glorifying the Father. He did this in many ways. He says here, **‘I have glorified You on the earth,’** and in doing that, of course, He, in a sense, manifested His own glory, veiled in flesh. He revealed and de-

clared the Father by just being what He was. He said on one occasion, **‘...He who has seen Me has seen the Father...’** ([John 14:9 NASB](#)); look at Him and you see something of the glorious God, the Father Himself. You see the eye of compassion, the understanding, the readiness to help and to bless.

If only we could see the Father, said Philip on one occasion:

John 14:8-9 (NASB)

⁸“Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.’

⁹Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?’”

In other words, He manifested the Father and the glory of the Father in His life and all His activities and in being what He was.

But then He also does the same thing, of course, in His teaching. There was never such teaching concerning God the Father as fell from the lips of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Man’s ideas of God are always incomplete and imperfect, even the Old Testament revelation was not enough. As the author of the epistle to the Hebrews puts it, God has revealed this truth concerning Himself in parts here and there—**‘in time past unto the Fathers by the prophets’**—but now He has revealed it in His Son, perfect, final, full and complete. It is all there in this wonderful person, the blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—and in all His teaching and all His references concerning the Father we find all this revealed.

But then He did it in a still more striking way by doing the work which the Father had sent Him to do **‘I have finished the work which you have given me to do’**—and what was the work? First and foremost, He kept the law Himself. God had given His law to mankind and He had told them to keep it, in order to glorify Him. The whole spirit of the law is that we should glorify God; it is not merely to keep a number of rules and regulations, doing this and not doing that. The real object of the law is that mankind might be taught and shown how to glorify God. But mankind had failed, and so the first thing the Son was sent to do was to honor and keep the law, and thus to glorify God, and He did it perfectly. It was an essential part of His work.

Not only that, He came in order that He might be a perfect High Priest to represent those redeemed people whom God the Father had given to Him. In [Hebrews 5](#) we are told a very remarkable thing about our blessed

Lord in that respect. We are told that **‘He learned obedience from the things which He suffered’ (Hebrews 5:8 NASB)**. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, had to be taught certain things before He could become a perfect High Priest and to represent us in the presence of God. He came into this world in order to be the Captain of our salvation, our Leader, and He had to be prepared for that work and to go through this process. He had to be tempted in all points even as we are in order that He might help us when we are tempted and be a sympathetic and understanding High Priest. He came down from the realms of glory and submitted Himself to all that, and as He was doing it, He was not only showing something of His own glory, He was showing us the glory of the Father who had forever planned such a way of salvation.

What an amazing and astounding thing this is! Oh, my friends, as we read these gospels we must always be reminding ourselves of that. Look at it in detail, look at the life of our Lord Jesus Christ and remember that this is the Lord of glory. Remember that this is the One who is the brightness of the Father’s glory, the express image of His person. But look at Him in the manger, or upon the Mount, suffering hunger and thirst; the Lord of glory, mildly laying by His glory and thus living life in this world as a man, being prepared to be the Captain of our salvation.

But now we come to one of the most remarkable things of all. In the first verse we read, **‘...Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You...’ (John 17:1 NASB)** Is this the same petition as that in verse 5: **“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”**

I suggest to you that it is not the same thing, and that the two petitions do not have reference to precisely the same matter. I think that the petition in [verse 1](#) means that the hour is come, He is about to die, about to face the greatest crisis of all. Oh, it was a mighty thing, transcending thought and imagination, for Him to leave that glory, to be born as a babe and to take unto Himself human nature. It was a tremendous thing for the eternal Son of God to be lying in the womb of a woman.

All His trials and difficulties are something that we will never grasp and never understand in this world. And deeper and greater and beyond it all was this trial that He was now about to endure, the cross and all that it meant. So here, living life as a man,

He prays to the Father, **‘Father, glorify your Son’**, by which He means, strengthen Me, enable Me to show and to give proof of the fact that I am your Son. Again, in [Hebrews 5](#), we are told that he prayed with crying and strong tears unto God to hold Him and strengthen Him, and we are also told there that He was heard because of His reverence and godly fear, and His beautiful piety.

And this means that He realized what He was about to do. He realized that the moment was coming when the weight of the world’s sins was to be put upon Him, when He was to bear the staggering load of the guilt of the whole of mankind, that the Father had placed upon Him, and it was an overwhelming thought. Would His human nature, as it were, crack and break under it? Could He stand this load, could He stand the thought of losing sight of His Father’s face as He was made sin for man, and as He bore the sin and punishment of man? Father, He says, strengthen Me, hold Me, prove to the world that I am your Son, glorify your Son in this world. That is the meaning of the petition in the first verse, and the prayer was answered.

Oh yes, He came from the highest heaven of glory, and, as I have reminded you, was born as man, made flesh, made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He took on Him the form of a servant. He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. And, as Paul says in [Philippians 2](#), He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He was crucified and nailed upon a tree, there is no deeper death than that—

From the highest realms of glory
To the Cross of deepest woe.

He asked that the Father enable and strengthen Him and His Father heard His prayer. He was glorified, He was strengthened and He was enabled, so that at the end He was able to say, **‘It is finished.’** He had borne it all; it had not crushed Him; the body had not cracked under it. The work was done, He had accomplished everything: **‘Father,’** He said, **‘into thy hands I commend my spirit.’**

Then, secondly, comes the petition in [verse 5](#). The Lord is still looking to what is before Him, and this is His prayer. Having completed all the work, having done everything which the Father had appointed Him to do, He asks, as it were: Has not the time now arrived when I can come back to you, exactly where I was before? I have done the work.

“Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” But the astonishing thing for us to remem-

ber at this point is that He goes back as God-Man! In eternity, he was God the Son, pure deity, and He shared the glory, but now He goes back as God-Man. And as God-Man, and our representative, the glory which He momentarily laid aside at the request of the Father is restored to Him, and thus as God-Man and Mediator He again shares this ineffable glory of the eternal God.

Romans 1:4

⁴“who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,”

And so, this prayer, too, was answered. It began to be answered at the resurrection, the event which finally convinced even the disciples that He was the Son of God. They did not quite understand it before, but, as Paul puts it in writing to Romans, our Lord was, **‘declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord’** (**Romans 1:4 NASB**).

Who is this who has conquered death and the grave? He must be, He is, the Son of God. Consider the appearances after the resurrection. You find the disciples in Jerusalem behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jews, and suddenly He came in without the door being opened. They thought it was a ghost. But He showed that He was not by asking them to give Him something to eat. So, they gave Him **‘a piece of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb’**. ‘You see who I am,’ He says in effect, **‘I have flesh and bones, and I can eat’**—the glorious person of this risen Lord.

Then perhaps still more strikingly we see it in the ascension. Many of us do not observe Ascension Day, do we? We are a little inconsistent in this; we observe Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday! We observe Pentecost Sunday, but we do not observe Ascension Day, and it is a very essential part in all this movement of God’s plan. His disciples were with Him on the Mount and while He was speaking, He was lifted up and He ascended into heaven. His glory was manifested in a most amazing manner there. And then He manifested it still more by sending the gift of His Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. It is a proof that He is the Son of God, the Messiah, this glorious being. And there He is now, sitting at the right hand of God in the glory, reigning until all His enemies shall be made His footstool.

And so, I have tried to hold before you something of the glory which is depicted in these **five verses**, from the glory, down to the depths of the cross and to Hades, and back again via the ascension to that ineffable glory once more, and He now takes human nature with Him. But why has He done all this? I can imagine someone saying, ‘My dear Sir, this is all very well, you know. If we were living in a leisurely world and had no business and no cares and no worries and trials perhaps we could take all these remarks objectively. But we want something that will help us now, here and now in the immediate present, have you not something to say to us?’

I hope nobody feels like that after what we have just been considering? I have just been reminding you of what the eternal Son of God has done for you, that you might be saved from the wrath of God and from hell, and from sin, and from yourself. He has done it that you might become a son of God, that you might begin to enjoy ‘a joy unspeakable and full of glory’, and that you might receive the Holy Spirit with all His power and might. That is what it is all about. If you feel that all I have been saying is something theoretical and remote, it is because you do not understand, because you are not related to it, and because you do not realize it has all been done for you. That is the greatness of the glory; He has done all this for us.

That is the true reaction to the things we have been considering together. He did it all to ransom guilty captives, and if you realize that He has done that for you, you will agree with **Robert Robinson** when he wrote these words: **‘Is your praise flowing? Do you praise the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you praise Him to other people; do you talk to them about Him?’** People talk today about those whom they like and admire. I read of them praising actors and actresses and all sorts of politicians and people; you see it in the newspapers, and you have to listen to them when you are trying to read in a bus. But do we praise the Lord Jesus Christ? If we do not it is because we do not realize what He has done for us. Again, I would agree with **Robert Robinson** when he says ‘Break my tongue, such guilty silence.’

Oh, my dear friends, if you do not realize the glory of these things, hasten to God and confess it. Ask Him so to give you His Holy Spirit that your eyes will be opened to these precious, glorious truths. The Holy Spirit was sent in order to make these things real to us. If we but realized these things then we would inevitably be praising with the whole of our being, and our whole life would be to His praise. The Holy Spirit will enable us to realize these glorious things. He will so imprint and impress them upon mind and heart and understanding that they will be real to us, so real that finally we

shall be able to join Paul in saying, ‘To me to live is Christ.’

CORAM DEO (Before the face of God)

PSALMS OF PRAYER AND PRAISE

Psalm 5: Morning Prayer for Guidance

Psalm 5:1-12 (NASB)

¹ “Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning.

² Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray.

³ In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order *my prayer* to You and *eagerly* watch.

⁴ For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.

⁵ The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity.

⁶ You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.

⁷ But as for me, by Your abundant loving-kindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.

⁸ O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.

⁹ There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.

¹⁰ Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.

¹¹ But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.

¹² For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.”

This psalm is a morning prayer and David’s circumstances are different. He is no longer in exile and has the privilege of entering the house of the

Lord and bowing in worship ([verse 7](#)).

Psalm 5:7 (NASB)

⁷ “But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.”

He is not fleeing from enemies but is in danger of those who are secretly lying in wait for him ([verses 9–10](#)).

Psalm 5:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ “There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.

¹⁰ Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.”

Several traits of God are manifested in this psalm. [Verses 1–3](#) depict a God who hears if we request.

Psalm 5:1-3 (NASB)

¹ “Give ear to my words, O LORD, Consider my groaning.

² Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, For to You I pray.

³ In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order *my prayer* to You and *eagerly* watch.”

How certain it is that all need to meditate on God’s Word and pray. We need to have that blessed communion with God and the joy of His fellowship in prayer. This little pronoun in “*my King, my God*” illustrates the root reason for our plea because He *is our* King and *our* God. He is ours by covenant and by promise. How beautiful to begin the day with God.

If the devil wins those morning minutes, he knows he has won that day. The enemy well knows how important that morning devotion is and he spares nothing to frustrate and confuse it. It takes perseverance. A few moments spent in communion with God at each opening day—a visit to the throne of grace—will help us through the snarls of daily routine.

[Verses 4–6](#) reveal a God who hates sin.

Psalm 5:4-6 (NASB)

⁴ “For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.

⁵ The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity.

⁶ You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.”

The holy God is unable to tolerate sin. He simply cannot be in the presence of sin as it contradicts His divine nature. In Him there is no darkness at all. We need to hate what God hates, to abhor sin in any form. How important it is for us to love what God loves and hate what He hates. To hear His name taken in vain and see a disregard for His Word should pierce our hearts like a sword. Pray that God will never allow us to get accustomed to sin. God hates sin and so must we. But always love and pray for the sinner.

Sin separates people from God. We need to identify and remove all sin from our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit within us. There is no such thing as a “little sin” before God. Anything at all that contradicts the divine nature is sin. We need to confess, repent, and refuse to participate in anything God calls sin. No one will be able to stand faultless under God’s wrath ([verse 5](#)).

Psalm 5:5 (NASB)

⁵ **“The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity.”**

[Verse 7](#) points out the mercy of God.

Psalm 5:7 (NASB)

⁷ **“But as for me, by Your abundant loving-kindness I will enter Your house, At Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You.”**

Throughout the Psalms there is a strong feeling that God, by His very character as a righteous God, is pledged to defend and bless the righteous. David confesses that it is only in the loving kindness of God that he can enter His holy temple. We do not deserve to come into God’s presence, yet in mercy He invites us in. We deserve condemnation for our sin, yet in mercy Jesus frees us from the punishment we deserve. When we grasp this concept, we will have a reverence and holy fear of God. Coming to God’s temple is not done flippantly but with a sense of awe.

[Verses 8–10](#) describe God’s judgment. God can look into a person’s heart and see what no one else sees.

Psalm 5:8-10 (NASB)

⁸ **“O LORD, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; Make Your way straight before me.**

⁹ **There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.**

¹⁰ **Hold them guilty, O God; By their own de-**

vices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.”

[Verse 9](#) says God knows when one is unfaithful (not sincere) and when one flatters with one’s tongue (speaking one way and acting another).

Psalm 5:9 (NASB)

⁹ **“There is nothing reliable in what they say; Their inward part is destruction *itself*. Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.”**

David’s prayer in [verse 10](#), **“Pronounce them guilty, O God!”** is not malicious.

Psalm 5:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ **“Hold them guilty, O God; By their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, For they are rebellious against You.”**

David is not cursing his enemies, but he is jealous for the honor of his Master. David is asking God to let the wicked get caught in their own trap—**“Fall by their own counsels.”** This is the natural consequence of their choice of rebellion against God. He considers the wickedness of traitors as a rebellion against God more than treason against his own earthly throne. His prayer is for the honor of God’s name and the vindication of His justice.

[Verses 11–12](#) emphasize God’s blessing on the obedient, enabling them to rejoice.

Psalm 5:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ **“But let all who take refuge in You be glad, Let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, That those who love Your name may exult in You.**

¹² **For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.”**

[Verse 12](#) states that God’s favor surrounds like a shield, despite appearances to the contrary. A mistaken notion can be corrected from these verses. Many say that God must not love you if you encounter bad circumstances. Yet just the opposite is true: when all else seems against you, you can be certain God is FOR you.

Psalm 5:12 (NASB)

¹² **“For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O LORD, You surround him with favor as with a shield.”**



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1 John 1- Overview

Part 3

In the last study we looked at three key words in [1 John 1](#) – “walk”, “light”, and “darkness”. Each of those are very key words because they set the stage for the constant contrasts that John is going to be developing as he continues. All of the “tests” that John will give to us will be centered and focused on the issues of walking in light or walking in darkness.

I want to keep before us that John is actually refuting the false doctrine of the Gnostics as well as other false doctrines that were becoming both prevalent and divisive. The Gnostics simply denied the reality of sin. They said that the spiritual was always good and the physical was always bad. They doing that, they created a dichotomy between the spiritual realm and the physical world. They contended that the spiritual realities were the only thing that mattered and that what was done in the flesh was a nonissue. What this did was to deny the existence of sin in a person’s life, and it provided a very convenient way to not take responsibility for their sin.

In looking at [1 John 1:3 and 6](#), there is a key word that John talks about. It is the word “fellowship”, or

the Greek word “*koinōnia*”. Fellowship is similar to two people walking down the road together. In [Genesis 5:22](#), for instance, it says that “**Enoch walked with God**”. That phrase means that Enoch was having fellowship with God. When we are having fellowship with God it means that we are going through life together, much the same as a husband and wife do that are truly committed to one another. So, whenever we talk about the issue of having fellowship, it is important to know something about the character of the two persons that are actually having fellowship together. Fellowship is ultimately based on people sharing the same beliefs and having certain vital things in common with one another. It is very difficult to have meaningful fellowship with someone with whom you do not have much in common. So, what John does in [1 John 1:5](#) is establish right at the beginning the character of God. He simply states that “**God is light**”. In reference to God’s nature, His being, and His essence, “**God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all**”. There is nothing, literally nothing in God that is not true and right and holy, and if we are going to have fellowship with Him, then those very things need to be a part of our life as well. There is no admixture in the character of God that is evil or sinful.

In v6, John comes to the other side of the fellowship, or our side. [Amos 3:3](#) says,

Am 3:3 **Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?**

Most marriages that do not work out do not do so because the husband and the wife cannot come to agreement about certain things. It might be their finances, their priorities, how to raise the children, how much debt they are willing to absorb, or their differing religious beliefs. It could be many things. They have this disparity in their values, beliefs, or opinions about things, and the differences become irreconcilable and they ultimately end up getting divorced. If we are going to have meaningful fellowship with someone, then there has to be a legitimate basis for that to happen. There are many people that I simply cannot have meaningful fellowship with because we do not believe the same things. We have different values and different beliefs, and therefore our behavior and the way that we live are completely different and incompatible. We may be able to have a certain kind of workable relationship, but we cannot have meaningful fellowship with one another. No wonder God warned believers to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. He fully understood that there

has to be a major level of compatibility in order for people to have meaningful fellowship with one another.

Please keep in mind what we have previously studied relative to the word “we” in this verse. The phrase “if we say” is in the subjunctive tense, so this is a hypothetical situation, but it is given to us because it reflects the reality of what it means to have fellowship with God. It could easily and correctly read “If we were to say”. The point that the author is making is that no one can have fellowship with God unless they are saved. Does everyone agree with that statement – yes or no? So, if there is not a legitimate basis for fellowship between God and an individual, it is because that person has never been saved. The problem that John is addressing here, however, is with those people who claim to have fellowship with God, but their life simply does not reflect their claim.

[1 John 1:6](#) begins a series of six “if” clauses (v6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 2:1). In reality, the six represent three pairs – v6 and 7 are the first pair, v8 and 9 are the second, and v10 and 2:1 are the third pair. The first verse of each pair begins with the words “if we say” followed by a negative statement which represents the claims of the Gnostics. Each of the verses that follow these (v7, 9, and 2:1) is a positive statement representing God’s truth that contradicts the false doctrines being taught by the Gnostics.

[1 John 1:6, 8, and 10](#) are the first tests that John will give to us - a trilogy of tests to help us be discerning as to who is truly a Christian and who is just a pseudo-Christian. Why do I say pseudo-Christian? Well, it is because the individual “says” one thing, but lives in a way that is contradictory to what they confess and to the truth that the Word of God declares. John says that people are walking in darkness (v6), deception (v8), and that leads to them defaming God (v10) by making Him to be a liar. Each one of these groups either willfully reject or deny the reality that genuine believers and sin are not compatible. Paul declared in [Romans 6:2](#) these remarkable words when he said,

Ro 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ²Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Paul’s last sentence is a rhetorical question. By asking the question Paul is answering the question, and

his conclusion is that true believers do not continue “to live” in sin as an ongoing habit of their life. It is important to notice that Paul did not say that believers “do not commit” sin, but that they simply do not live in it. We all commit sin, but that is far different than continually living in known sin. I understand that at times there may be a fine line in identifying a true believer from a false believer. My recommendation would be that if you are asked that kind of question to simply let God’s Word say what it says. Is God merciful? Sure. Is God forgiving? Absolutely! What I do know about God, however, is that He is also holy and just, and He will not violate His Word to accommodate our sinfulness. God and sin are not something that we can be flippant about – not at all. The moment that happens, we will be lured into a great deception about both God and sin. At a personal level, I never want to be in a position where I appear that I am the judge and jury on someone’s salvation, for that certainly is not the case, and it is not fair to the individual. However, by the same token, I do not want to mishandle God’s Word by denying the hard truths that it so often presents to us.

One of the worst things that can happen to someone is that they become self-deceived about reality and especially about their relationship with God. It is not a good thing to pretend that we are something that we are not or to pretend that we have something that we do not have. I think that we all know people who want all of the benefits of salvation, but unfortunately they do not want it enough to commit their life to Christ in a meaningful and purposeful way. They do not mind coming to church and listening to messages. They do not mind making some contributions to the church. They do not even mind having some superficial level of involvement in various activities, but at the very core of what they are doing there is no real commitment to the things of God.

So, if we are going to have fellowship with God there must be certain things that are true of both sides before there can be any fellowship. In [2 Corinthians 6:14](#), Paul said,

^{2Co 6:14} ... And what communion has light with darkness?

So, what John is doing is delineating and describing what must be true if a person is saved. I.e., if someone “says” that they are having fellowship with God, then there must be those elements in their life that affirm what they are saying. The first evidence that someone is not saved is in v6 when it says that they “walk in darkness”. In our previous study we saw that the word “walk” refers specifically to a person’s conduct and be-

havior, to their manner of life, and what we discerned in that definition is that when someone is truly saved that that reality will always manifest itself in their life – not just their profession. In fact, John is clear that to profess one thing and live in contradiction to that profession is actually what he called “**a lie**”. It is something that is not true.

Then to reinforce his teaching, v6 says that these pseudo-Christians “**do not practice the truth**”. The word for “**practice**” is actually the Greek word “*poieo*” which simply means to “**do**”. The word “**practice**” is used to give what the translators believe the word is actually conveying. In essence, it reads in a number of translations simply as “**do not the truth**” (KJV, ASV, YLT). The reason that the translators have the right to translate it as “**do not practice the truth**” is because it is in the present tense which represents continuing action. It could easily and correctly be translated as “**do not do and do not continue to do the truth**”. So, the translators simply use the word “**practice**” to delineate the intent of what the word means. Personally, I like the word “**practice**” because it captures the essence of the Greek tense. It refers to living out the truth in a way that is obedient to the Word of God. [John 3:20-21](#) seems to capture the idea as well when it says,

Jn 3:20 **For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."**

The word for “**practice**” in this verse is not the same word as used in [1 John 1:6](#). Here it is the Greek word “*prasso*” and literally means to perform something repeatedly or habitually. It also is in the present tense. It has a slight nuance in its meaning over the word used in 1 John, but the idea is the same - people repeatedly and habitually continue to live in known sin that violates God’s Word. That one element is a very distinguishing mark that differentiates true Christianity from false Christianity, and it is not an issue that as Christians we can just take lightly. For many people it will be the difference between living with God in eternity or being separated from Him eternally in a place of utter torment and despair. This is not a trivial issue, and not one that anyone should take lightly.

People who merely make a profession of salvation are banking on the fact that God is a God of love

and forgiveness – which He is. However, what they fail to realize is that He only provides His forgiveness to those who have truly embraced Christ and become His followers. No one else is forgiven – no matter what they may say or have done. They may have been baptized and joined a church, but that will not open the door to God’s kingdom for them. Here is the first principle that we want to take away from this:

Principle One: No one who claims to be a Christian and yet continually lives in “**darkness**” is actually saved.

I know that is hard for people in the current American Christian culture to accept. Somehow we have conveniently forgotten Christ’s words in [Matthew 7](#) that only a few will actually enter into God’s kingdom. Of all of the different people groups in the world, my fear is that the American church has so watered down and softened the truth, that we may be the most deceived people on the planet. We have created a Christian culture that no longer calls sin the sin that it is. We no longer call on people to repent. Our form of Christianity is one that has reduced Jesus to a cosmic genie to meet all of our personal and felt needs. We have reduced him to bumper decals on cars that want us to honk if we love Jesus. I personally find all of that demeaning to both His person and His work. If we lived in China, North Korea, Pakistan, or Afghanistan where the greatest levels of Christian persecution happen on a daily basis, this principle would never be a problem for people to accept. Many people are martyred every day in these countries for their faith in Christ. They fully understand that being a Christian means a break with sin and renouncing those things that do not reflect Christ – and they are willing to die for that belief.

A major problem is that we think of the word “**darkness**” in terms of various “sins” that someone may commit. However, in reality it is a much bigger word than some personal sins that someone may commit. The Bible tells us that in this world that there are two kingdoms – the kingdom of God and the kingdom of evil. There is the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. These are not just ideas and perspectives, but these are two very real domains and realms that are at work in the world. The point that Scripture makes is that apart from us personally and how we may actually live, there is such a thing as the domain and realm of sin and evil. It is a realm which advances a certain outlook and mindset that the individual operates in. For the most part, it promotes living life without regard to God. Before we were even born, sin was in the world and not only was man’s nature polluted in the Fall, but the entire

creation was polluted. For instance, [2 Corinthians 4:3-4](#) says,

^{2Co 4:3}But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

[Ephesians 2:2](#) calls Satan the “**prince of the power of the air**”. [Ephesians 6:12](#) says that we wrestle against the “**rulers of the darkness of this world**”. This is not an imaginary realm or domain, this is a very real domain that men live in.

So, the term that says that men “**walk in darkness**” is not just referring to individual sins that they may commit at times, but rather it refers to the fact that men are engaged in a kingdom, in a spiritual realm, and in a domain in which everything is opposed to God – everything. It is not that everything at once appears to be evil and pernicious and wicked in this kingdom – not at all. Satan and his emissaries disguise themselves as “**angels of light**”. [2 Corinthians 11:4](#) says,

^{2Co 11:14}And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

“**Walking in darkness**” means that the person is living in such a way that they rarely have any thought about God at all. When they do think about Him, they think of Him as some benign fatherly person who is ready to smile on their failures and grant them immediate access into His kingdom and His blessings, but without any commitment to Him on their part. Nothing could be further from the truth. Obviously, that kind of attitude does not work in any other endeavor in life. It certainly does not work in marriage where one partner just thinks that the other partner is to give them all that marriage affords to someone, but without any commitment on their part to the marriage. It is somewhat ironic that when people approach the spiritual realm that their perceptions of God are so far removed from how they think in the earthly realm.

The word for “**walk**” in v6 is in the present subjunctive active tense. What the present tense implies is that “**walking in darkness**” is a way of life. The active tense implies that the subject is the one doing the walking. This is not something that the individual is being forced to do. Living a life that ignores

God and ignores His Word is their choice. This is not some isolated action or someone’s momentary lapse into a sin against God, but this is an ongoing manner of life that is in direct disobedience to Christ. The individual is constantly living in a way that completely ignores God and His Word and is always presuming on His goodness and forgiveness. They really do not have a meaningful and active interest in the things of God. The Word of God really does not affect and impact their life at all. They want people to believe that it does. They want them to think that they are in fellowship with God. Unfortunately, though, their life declares differently. They are not striving to live in a way that would please God, but to the contrary they are finding multiple ways to excuse their life, their lifestyle, and their decisions.

You cannot mix light and darkness. Let me say it in another way that may create a stronger image for us – you cannot mix God and sin. It is an impossibility. So, what we know about the person who says one thing but lives another way is that they are actually lying and not practicing the truth. Look at what [1 John 1:6](#) says again,

^{1Jn 1:6}If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

If someone were to look at your life, there ought to be nothing, absolutely nothing that would cause them to wonder whether or not you were actually a Christian. We cannot be in fellowship with God who is light and be living in consistent, habitual, and chronic sin. It is impossible to do the latter and have fellowship with God. We demonstrate what we genuinely believe by how we live. We reveal what is important to us not by what we say, but by how we live.

As we migrate through these verses, please notice that v6 is clearly dealing with someone’s behavior, with their actions, and with their lifestyles. In v8 and 10, though, John is not dealing with someone’s behavior any longer, but with a person’s attitude towards sin. The references in v8 and 10 are not to specific acts of sin committed against God, but with the sinful nature that produces those acts. Every non-believer wants to think that they are good and that their life is just as acceptable to God as the next person’s life. The lost person’s problem is that they think more in terms of “sins” rather than in terms of a sinful nature whose full and ongoing propensity is constantly towards sin against a holy God. For the most part, men believe that that are good and God declares the exact opposite. Look at [Romans 3:10-12](#) which says,

Ro 3:10 **As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; ¹¹There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. ¹²They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one."**

This is God's righteous assessment of all men without Christ. It does not matter what a man may think about his life. If God has judged a man to be unrighteous, without spiritual understanding, with no desire to truly seek or know God, as one who turns aside from the truth and becomes unprofitable, and then simply stating that there is "**none who does good, no not one**", then that is the correct verdict. To the lost man, that verdict is completely unacceptable and for that reason men become even more hardened against Christ. John is dealing here in v8 and 10 at a much deeper level than v6. What John is saying is that the real problem that a lost man has is not some "sins" in their life, but a complete misunderstanding of their sinful nature. They believe themselves to be good. They believe that they are righteous and that their sinful life is somehow and for some reason fully acceptable to a holy God – which it clearly is not. They actually say that they "**have no sin**" and "**have not sinned**". Men are constantly revising their definition of sin to discredit God's view of sin. By redefining sin, they are actually minimizing it in their life. We give sin all kind of different names. Men call it failures, breakdowns, disorders, syndromes, disabilities, illnesses, dependencies, bad habits, and addictions. They call it cohabitation, significant others, and domestic partners. We remove God's name from every conceivable public place and call it civil liberty. Men have become adept at finding both cultural and creative ways to not accept responsibility for their sins.

God's view of sin makes man guilty and man's view of sin makes man acceptable. If a person says either that they "**have no sin**" or "**have not sinned**", God says in v8 that they are "**deceived**" and the "**truth is not in them**". V10 says that they make God "**a liar**" and that God's word is not in them. God's truth is like a great light that is constantly exposing us for what we really are. We cannot escape God's truth. He will not let us escape it, and He holds each of us fully responsible for what we do with the truth – no exceptions. That is actually a very good thing. The only way that we can make any progress spiritually is to be in agreement with God. [Hebrews 4:12-13](#) declares the following,

Heb 4:12 **For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**

Do you want to know why this is so critical? It is critical because if someone does not accept the fact that before God that they are sinners, then they will never seek God's forgiveness for their sin. Sin against God requires God's forgiveness. That is clearly the message of v7 and v9. Look at how those verses conclude for those of us who are believers. V7 says that "**the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**" V9 says that if we are willing to "**confess our sins**", if we are willing to come to Him and recognize and admit that we have sinned against a holy God, then God is "**just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**" God certainly wants the lost to experience His forgiveness, but that will never happen if they casually and indifferently keep clinging to the unbiblical notion that they are not sinful. John says without any hesitation that if someone says that they "**have not sinned**" that the truth is not in that person, or in other words, they are not saved and have called God a liar. Here is Principle two that we want to take away from this:

Principle Two: Anyone that refuses to acknowledge their sin is living in the depths of spiritual darkness and deception and are blaspheming both God and His Word.

ENDNOTES:

¹MacArthur, 27.

²Harris, 60.

³MacArthur, 27.

⁴Strong, 1329.

⁵Jones, 110.

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