**Grace Group Guide**

**1 John 1:5**

**God is Light**

I don’t know what your house looks like after dark, but ours is lit up like the 4th of July. Not on the outside, but on the inside. You see, Eli’s room is as far away as it can possibly be from our room. If he needs something in the middle of the night, he has to pass by one guest room, two bathrooms, the dining room, the office, and the kitchen before he gets to our bedroom. For a 4-year-old, he might as well be trying to run a marathon. And so, we try to make it as easy as possible if he needs us.

I can picture in my mind his routine – he comes to the threshold of his bedroom door and looks to the left to see if there’s anything lurking in the bathroom; then peeks into the guest bedroom to do the same thing. If the coast is clear, he shoots down the hallway as fast as he can, forsaking whatever hides in the shadows in the rooms along the way. I almost always wake up when he’s about halfway down the hall. It’s amazing how a 40-lb. kid can sound like a herd of elephants. But I’m usually at least looking in the direction of our bedroom door as he rounds the corner in the kitchen and comes into the bedroom. One thing that I’ve noticed that he does EVERY SINGLE TIME - he cups his hands around his eyes, similar to what he’d do if he was holding a pair of binoculars.

I don’t need to spend a bit of time in his head to know exactly what he’s doing. If there is danger lurking somewhere along the way, he doesn’t want to see it.

The whole reason that there are so many lights on is to try and make it so that he doesn’t have to be scared as he comes to our room at night. But there’s a problem with the lights in our house – no matter how many are turned on, there are still shadows and places in which the light doesn’t reach.

It’s one of those things that is completely mind-blowing to me, to think about a light so bright and pure and powerful that it doesn’t allow even a hint of shadow or darkness. I’m sitting in my office right now and as I look around this relatively small room, lit by a collective 32 feet of fluorescent light bulbs, there are shadows everywhere I look. And it’s in those shadows that things hide and lurk. But the nature of God as described by John in 1:5 is LIGHT. No darkness- no shadows at all can reside where His light shines.

As I think about the concept of light and dark, I’m reminded of a passage from John 3. *19This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.*

I’ve appreciated this past week the reminder of the absolute truth in which John references here. It’s a sobering reminder that we all need to hear from time to time. You are in the light, or you are in the darkness. There is no middle ground. Again, I would remind you that the key word in verse 6 is “walk.” That word speaks about the direction that you are headed in or the habit of your life. If you are content to walk in darkness, neglecting to pursue fellowship with the Lord, and live according to His word, then John says, “don’t fool yourself by thinking you have fellowship with God.”

The other thing that struck and stuck with me this week was the very plain reminder from John that God is holy. How often do we neglect to honor Him for Who He is? And as you heard us sing on Sunday, what do we really know of holy? I love those lyrics, “What do I know of You, who spoke me into motion? Where have I even stood, but the shore along Your ocean?”

Discussion- I*n light of our grasp of the holiness of God, and our relationship to Him, Why is our fellowship with fellow Christians so often just on a surface level? How can we have fellowship at a deeper level in Christ? What would it take in your small group or your relationships with other believers to deepen your level of fellowship so it is authentically Christian? What verses from 1 John 1 help us answer this question?*

I remember a couple of weeks ago watching a sitcom on TV and the main characters started talking about God and it was the typical picture of a good buddy in the sky who helps you out when you are in a pinch that doesn’t require anything of you but to do the best that you can. I remember thinking to myself, “well, that’s a bold thing for them to do in even mentioning the name of God.” But after re-looking at 1 John I’ve spent some time thinking about that and asked myself, “isn’t that what John was writing against? This misconstruing of who God is and what He requires?” That type of thinking reduces God to man’s level and that is dangerous.

BUT, that type of thinking is rampant around us today. So what do we do about it?

*If as a way of life, I am not allowing God’s Word to confront my sinful thoughts, attitudes, motives, words, and deeds, I am walking in darkness. If I dodge my sin by blaming others or making up excuses for why I sin, I am walking in darkness. And for John, to walk in darkness is not describing a “carnal” Christian. It is describing an unbeliever, no matter how much he may claim to have fellowship with God. To have fellowship with God, we must recognize that He is absolutely holy. And, we must not walk in the darkness.*

*This does not imply that the person walking in the light never sins. 1 John 1:7 indicates that the blood of Jesus is cleansing (present tense) from all sin the one who is walking in the light. So, to walk in the light does not mean to be sinless, which no one can do. Rather, it points to a habitual pattern of living openly before God, who examines the heart. To walk in the light is to seek to be holy as God is holy. But, what about when we sin?*

*A person walking in the light does not deny his sin or try to cover it up. He does not blame others for it or make excuses about it. Rather, he confesses it (1:9): “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” To confess means to agree with God that our sin is sin. It means to accept responsibility for it and to turn from it. God’s wonderful promise is that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive and cleanse us.* – Steven Cole

Discussion- *What is the result when a Christian continues willfully to do what he or she knows to be wrong? How does this involve self‐deception? What is the result, according to verse 7, when we walk in the light? How do we get back into the light if we sin?*

*Discussion- How would you define “confession”? Why is confessing our sins so important? What happens to us if we stop confessing our sins? What are the promises given to us if we do confess our sins?*

As you go forward in the Lord, don’t be afraid of what lurks in the shadows of your life. Take off the blinders and ask the Lord to illuminate so that you can deal with those things. Anything less than this and we are like the bird that sticks its head in the sand when danger is around. Putting on blinders and turning the lighting down to a soft glow doesn’t get rid of the patterns of sin in our life, only the marvelous Light of the Father can do that.