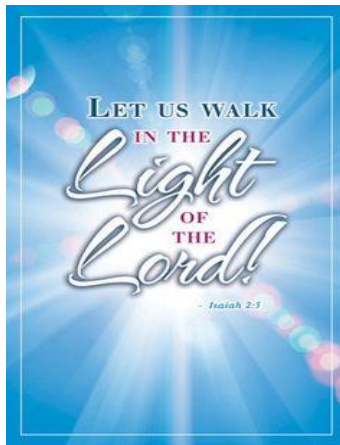


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## Walking in the Light



*"...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."*  
I John 1:7

*"This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another...we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death...dear children let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth..."*  
I John 3:11-24

As believers, John writes, we are constantly purified of our sin by the blood of Jesus because we *"...walk in the light..."* The Apostle will tell us in this letter that *"Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them."* And he will add, *"...this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gives us."* (I John 3:24)

The Holy Spirit living in us is the proof of our saving relationship with him, and our lives demonstrate the presence of that Spirit within us in the way we treat others. The importance of this concept is central to our faith. We cannot be true disciples if our actions and attitudes toward others are not consistent with nature of Jesus Christ. Obedience is, above all else, bound up in Jesus' command, *"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."* (Matthew 7:12)

No one then, can claim to be a true follower of Jesus and still go on treating others badly. In the counseling world we call this 'congruence'. If the words a client is using are not congruent with the client's body language or tone then that lack of congruence tells the counselor that the words are not true. For believers congruence between what we say and how we act toward others is essential to our believability. We cannot claim to be disciples if our words and our actions are not congruent.

In our day, this need for congruence is so important. When the world we live in so constantly demands that we participate in disrespecting and demeaning others, the need for those of us who follow Jesus to set a very different standard is immeasurable. We cannot participate in the world's sin and still claim to be followers of Jesus Christ.

So, what will we choose? How will we, who claim that Jesus is our Lord, live before a world that demands that we reject him and join them in treating others badly? Will we stand out as living examples of a better way or will our light be hidden because we participate with the world? These are tough, tough questions aren't they?

So, how can we possibly live congruent lives before this harsh, and often hate-filled world? The Apostle Paul would teach us to *"...count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and the parts of your*

*body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be our master, because you are not under law, but under grace.” (Romans 6:11-14)*

Each one of us must constantly decide on who or what we allow to control our lives. We can choose to let ourselves be controlled by those evil desires within us demanding that we gratify ourselves at all costs. Or we can choose to let our lives be controlled by the Holy Spirit of God who will guide us into a selfless existence of obedience. We cannot choose both.

So, who are you? Who am I? We are either those who choose to follow Jesus, who have received his Holy Spirit, and who constantly demonstrate our commitment to him in the way we treat others. Or, we are those who are rejecting Jesus as our Lord, who are living to gratify every whim of our self-serving and sinful nature, and whose daily interactions reflect that choice. The way we treat others testifies to who we really are. So, who are you? Who am I?

