

Walking in the Light and Stepping Away from the Darkness



1 John 1:5 to 2:2

This week we continue our journey through John's 'Little Letters'. John cared deeply about the believers in the early Church and wanted them to live in a way that reflected the love of God. In today's Bassline we'll tackle the tricky topic of sin and face what it means to walk in darkness. We'll also explore what it means to walk in the light enjoying the freedom of forgiveness and grace found in Jesus.

You will need:

- Paper and pens/pencils
- Torch
- Masking tape, string or fairy lights (to make a path)
- 'Sin Sound Check' handout
- 'Walking in the light' handout



Beat

Leader's notes:

Split the group into small teams. Give them 2-3 minutes to list as many films built around a friendship as they can (eg *Toy Story*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Encanto*, *Monsters Inc*, *The Hunger Games*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Spider-Man*).

When their time is up, have each team choose one or two friendships from their list to discuss.

Ask:

- Who's the 'truth-teller' in that friendship and the one who is willing to be honest when it's hard? Share examples.
- How does their honesty help or challenge that friendship?
- What happens to the relationship because of that truth-telling?

Leader's notes:

Bring the group back together to share what they have discussed about honesty in friendships.

Ask:

- What healthy examples are there of 'truth-telling' within these friendships?



Ask:

As you think about all the friendship groups mentioned, which one would you most like to be part of? Explain your choice.



Say:

In our Beat activity we thought about people who love us enough to tell us the truth, even when it's uncomfortable. Those are the kind of friends we trust, because we know they care about us.

- Why do we listen to their advice?
- What makes their honesty different from criticism?
- What kind of trust have they earned with us?

Say:

John had earned that same kind of trust with the people he was writing to as he truly cared for them. Like a loving mentor writing to a younger church family, he wasn't afraid to tackle difficult topics because he wanted them to stay close to Jesus and to one another.

Ask:

Who is the truth-teller in your life?

Say:

Last week, we began our Little Letters series and heard John remind us that faith isn't about hidden knowledge or spiritual shortcuts.

In John's time, some false teachers claimed to be the keepers of a secret truth, as if they had access to a deeper knowledge of God that others didn't. John made it clear that real faith isn't mysterious (in the sense of strange or weird) or exclusive. It's about knowing and following

Jesus, the one who shows us exactly what God's love looks like.

The problem was that many of these teachers said they followed Jesus, but their lives told a different story. They claimed to walk with him, yet continued to live in ways that didn't reflect his love. That's the situation John is addressing in his letter.

Read:

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ But 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.

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

— (1 John 1:5-10)

Ask:

What does verse 5 tell us about God?

Say:

Before John says anything about the difference between light and darkness, he makes sure we understand who God is.

He says, 'God is light.' That means there's no darkness, no deceit, and no evil in him.

It's not just that God **has** light; he **is** light. His very nature is truth, goodness, and love. Darkness can't come from him or exist alongside him.

Ask:

Why do you think John begins with God's character instead of jumping straight to our behaviour? What difference does that make?

Say:

John wants us to see that our faith starts with who God is, not what we do. When we understand that God is pure light, we realise that walking in the light isn't about trying harder to be perfect, but about living in response to God's nature.

Ask:

Read 1 John 1:6-7. What do you think John is saying? What is he not saying?

Say:

Walking in the light does not mean that we lead sin-free lives. We are human and are not capable of the sinless perfection of Jesus. Instead, we can keep bringing our sin out into the light for Jesus to forgive.

Leader's notes:

This demonstration helps bring John's message to life. It should involve two leaders – one as the 'walker' and one as 'God's light' (holding a torch). It shows what happens when we walk in the light, drift into darkness, deceive ourselves, and return through confession.

You'll need a clear path (masking tape, string or fairy lights) and a torch to represent God's light.

Say:

John paints a vivid picture in this passage. He describes what it means to 'walk in the light' and what happens when we step away from it.

Leader's notes:

The demonstration below covers the teaching for 1 John 1:5–10. Pause briefly after each step to allow for short discussion or questions.

Step 1 – Walking in the light (verses 5 to 7)

The 'walker' begins walking along the lit path. The 'light' shines the torch ahead of them on the path.

Say:

This is what John calls walking in the light. It's about being honest with God, following his truth, and staying close to him. When we walk in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing us from sin. We'll still make mistakes, but the Holy Spirit gently convicts us, and we remain within God's forgiveness and grace.

Step 2 – Drifting into darkness (verse 6)

The walker gradually steps off the path, away from the light.

Say:

But sometimes we drift. We start walking our own way. This is what some teachers in the early Church were doing: they said they lived in God's light but weren't living God's way. They were deceiving themselves and others. The problem wasn't their sin, but the denial of it, pretending there was nothing wrong while continuing in darkness.

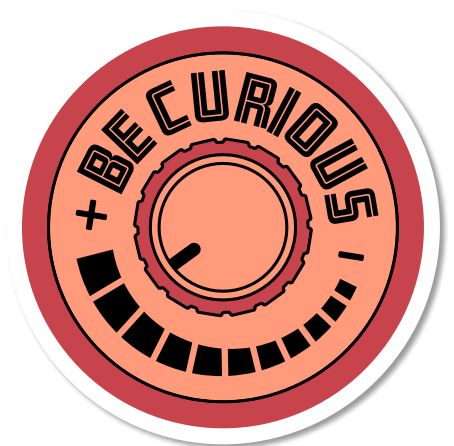
Step 3 – Confession and return (verse 9)

Read:

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

– (1 John 1:9)

As the Bible verse is read, the walker stops, turns back toward the light, and begins walking in it again.



Say:

Walking in the light means bringing everything into God's love – our mistakes, our pride, our failures – and finding freedom through Jesus.

Ask:

- What did you notice as the person moved in and out of the light?
- How does this picture help you understand what John means by walking in darkness or walking in light?

Say:

John's message is simple but powerful. God is light. We walk in his light when we live truthfully before him. That doesn't mean we never sin; but when we do, we keep bringing it into the light. The danger comes when we claim we haven't sinned or hide from the truth. That's when we step out of the light and start walking in the darkness.

**Ask:**

Why do you think it's sometimes easier to hide our sin instead of bringing it into the light?

 Sound Check**Say:**

If walking in the light means walking in transparency with God, then we need to take an honest look at what it means to walk in darkness. We're going to spend some time thinking about sin, what it is and the impact it has on our lives. Before we do, let's keep in mind John's message for the Church.

Read:

¹ My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

– (1 John 2:1-2)

Leader's notes:

Divide the whole group into teams and give each team a 'Sin Sound Check' handout. Watch the following clip together and then give the group time to discuss and jot down their responses to the questions on the handout. There is quite a lot to cover, so it is OK if they decide to focus on a couple of areas for discussion.

Watch:

What Does It Mean to Sin? – Bible Project (stop at 5:15)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNOZ7ocLD74>

‘Sin Sound Check’ Content

In the clip we heard that the Bible describes sin as ‘missing the goal’ and failing to love God and love others as we should. It’s less about ‘breaking rules’ and more about failing to reflect who God is.

The Goal

The Bible says every human is made in God’s image. We are designed to reflect his character and love.

Discuss:

- If that’s our goal, what does a ‘successful’ day look like as a follower of Jesus?
- How is that different from the way people usually define success?

Missing the Goal

Sin means ‘to fail’ or ‘miss’. Sometimes we don’t even realise we’ve missed the goal, but we are reminded of the choice we could have made through the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss:

- What are some ways we might ‘miss the goal’ of loving God or others without noticing?
- Why do you think it’s so easy to deceive ourselves and to convince ourselves that wrong choices are OK?
- How does this connect with John’s warning that *‘if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves’* (1 John 1:8)?

Naming the Miss

The clip showed that calling sin by its true name brings freedom, not shame.

Discuss:

- Why do people prefer to call sin a ‘mistake’ or ‘bad choice’?
- What happens when we soften the language around sin? What do we lose?
- How does John’s reminder that God is light help us to be honest without fear?

The Good News

Jesus never ‘missed the goal.’ He fully loved God and others and now shares that life with us.

Discuss:

- How does Jesus’ perfection change how we deal with our own failure?

- What does it mean that his light keeps purifying us?
- What could 'walking in the light' look like in real life this week?

Leader's notes:

Draw out the key points from the group discussions. They may want to take the 'Sin Sound Check' home to spend more time reflecting on the questions.

**Ask:**

What was the most challenging aspect of the 'Sin Sound Check' handout? Explain your response.

**Leader's notes:**

Each young person will need a slip of paper with 1 John 1:7 printed on it with the sentence starter: 'Walking in your light means ...' (a handout is provided).

Say:

We've spent time during this session thinking honestly about what it means to walk in the light, not pretending to be perfect but choosing to live openly before a God who loves us.

Now we're going to take some time to think about what that really means for you.

Let's read together 1 John 1:7.

Read:

7 But 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.

— (1 John 1:7)

Ask:

What do these words mean to you?

Leader's notes:

Give the group time to complete the sentence starter on their slip of paper: 'Walking in your light means ...' Encourage them to make their response personal, something honest about how they want to live in God's light this week, not just a general statement.

If the group feels comfortable, invite them to share what they've written.

Then close by praying together, drawing on some of their words, thanking God for his light, his love, and the freedom we have to walk with him honestly and without fear.



Say:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from this session about walking in the light of God?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.





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