

1 John 1:5 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[INDEX FOR ALL VERSES ON 1 JOHN](#)

- [1 John 1:1](#)
- [1 John 1:2](#)
- [1 John 1:3](#)
- [1 John 1:4](#)
- [1 John 1:5](#)
- [1 John 1:6](#)
- [1 John 1:7](#)
- [1 John 1:8](#)
- [1 John 1:9](#)
- [1 John 1:10](#)

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

STUDY GUIDE

1 JOHN 1

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+ "Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading. (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

"Asking questions is the key to understanding."
--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (**click page to enlarge**). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [Kai estin \(3SPAI\) aute e aggelia en akekoamen \(1PRAI\) ap' autou kai anaggellomen \(1PPAI\) humin, hoti o theos phos estin \(3SPAI\) kai skotia en auto ouk estin \(3SPAI\) oudemia.](#)

Amplified: And this is the message [the message of promise] which we have heard from Him and now are reporting to you: God is Light, and there is no darkness in Him at all [no, not in any way]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV: This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ([ESVBible.org](#))

KJV: This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

NLT: This is the message we heard from Jesus* and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Here, then, is the message which we heard from him, and now proclaim to you: GOD IS LIGHT and no shadow of darkness can exist in him. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: And it is this message which we have heard from Him and at present is ringing in our ears and we are bringing back tidings to you, that God as to His nature is light, and darkness in Him does not exist, not even one particle.

Young's Literal: And this is the message that we have heard from Him, and announce to you, that God is

light, and darkness in Him is not at all

- **the message:** 1Jn 3:11 1Co 11:23
- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

JOHN'S MESSAGE GOD IS LIGHT WITHOUT DARKNESS

This is the message ([aggelia/angelia](#)) **we have heard** ([akouo](#) - perfect tense - heard in past, still "ringing" in our ears) **from Him** (Jesus Christ) **and announce** ([anagello](#) - present tense) **to you, that God** ([theos](#)) **is** (present tense - continually) **Light** ([phos](#)), **and in Him** (God) **there is** (present tense) ([ouk](#) - absolutely) **no darkness** ([skotia](#)) **at all** ([oudeis](#) = absolutely nothing at all) - Jesus conveyed to the apostles that the essence of God is light without a hint of darkness. This will be discussed phrase by phrase in the following comments.

Brian Bill ([Walk the Talk](#)) has a simple but accurate summary of John's profound prologue 1Jn 1:1-4 - (1) Christianity is fact, not fiction. (1Jn 1:1), (2) Christianity is proclaimed, not private. (1Jn 1:2), (3) Christianity is shared, not selfish. (1Jn 1:3), (4) Christianity is rejoicing, not repressive. (1Jn 1:4)

David Legge has another summary of John's prologue - *Christ, Community and Communion -- Jesus must be encountered -- Jesus must be experienced --- Jesus must be expressed*

Note that while the comments on 1 John 1:5 are on a separate page, this is somewhat misleading because the truth of this verse is intimately associated with John's discussion of fellowship in 1 John 1:6-7 (see comments on 1Jn 1:6-7). So keep this important **context** in mind as you read the notes on 1 John 1:5.

*Proper doctrine should always
produce proper practice.*

The doctrinal truth that John presents in this verse about God as light is preparatory for the practice of this truth as described in the next two verses, first negatively (conduct [pictured as "walking"] not in keeping with the doctrine that God is light 1Jn 1:6) and then positively (1Jn 1:7). John's point is that since God is light, only those whose conduct can be described as "*walking in the light*" can enjoy fellowship with God (and other believers). **Brooke** amplifies this important point writing that

Walking in darkness must exclude from the fellowship of Him "in Whom is no darkness at all." Conduct is not the matter of indifference that in some of the teaching of the time it was made out to be (Ed: Or is being "made out to be" even in modern times - [See "A Word of Caution"](#)). ([A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles](#))

Smalley sees this verse as the beginning of the first major division (after the "prologue" of 1Jn 1:1-4) of this letter...

The two main divisions of the letter set out these conditions and exhort the readers to live in the light (1Jn 1:5-2:29) as children of God (1Jn 3:1-5:13). ([1, 2, 3 John - Word Biblical Commentary](#))

Hiebert comments on the difficulty in outlining First John, observing that "Following the weighty and difficult opening paragraph (1Jn 1:1-4), John launched into his discussion. It is exceedingly difficult to present a logical analysis of the body of the epistle (1Jn 1:5-5:12). Attempts to analyze its contents are like attempts to analyze the face of the sky: "There is contrast, and yet there is harmony; variety and yet order; fixedness, and yet ceaseless change; a monotony which soothes without wearying us, because the frequent repetitions come to us as things that are both new and old." (Alfred Plummer [1 John 1 Commentary](#))...John began by discussing the test of fellowship with God (1Jn 1:5-2:17). Grounded in the nature of God as light (1Jn 1:5), this test "is largely directed against the Gnostic doctrine that to the man of enlightenment all conduct is morally indifferent." (Plummer) In 1Jn 1:6-10 he showed how sin hinders fellowship and he provided the corrective; in 1Jn 2:1-2 he set forth the divine provision for maintaining fellowship, and in 1Jn 2:3-17 he presented signs of fellowship maintained. ([1 John 1:5-2:6 Exposition - excellent](#))

I Howard Marshall introduces his comments on this verse noting that "Although the prologue to the Epistle (1Jn 1:1-4) has given strong hints that the problem facing the writer was the existence of doubts about the historical revelation of God the Father in His Son, Jesus Christ, he begins his main discussion at a different point. His aim was that his readers might stand in a position of real fellowship with himself and so with God and Jesus. But there are conditions attached to such fellowship, and in addition to the **doctrinal condition** already hinted at (which will be developed later) there is also **amoral condition** which arises out of the character of God. (BORROW [The Epistles of John](#) The New International Commentary on the New Testament)

Roy Gingrich writes that in the body of the epistle (1Jn 1:5-5:12) -

John gives a series of tests to determine whether a person is a Christian or a non-Christian (these tests are numerous and varied but they center around three main tests: (1) the theological test, confessing that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh; (2) the moral test, doing righteousness; and (3) the social test, loving one's brethren. John provides these tests that the readers might use them: (1) to test their religious instructors; (2) to test their professing brethren and (3) to test themselves. Today, these tests may be used for the same three purposes.)

THE FIRST TEST FOR BEING A CHRISTIAN-Walking in the light (1Jn 1:5–7) Now we have a test to determine who is and who is not in fellowship with the Father and so a test to determine who is and who is not a Christian, for only those who have fellowship with the Father are true Christians. The word "fellowship" in these verses has reference to positional fellowship, a fellowship which includes all believers but which excludes all unbelievers. Where we walk determines whether we are in positional fellowship with God; how we walk within this positional fellowship determines whether we are in experiential fellowship with God.

Robert Candlish introduces this next section writing that "Having explained the general aim of his book—to make his readers, as disciples, partakers of the same fellowship which he and his fellow-apostles had with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and of the fulness of joy in the Lord which that implies,—the writer proceeds to open up the nature and character of this fellowship of joy. He begins by laying down the first and primary condition of it, the fundamentally necessary qualification for its possession, that without which it cannot be. *It is light; the fellowship must be a fellowship in light.* In the verses now before us (1Jn 1:5-7), John, gives the ground or reason of his primary and fundamental condition,—that the fellowship must be a fellowship in light; and shows how it rests, not on any merely arbitrary or sovereign ordinance of God, but on His very nature and essential perfection. Accordingly, in that view, we have first a solemn message, next a faithful warning, and lastly a gracious assurance. These are the three steps in this high argument; a **solemn message** in the fifth verse; a **faithful warning** in the sixth (1Jn 1:6); and a **gracious assurance** in the seventh (1Jn 1:7). ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

THE GOOD NEWS

This is the message ([aggelia/angelia](#)) **we have heard** ([akouo](#) - perfect tense - heard in past, still "ringing" in our ears) - The Greek sentence begins with the connective conjunction *kai* which is usually translated "*and*", and so this verse literally begins "And this is the message..." Neither the generally literal NAS or ESV translate the *kai* for reasons unclear to me. This is the third time in this introductory section John uses the verb "**heard**" (1Jn 1:1, 1Jn 1:3) and he again uses the perfect tense which signifies that this message was heard by him in the past and is "still ringing in his ears" so to speak. Stated another way, the perfect tense indicates the abiding results of the hearing. John is making it clear that this message is not something he fabricated but is straight from the lips of the Lord!

John's affirmation of the veracity and authenticity of his message is similar to **Paul's** in Galatians...

For I would have you know, brethren, that the **Gospel** which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (Galatians 1:11, 12+)

Comment: It is worth noting that the Greek word for **Gospel**, **euaggelion/euangelion** is derived from **eu** (good) and **aggello** (to tell, declare proclaim), **aggello** being the same root for John's words "**message**" and "**announce**." This would lend support to the NET Bible's addition of the word **Gospel** in their translation ("*Now this is the **Gospel** message we have heard from Him*").

The **NET Bible** amplifies the text adding the word "**Gospel**" "Now this is the **Gospel** message we have heard from Him and announce to you: God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." **The NET Note adds:** The *kai* at the beginning of 1:5 takes on a resumptive force, indicated by the phrase "*heard from Him and announce to you,*" which echoes similar phrases in 1Jn 1:2 and 1Jn 1:3. The word "Gospel" is not in the Greek text but is supplied to clarify the meaning.

This is the message - this opening is a common pattern in John's writings...

"**And this is the** judgment, that the light is come into the world..." (Jn 3:19)

"**This is** My commandment, that you love one another..." (Jn 15:12)

"**And this is** eternal life, that they may know Thee..." (Jn 17:3)

Compare similar phrasing in 1Jn 3:11, 23, 5:3, 11, 14; 2Jn 6

Alfred Plummer comments that John's idea is... "**This is** what it consists in, **This is** the sum and substance of it'... Once more we

have a striking parallel between Gospel and Epistle: the Gospel opens with a sentence very similar in form; 'And the witness of John is this' (John 1:19). All these similarities strengthen the belief that the two were written" by the same author. ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

From Him - In **context** of the first four verses which emphasize the historical appearance of God's Son Jesus Christ, **Him**" refers to Jesus. The NLT has "*this is the message we heard from Jesus.*" As an aside, it is interesting to me that some versions do not capitalize "**Him**" (ESV, KJV, NET, NIV) as does the NAS and Young's Literal. Throughout the notes on this website, you will find that I have chosen to always capitalize any nouns or pronouns that clearly refer to Jesus Christ, as my way of honoring and respecting the single most important Person in time and eternity.

John as an apostle who has personally interacted with Jesus is not giving secondhand testimony. He has not invented this message, but heard it from God Himself through His Son. John's testimony about Jesus is not based on hearsay or clever reasoning but truth which was received directly from the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the essence of Truth (Jn 1:14, 14:6). Why is this so important? As **W E Vine** states "*John's statement is set in sharp contrast to the various deductions of the Gnostic teachers:*"

In fairness, it should be noted that one could also consider "**from Him**" as from the Father rather than the Son. In that regard the NET Bible writes...

The referent of the pronoun "him" is not entirely clear in the Greek text; it could be either (1) God the Father, or (2) Jesus Christ, both of Whom are mentioned at the end of 1Jn 1:3. A reference to Jesus Christ is more likely because this is the nearest possible antecedent, and because God (the Father) is specifically mentioned in the following clause in 1Jn 1:5.

And announce ([anagello](#) - present tense) **to you** - **Announce** ([anagello](#)) in the present tense signifies that the action of announcing is in progress. This announcement is ongoing. **Wuest** paraphrases it as "*we are bringing back tidings to you*". John repeats the emphasis from the previous 4 verses (**bear witness, proclaim** in 1Jn 1:2, **proclaim** in 1Jn 1:3, **write** in 1Jn 1:4) being assiduous (marked by careful unremitting attention or persistent application) to faithfully transmit Jesus' message to his readers. John obviously understood the power of the truth (cp Jn 8:31, 32) and thus goes to great lengths to pass it on to the followers of Christ. Recall that John is the apostle who recorded Jesus' description of the power of Truth...

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:31, 32+)

John's readers were in danger of being deceived, deluded, ensnared and/or misled by the false "Gnostic" like teaching that apparently had already begun to slither into the Body of Christ. John knew that the best defense against the false is that which is true! Beloved are you remembering to focus your reading on the eternal, living Word of Truth? We live in an age of "information overload." As followers of Christ, we need to intentionally make the Scriptures our reading priority. Let the Word of Life be our source of "information overload" for we will never be overloaded as we are with vain, empty secular input.

*O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling,
To tell to all the world that God is light,
That He who made all nations is not willing
One soul should perish, lost in shades of night.*
--Mary A Thomson

Message ("*the news*") ([31](#)) ([aggelia/angelia](#) from the verb **aggéllō** = to tell, declare; related English word = "angel") means a message (the content of what is announced) or an announced requirement which has the sense of an instruction, directive or command (1Jn 3:11). Note that the [Textus Receptus](#) has the noun epaggelia here in place of aggelia.

Note that this noun **message** ([aggelia/angelia](#)) is directly related to the verb **announce** ([anagello/anagello](#)) (see below). Notice also that the root of both message and announce (**aggello**) is also the root word for the **Gospel** (euaggelion) and "preach the Gospel" (evangelize) (euaggelizo/evangelizo). Although John does not specifically state that his "message" is the Gospel, the context leaves no doubt that what he states in the next part of the sentence is related to the good news of Jesus Christ.

TDNT writes that "'Message" (aggelia/angelia) is an important concept in the NT, and the terms for "to tell," "declare," "proclaim," help us to understand the main word euangelizesthai... In classical usage the term (aggelia) can mean both "announcement" and "order." (BORROW [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

The only other use of **aggelia** in the NT is also by John...

1 John 3:11 For this is the **message** which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another

Aggelia/angelia - 11v in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (Lxx)**- 1Sa 4:19; 2Sa 4:4; 2Kgs 19:7; Pr 12:25; 25:25; 26:16; Isa 28:9; 37:7; Ezek 7:26; 21:7; Nah 3:19

Proverbs 12:25 Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, But a good word (Lxx = *aggelia* ~ good message or report) makes it glad.

Heard (191)(*akouo*) means literally to hear and then to hear with attention, to hear with the "ear" of the mind, to heed (give consideration or attention to; to regard with care; to take notice of), to hear with understanding (eg in Mt 5:21 "you have heard" in context speaks of the hearer's "understanding" of the interpretations of the OT passages by the rabbis). The KJV translates *akouo* 6 times as "*hearken*" which means to lend the ear", to attend to what is uttered with eagerness or curiosity. It is interesting that *akouo* was a technical term in law and used with the idea of hearing a legal case or granting a hearing.

Announce (312)(*anaggello/anangelo* from *aná* = up to, again, back {like our English prefix "*re-*"= again thus "*re*-port" or "*re*-hearse" = to say again} + *aggéllō* = tell, declare related to *áγγελος* = messenger) means to bring back word and later to announce, to report. To rehearse, to show, to declare or tell of things done. **Anaggello** means to carry back good tidings, to inform, to provide information, with some contexts conveying the implication of considerable detail (see Acts 14:27, 15:4). In the 14 NT uses of **anaggello**, notice that most report or announce something that has to do with God, including His works and/or purposes.

Alfred Plummer comments that **apaggello** "has merely the notion of proclaiming and making known, (**anaggello**) has the notion of proclaiming again what has been received elsewhere." (*ibid*) As a practical application of this truth is that believers today should emulate John in (1) carefully and accurately handling the Word of Truth (cp 2Ti 2:15-note) and (2) announce or proclaim that message of Good News to others, taking care not to alter the message. Remember that the first two letters in "Gospel" spell "Go" which is what the early church did for they could not stop speaking what they had seen and heard. (Acts 4:20, cp Acts 5:42 and Jn 4:29, the Samaritan woman at the well) The Gospel is not something just to *come* and *hear*; it is something to *go* and *tell!* ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

Vincent adds that **anaggello** means "*to bring the tidings up to (ana) or back to him who receives them*"

Hiebert observes that "The verb "**announce**" (*anaggello*) or "declare" (NIV), differs slightly from the verb rendered "**proclaim**" (*apaggello*) in 1Jn 1:2–3. While no vital distinction between these two compound forms is involved, the former term (*apaggello*) conveys the thought of proclaiming and making known a message, the term here (*anaggello*) suggests proclaiming again, or diffusing knowledge of the message." ([1 John 1:5-2-6](#))

Brooke writes that **anaggello** "may suggest that the message contains a conception of God which men could not have formed without His help. It is a revelation and not a discovery ([A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles](#))

TDNT comments that **anaggello/anangelo** is "common in the Koine for *angéllein* (interchangeably with *apangéllein*). It is used for proclamations of kings, reports of envoys, messages of sorrow, communications of various kinds, and, more weakly, letters, the sense being "to tell." It has a sacral (holy) tone in connection with divine (pagan) festivals and the honoring of (so-called) divine rulers. It is common in the **Lxx**, often with a religious sense: a. The Lord declares what is to come (Isa 42:9); b. God declares his righteousness, His works, His mercy, and His Name to the nations (cf. Ps 29:10; 63:10; 70:15; 91:3; 95:3; 101:22). In distinction from Hellenism (with its paganism and idolatry), the OT relates this declaring to God's action and command, as well as to such specifically Hebrew concepts as righteousness and mercy. (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

NIDNTT has an informative discussion of **anaggello** (and related words) as used in secular Greek "In their basic meaning these words always refer to the activity of the messenger who conveys a message which has been given to him either orally or in writing... and who in this way represents the sender of the message himself. The content of the message may vary very considerably. It may be private family news (Soph., Ajax 1355), reporting good or evil fortune. Such news may especially concern political events: war (Plato, Phaedrus 262b), victory or defeat of an army (Plato, Politicus 1, 15, 11), the solemn proclamation of a ruler (cf. Xen., Anab. 2, 3, 19), the accession of an emperor. Good news (*angelia agathē*) is also called *euangelion* (Gospel). 2. Just as the messenger who brings the news stands under the special protection of the gods (Angel), so too his message can acquire a sacred significance. This is, of course, true particularly where it is associated with the cultic veneration of rulers and gods: e.g. where the messenger solemnly proclaims the successful completion of a sacrifice which brings blessing, or the approach of a ceremonial procession. He proclaims the manifestation of a god, the reign of a new god-king, or announces the mighty deeds of his god or emperor. (Online [The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology](#))

Anaggello - 14x in 14v in **NAS** - Translated - announce(1), announced(1), declare(1), declaring(2), disclose(3), disclosing(1), had... news(1), report(1), reported(2), told (1). Note the Textus Receptus lists 18 uses of **anaggello**, but the Nestle-Aland manuscript (source of NAS, etc), lists only 14. The difference is the

Textus Receptus uses anagello in 4 verses in which the Nestle-Aland uses the similar verb apagello (Mark 5:14, 19, Jn 16:25, Acts 16:38).

Here are the 14 uses of anagello in the NAS..

John 4:25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ ["Anointed One"]); when that One comes, He will **declare** all things to us."

Comment: The Samaritan woman unbeknownst to her is speaking to Messiah stating that the Messiah would give a fresh revelation of divine truth.

John 5:15 The man went away, and **told** the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Comment: He reported to the officials the name of the one who healed him

John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will **disclose** to you what is to come. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will **disclose** it to you. 15 "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will **disclose** it to you.

Comment: Anagello "is used of the fresh and authoritative message of the Advocate (Helper, Comforter, the Spirit) in John 16:13-15" (Westcott). "The Messiah is the supernatural Person who will declare the divine truth to men." (Barrett). This will be His recognizing trait. {Lk 5:25}

Acts 14:27 When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to **report** all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

Acts 15:4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they **reported** all that God had done with them.

Acts 19:18 Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and **disclosing** their practices.

Acts 20:20 how I did not shrink from **declaring** to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,

Acts 20:27 "For I did not shrink from **declaring** to you the whole purpose of God.

Comment: Clearly this declaration would include God's plan of salvation. Thus again we see how close **anagello** is related to **euaggelizo** (preach the Gospel).

Romans 15:21-note but as it is written, "THEY WHO **HAD NO NEWS (anagello)** OF HIM SHALL SEE, AND THEY WHO HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND."

Comment: Paul is quoting Isaiah 52:15 and uses **anagello** in reference to the Gospel. Those who "**Had no news**" (they had no "report" or "announcement" of the Gospel) refers to those who have never heard the Gospel (especially the pagan, idol worshipping Gentiles), but he goes on to say they would eventually have the Gospel, the good news, proclaimed and would see and understand (and be saved). This prophecy by Isaiah clearly predicted they would see and understand the Gospel some day. Paul's ministry to Gentiles served as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

2 Corinthians 7:7 (Context = Paul was cut off from his friends and all alone in Macedonia) and not only by his coming (Referring to Titus who came to Paul and "reported" good news about the Christians at Corinth), but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he **reported** to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more.

1 Peter 1:12-note It was revealed (apokalupto) to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been **announced** to you through those who preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look.

Comment: How are we to present the Gospel? Peter implies by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, a truth which "dovetails" with Jesus' charge to the disciples in Acts 1:8 (where power = dunamis = ability to accomplish a task!). Doesn't this take the pressure off of us having to "perform" or be "perfect" in our presentation of the Gospel? Beloved, God calls us to be faithful and He will take care of the "fruitful"! Also keep in mind that "the Gospel is the power (dunamis) of God for salvation" (Ro 1:16-note), indicating that the Gospel has inherent power to accomplish its purpose of saving souls! Therefore it is incumbent on us as His disciples to present the full Gospel (see 1Cor 15:1-note, 1Cor 15:2-note, 1Cor 15:3-note, 1Cor 15:4-note, 1Cor 15:5-note, 1Cor 15:6-note)

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Anaggello is used 213v in the **Septuagint (Lxx)**. NIDNTT notes that "In the LXX **anaggello** and **apaggello** ... occur frequently, chiefly to render the Hebrew *nagad*... in the sense of to report, announce (e.g. Ge 9:22), to proclaim (Ps. 19:1; 51:15)... to direct or instruct (Dt 24:8)."

Here are a few examples of **anaggello** as used in the **Septuagint**...

Genesis 3:11 And He said, "Who **told** (Lxx = **anaggello**) you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

Exodus 4:28 Moses **told** (Lxx = **anaggello**) Aaron all the words of the LORD with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him to do.

Psalm 19:1-[note](#) For the choir director. A Psalm of David. The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is **declaring** (Lxx = **anaggello** - present tense = continually) the work of His hands.

Psalm 51:15-note O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may **declare** (Lxx = **anaggello**) Your praise.

Psalm 92:2-[note](#) To **declare** (Lxx = **anaggello** - present tense = continually) Your lovingkindness in the morning And Your faithfulness by night

Psalm 96:3-[note](#) **Tell** (Hebrew = *saphar* = means to recount or relate and is in the Hebrew Piel [expresses an "intensive" or "intentional" action] Imperative; Lxx = **apaggello** in the **aojist imperative** = not a suggestion but a command to... "Do this now!"... "Don't delay!"... "Do it effectively!") of His glory among the nations (Gentiles), His wonderful deeds among **all** the peoples.

THOUGHT: In a sense, John's Gospel and his epistles (as well as "The Revelation of Jesus Christ) testify to his obedience to this OT command! Indeed, by way of application, is not this command also directed to all believers of all times? Surely it is! This truth begs the simple question - "Am I being obedient (as enabled by grace and the Spirit) to tell of His glory among those I have been providentially placed?"

Isaiah 40:21 Do you not know? Have you not heard? **Has** it not **been declared** (Hebrew = *nagad* = to be or make conspicuous; **Lxx** = **anaggello**) to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

Isaiah 42:9 "Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I **declare** (Hebrew = *nagad* = to be or make conspicuous; **Lxx** = **anaggello**) new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim (Lxx = *deloo* = to make known what was unknown or not previously communicated; especially of something divinely communicated) them to you."

[Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise](#)

--Walter C Smith

Vocal by Steve Green

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,

In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,

Most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,

Almighty, victorious, Thy great Name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,

Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;

Thy justice, like mountains, high soaring above

Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all, life Thou givest, to both great and small;

In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;

We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,

And wither and perish—but naught changeth Thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,

Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;

But of all Thy rich graces this grace, Lord, impart
Take the veil from our faces, the vile from our heart.

All laud we would render; O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee,
And so let Thy glory, Almighty, impart,
Through Christ in His story, Thy Christ to the heart.

THAT GOD IS LIGHT: *hoti o theos phos estin* (3SPA1):

- **God:** Ps 27:1, 36:9, 84:11, Isa 60:19 Jn 1:4,9, 8:12, 9:5, 12:35,36, 1Ti 6:16 Jas 1:17, Rev 21:23 Rev 22:5
- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

THE NATURE OF GOD: LIGHT

And announce ([anagello](#) - present tense) **to you** (believers), **that** ([hoti](#)) **God** ([theos](#)) **is** (present tense - continually) **Light** ([phos](#)) - Literally the Greek reads "*The God light is.*" "**Light**" ([phos](#)) is anarthrous (no definitive preceding particle [*the*] in Greek) which generally expresses quality. It is the nature of light that it **is** and **makes** visible.

That ([hoti](#)) is a conjunction which introduces the content of the announcement. Remember that there were apparently false winds of doctrine beginning to blow in the young church, winds of ethical error like you can believe in God and then live any way you want. You don't have to worry about sin. So John addresses error by reminding them of the truth about God, and then he explains how doctrine calls for duty, a practice in concord with the truth about God.

God is light - Note that "**Is**" ([estin](#)) is the present tense (continuously) and indicative mood, the mood of reality. In other words, God "*really*" is light and He is light forever and ever. Amen! And as Psalm 27:1 teaches, for believers He is "my" light, the only Old Testament text in which God is actually called light ([See multiple comments](#) on Ps 27:1). As light shines, so God shows Himself and in fact all light comes from Him because He created it declaring "Let there be light"; and there was light." (Ge 1:3+, cf Isa 45:7). And because God is light, there is nothing hidden from Him. God is not a light or even the light, but Light. The absence of an article ("a") or a definite article ("the") signifies that God in His very nature and essence is light. As **James Smith** says "Strictly speaking, white is no colour, but combination of all colours. When the Apostle wrote, "God is Light," he meant that God is not a hue, nor a colour, not a tone, nor a shade. He is the combination of all colours, all shades, all hues." **Robert Lightner** adds "This clear statement about God's character describes His absolutely holy nature, totally free of moral defects." See also [What is God is Light?](#)

THOUGHT - There's an old Maranatha chorus based on Psalm 27:1 I learned when I was first delivered from darkness into His marvelous light... click the following link and listen (and memorize this powerful, soul stirring truth so that you will be able to recall it in your day of trouble!)... [Maranatha! singers — The Lord is my light](#)

Kenneth Wuest explains the significance of **anarthrous** in the phrase **God is light** - "The message is "God is light" (AV). As it stands, the statement is to the effect that God is an abstraction, for light is non-personal and an abstraction. That statement is not true. The word "light" ([phōs](#)) in the Greek text is without the article (anarthrous). **The rule of Greek grammar is that the absence of the definite article shows quality, nature, or essence.** What the inspired apostle said was, '**God as to His nature, essence, character, is light.**' That is, "God as a Person has a character or nature that partakes of light." That light, of course, is not physical light, for John in the context is speaking of spiritual things. That light is ethical, spiritual, moral. Then John strengthens his assertion by saying, "And darkness in Him does not exist, not even one bit." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used by permission)

Lightner points out the practical implication of God is light - Throughout Scripture light refers to holiness and is in direct contrast to sin or darkness. Christ's declaration then that God is light speaks of the Father's absolute holiness. Therefore, to think such a God would allow sin or lawlessness to go unjudged is unthinkable.

Note that the inspired text does not say God **emits** light, is **a** light, is **like** light but that He **is** light (but see Hiebert's comments below). John goes on in the next two verses to explain that this Divine light is the basis for testing one's fellowship. Walk in the **darkness** and you have no **fellowship**. Walk in the **light** and you have **fellowship** with God and one another. And as someone has well said "*The man who walks with God always gets to his destination*"

Kistemaker amplifies the preceding comments emphasizing that "God is not a light among many other lights; He is not a light-bearer; God does not have light as one of His characteristics, but He is light; and although He created light (Ge 1:3), He Himself is uncreated light. Moreover, the light of God is visible in Jesus, Who said, "I am the Light of the world" (John 8:12). In the Nicene

Creed, the church confesses Jesus Christ as "God of God, Light of Light." In Jesus we see God's eternal light. From the moment of His birth to the time of His resurrection, the life of Jesus was filled with God's light. "*Jesus was completely and absolutely transparent with the Light of God.*" And whoever has seen Jesus has seen the Father (John 14:9). [Simon J. Kistemaker: New Testament Commentary - James, Epistles of John, Peter, and Jude](#))

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines **essence** as "That which constitutes the particular nature of a being or substance, or of a genus, and which distinguishes it from all others." Newer editions add "the permanent as contrasted with the accidental element of being; the individual, real, or ultimate nature of a thing..."

Some commentators feel that **God is light** is a reference to His glory, which in the Old Testament was frequently manifest as the **Shekinah glory cloud**. I certainly would not argue with this interpretation for the idea behind "glory" is to give a proper impression of God.

Williamson writes that "*true light; is both a necessity that belongs to God's moral nature and the source of all moral illumination!*"

While the other NT writers describe the attributes and activities of God, the apostle John is the only one to make three assertions concerning the nature of God (there is one other in Heb 12:29 "God is consuming fire.") **God is spirit** (John 4:24), **God is light** (1 John 1:5), **God is love** (1 John 4:8, 16)

Alfred Plummer comments on John's three statements about God "There are three statements in the Bible which stand alone as revelations of the Nature of God, and they are all in the writings of S. John: '**God is spirit**' (John 4:24); '**God is light**', and '**God is love**' (1 John 4:8). In all these momentous statements the predicate has no article (anarthrous -[see comment below](#)), either definite or indefinite. We are not told that God is the Spirit, or the Light, or the Love: nor (in all probability) that He is a Spirit, or a light. But 'God is spirit, is light, is love': spirit, light, love are His very Nature. They are not mere attributes, like mercy and justice: they are Himself. They are probably the nearest approach to a definition of God that the human mind could frame or comprehend: and in the history of thought and religion they are unique. The more we consider them, the more they satisfy us. The simplest intellect can understand their meaning; the subtlest cannot exhaust it. No philosophy, no religion, not even the Jewish, had risen to the truth that God is light. ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

Comment: As an aside, we hear many today describe God as love and theologically they are absolutely correct. But we must be "fair and balanced" in our theology, for God is also Light (~Holy). In truth God is Light and Love. His love is Holy Love, balanced by Who He is in His nature and essence. His love is not a sentimental feeling that condones sins and pampers sinners... which is the deceptive trap we can fall into if we emphasize God is Love and forgets God is Light! Stated another way, Wiersbe says that "*to emphasize only God is Love and eliminate God is Light is to rob Him of His attributes of righteousness, holiness and justice.*" ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#)) We do well to remember one other description of the nature and essence of God in Hebrews 12:29 - "Our God is a Consuming Fire!" Augustus Strong said it well when he wrote that "Love is central in God, but holiness is central in love." Amen!

Light is a subject so profound that it saturates the Scriptures with some 200 appearances from beginning to end, from Genesis (Ge1:3,4) to Revelation (Rev 22:5+)! Clearly light is one of the major Biblical physical and metaphorical motifs and thus the following discussion on "light" is only a summary. (**Pastor Ray Stedman** has a sermon with a very interesting analysis of light -[see God Is Light](#))

As **J Ligon Duncan** explains "theology proper is theology that has to do with who God is and what He is like. It's usually one of the first sections in a systematic theology. It deals with things like: the names of God and the attributes of God, the characteristics of God and the works of God--like creation and providence and redemption. And it's interesting that John responds to this ethical error in the church by first taking people to who God is, and he announces in verse six that God is light. Now in doing that, in and of itself, he reminds us of a very important truth; and that is this: that the Christian life flows from what you really believe God is. What you really believe God is. Who you really believe God is. What you really believe God is like will work itself out in the way that you live the Christian life. And so he makes this announcement that God is light.

Wayne Grudem writes that "When Scripture speaks about God's attributes it never singles out one attribute of God as more important than all the rest. There is an assumption that every attribute is completely true of God and is true of all of God's character. For example, John can say that "God is light" (1 John 1:5) and then a little later say also that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). There is no suggestion that part of God is light and part of God is love, or that God is partly light and partly love. Nor should we think that God is more light than love or more love than light. Rather it is God himself who is light, and it is God himself who is also love. (See [page 141 of Systematic Theology - pdf](#))

Marvin Vincent says **God is light** is "A statement of the absolute nature of God. Not a light, nor the light, with reference to created beings, as the light of men, the light of the world, but simply and absolutely God is light, in His very nature. Compare God is spirit, and see on John 4:24: God is love, 1 John 4:8, 16. The expression is not a metaphor...Light is immaterial, diffusive, pure, and

glorious. It is the condition of life. Physically, it represents glory; intellectually, truth; morally, holiness. As immaterial it corresponds to God as spirit; as diffusive, to God as love; as the condition of life, to God as life; as pure and illuminating, to God as holiness and truth. In the Old Testament, light is often the medium of God's visible revelations to men. It was the first manifestation of God in creation. The burning lamp passed between the pieces of the parted victim in God's covenant with Abraham. God went before Israel in a pillar of fire, descended in fire at Sinai, and appeared in a luminous cloud which rested on the mercy-seat in the most holy place. ([1 John 1 Word Studies in the New Testament](#))

D Edmond Hiebert, one of my favorite conservative scholarly commentators disagrees with Marvin Vincent's statement that "God is light" is "not a metaphor". Here is **Hiebert's** reasoning - ""**God is light**" (*o theos phos estin*) is a metaphorical statement of His very nature. "**God**," with the definite article (*o* = "the" in English), is the subject; "**light**," without the article, is the predicate nominative; the two terms cannot be interchanged. The predicate noun is qualitative, describing God as possessing the qualities of light. Obviously it is not to be taken in a literal sense. Whatever other qualities this metaphorical designation may include, it clearly involves the intellectual and moral—enlightenment and holiness. Just as light reveals and purifies, so by His very nature God illuminates and purifies those who come to Him. His nature determines the conditions for fellowship with Him. ([1 John 1:5-2-6](#))

Comment: As an aside Webster defines a **metaphor** as "*a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them.*" (See related discussion of the recognition and interpretation of metaphors in the practice of inductive Bible study = Terms of comparison = simile and metaphor)

Brian Bill - I find it interesting that John did not declare that God is love (He does that later - 1Jn 4:8, 16), though He certainly is. Or that God is powerful, though He for sure is that (Omnipotent). By saying that God is light, he's affirming God's holiness. There is no dark side to God. He is completely **holy** and perfectly perfect... I come back often to a quote from **A.W. Tozer**: "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." John doesn't start with what we might like from God but with a declaration of what God is like. Have you ever noticed that when you walk into a jewelry store (which I haven't for awhile), that the diamonds are often displayed on black velvet? They're positioned like that so their brilliance stands out in contrast to the blackness. God's light is so bright that there is no darkness within Him. ([1 John 1:5-2:2](#))

POSB - God is light by nature and character. Light is what God is within Himself, within His being, essence, nature, and character. God dwells in the splendor, glory, and brilliance of light. Wherever He is, the splendor, glory, and brilliance of light shines out of His being. In fact, there is not even a need for the sun when God's glory is present (Rev 21:23, 22:5). The glory of His presence just beams forth the most brilliant light imaginable, so brilliant and glorious that it would consume human flesh. (BORROW [The Preacher's outline & sermon Bible : New Testament, King James Version](#))

In **And Can It Be That I Should Gain** one of my favorite hymns by Charles Wesley (1707-88), Wesley portrays **the power of Light** to dissolve the deep darkness in the heart of a lost soul (A miracle which He graciously accomplished in my life at the relatively late age of 39 - Thank You Jesus for shedding Your perfect blood on Calvary and then shedding Your pure Light into the darkness of my sinful heart. Amen - See Personal Testimony)...

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.*

[And Can It Be That I Should Gain](#)

Robert Candlish agrees with **Hiebert** writing that **God is light**...

is a metaphor, a figure of speech. And in that view, it might suggest a world of varied analogies between the nature of God and the nature of the material element of light. Light is diffusive, penetrating, searching; spreading itself over all space, and entering into every hole and corner. It is quickening and enlivening; a minister of healthy vigor and growth to all living creatures, plants and animals alike, including man himself. It is pleasant also; a source of relief and gladness to those who bask in its bright and joyous rays. But there are two of its properties that may be singled out as specially relevant to this great comparison.

In the first place, light is clear, transparent, translucent; patent and open, always and everywhere, as far as its free influence extends. The entrance of light, which itself is real, spreads reality all around. Clouds and shadows are unreal; they breed and foster unrealities. Light is the naked truth. Its very invisibility is, in this view, its power. It is not seen because it is so pure.

For, secondly, a certain character of inviolability belongs to it, in respect of which, while it comes in contact with all things, it is

itself affected by nothing. It kisses carrion; it embraces foul pollution; it enters into the innermost recesses of the rottenness in which worms uncleanly revel. It is the same clear element of light still; taking no soil; contracting no stain;—its brightness not dimmed, nor its viewless beauty marred. It endureth for ever, clean and clear.

Now, when it is said, "God is light," when he says it of himself; when he makes it his own personal and special message to us, which his apostles and ministers are to be always receiving of him and declaring to us;—the one heavenly telegram, or express telegraphic despatch, which they are to be reading to us and we are to be reading to our neighbours, that we may have fellowship, all of us together, with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ;—let not our imaginations wander in a wilderness of fanciful resemblances. Let these two thoughts be fixed in our minds; first, the thought of perfect openness; and secondly, the thought of perfect inviolability. Let these be our thoughts of God, and of his essential character, as being, and declaring himself to be, "light." Thus "God is light." ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

John Piper unpacks this verse by first asking "What does John mean that **God is light**? **Truth!** One answer would be that God is **TRUTH**. This comes from 1 Jn 1:6: "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the TRUTH." He might have said, "When we walk in darkness, we do not live according to the LIGHT." But he puts truth in the place of light. So it seems that truth is virtually the same as light. (See also 1 Jn 5:20.) In other words, **God is light** means that God is the source and measure of all that is true. Another way to put it would be that nothing is truly understood until it is understood in the light of God. This is why the Old Testament says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). You don't even get to first base in true knowledge if you leave God out of account. Which is why secular education is such a mirage of hope in the contemporary wasteland of our culture. God is light. That is, God is truth. He is the source of all that is true and whatever is true is true because it conforms to Him... What is the main value of light? Negatively, it helps you avoid danger. Positively, it helps you reach what you are after. When you walk in the darkness, you may stumble over a log, or step on a rattlesnake, or fall off a cliff, or hit your head on a low-hanging branch. Darkness is full of threat. It frustrates your ability to attain your goal. But light changes all that. It exposes dangers and frees you from their lurking power. It opens the way to your goal. It is full of hope and promises the glad attainment of your goal. No Hidden Agenda, No Small Print ([1 John 1:5-10: Let Us Walk in the Light of God](#))

C H Spurgeon (on 1Jn 1:5)...

God is knowledge, God is truth; God is purity. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." There is no darkness of sin, or ignorance, or error about God.

(In his Exposition Spurgeon adds that God is...) Not a light, nor the light, though he is both, but that He is light. Scripture uses the term light for knowledge, for purity, for prosperity, for happiness, and for truth. God is light, and then in his usual style, John, who not only tells you a truth but always guards it, adds—"in Whom is no darkness at all."

Cleon Rogers writes "That **God is light** is a penetrating description of the being and nature of God, indicating that He is absolute in His glory, truth, and holiness. (BORROW [The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament](#))

A W Pink in the Attributes of God - "God is light" (1 John 1:5), which is the opposite of darkness. In Scripture "darkness" stands for sin, evil, death, and "light" for holiness, goodness, life. "God is light" means that He is the sum of all excellency. ([The Attributes of God](#))

John Phillips has some interesting thoughts on **God is light** writing that "Light! What an amazing and wonderful thing light is. Darkness cannot drive out the light, but light can drive out the darkness. There can be no fellowship between light and darkness—and God is light... Physical light bears the image and stamp of its Creator, a God who is, Himself, light... Another wonderful property of light is that it cannot be defiled. Even though it passes, say, through a glass of muddy water, light is not defiled. Moreover, light can, and most certainly does, reveal defilement. Also, life as we know it craves light. A plant will always turn toward the light and struggle to reach it. Such are some of the characteristics of natural, created light. Many of these properties reflect the One who reveals Himself as the Light. He is always the same, He is immaculate and beyond the reach of darkness, He reveals Himself to us in all the diverse beauties of His being. And beneath the sunshine of His smile, life can flourish, take root, and grow. Our desire is toward Him, and He rules over us. ([Exploring the Epistles of John](#))

John Stott explains that in regard to the truth that **God is light**, God by His very nature seeks "to reveal Himself, as it is the property of light to shine; and the revelation is of perfect purity and unutterable majesty. We are to think of God as a Personal Being, infinite in all His perfections, transcendent, 'the high and lofty One... He Who lives forever, Whose name is holy' (Isa. 57:15), yet Who desires to be known and has revealed Himself. The miserable errors of the heretics were due to their ignorance of God's ethical self-revelation as **light**. They could never have laid claim to a private, esoteric **gnosis** into which they had been initiated if their conception of God had been of one Who is light, diffusive, shining forth and manifesting Himself, in Whom there is no darkness at all, no secrecy, no hiding in the shadows. And if God is also light in the sense of possessing an absolute moral perfection, their claim to know Him and have fellowship with Him despite their indifference to morality is seen to be sheer nonsense, as the author goes on

to demonstrate. (BORROW [The Epistles of John : an introduction and commentary](#))

Roy Gingrich - God is light (truth and righteousness) and in Him is no darkness (error and unrighteousness). This truth was partially unveiled through the writings of the Old Testament prophets but it was fully unveiled in the words and the works of the incarnate Christ (His words revealed God's truth and His works revealed God's righteousness), John 14:7–11; Heb 1:1–3. The apostles learned the truth that God is light from Jesus and they proclaimed it to all men.

NET Bible Note - Following the theme statement in 1Jn 1:5, God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all, the author presents a series of three claims and counterclaims that make up the first unit of 1 John (1Jn 1:5–2:2). The three claims begin with "if" (1Jn 1:6, 8, 10) and the three counterclaims begin with "but if" (1Jn 1:7, 9; 2:1).

Believer's Study Bible - The imagery of **God** as "light" illustrates two concepts. First, it pictures God's self-revelation (cf. John 8:12; 9:5; 12:35, 36). Because of this God-initiated disclosure, believers have access to the truth (Jn 2:21, 27). Second, the "light" motif highlights God's holiness. Hence, the contrast between light and darkness does not simply represent knowledge and ignorance; it also portrays good versus evil (cf. John 3:19-21). ([Criswell, W. A. Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version, 1991. Thomas Nelson](#))

John MacArthur notes that "Scripture reveals two fundamental principles that flow from the foundational truth that **God is light**. First, light represents the truth of God, as embodied in His Word. The psalmist wrote these familiar words: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path...The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" (Ps 119:105, 130; cf. Pr 6:23; 2Pe 1:19). The light and life of God are inherently connected to and characterized by truth. Second, Scripture also links light with virtue and moral conduct. The apostle Paul instructed the Ephesians, "You were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth)" (Eph 5:8,9; cf. Isa. 5:20; Ro 13:12; 1Th. 5:5, 6). Those two essential properties of divine light and life are crucial in distinguishing genuine faith from a counterfeit claim. If one professes to possess the Light and to dwell in it—to have received eternal life—he will show evidence of spiritual life by his devotion both to truth and to righteousness, as John writes later in this letter (1Jn 2:9, 10, 11) If truth and righteousness are absent from one's life, that person, no matter what he or she says, does not possess eternal life (Matt. 7:17, 18, 21–23; 25:41-46). They cannot belong to God, because **in Him there is no darkness at all**. God is absolutely perfect in truth and holiness (Ex. 15:11; 1 Sam. 2:2; Ps 22:3; 48:10; 71:19; 98:2; Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8; 15:4). Obviously, believers fall far short of that perfection, but they manifest a godlike desire for and continual striving toward heavenly truth and righteousness (cf. Phil. 3:7–16). (See [1-3 John - Volume 5 - Page 24](#))

J M Gibbon comments on "**God is light**" as symbolic of His "holiness and love. Do you say, "It is a message that crushes"? Nay, it consoles too, it inspires. There is a gospel in it. The sun looking down at the green wheat blade, says, "You must be like me." But how? "By looking at me. I, by shining on you, will make you to be what I want you to be." God is light! If He is holiness without spot, He is also love without measure. He gives Himself away like the light.

Dwight M. Pratt - The origin of light finds its explanation in the purpose and very nature of God Whom John defines as not only the Author of light but, in an all-inclusive sense, as light itself "God is light" (1John 1:5)....An Attribute of Holiness: **(1) God.**"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn 1:5). Darkness is the universal symbol and condition of sin and death; light the symbol and expression of holiness. "The light of Israel will be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame" (Isa 10:17). God, by His presence and grace, is to us a "marvellous light" (1 Pet 2:9). The glory of His holiness and presence is the "everlasting light" of the redeemed in heaven (Isa 60:19,20; Rev 21:23,14; 22:5). **(2) Christ.** Christ, the eternal Word (logos, Jn 1:1), who said "Let there be light" (Gen 1:3), is Himself the "effulgence of (God's) glory" (Heb 1:3), "the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world" (Jn 1:9) (compare the statements concerning Wisdom in The Wisdom of Solomon 7:25 f and concerning Christ in Heb 1:3; and see CREEDS; LOGOS; JOHANNINE THEOLOGY; WISDOM). As the predicted Messiah, He was to be "for alight of the Gentiles" (Isa 42:6; 49:6). His birth was the fulfillment of this prophecy (Lk 2:32). Jesus called Himself "the light of the world" (Jn 8:12; 9:5; 12:46); As light He was "God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim 3:16 the King James Version). "The Word was God" (Jn 1:1). Jesus as logos is the eternal expression of God as a word is the expression of a thought. In the threefold essence of His being God is Life (zoe) (Jn 5:26; 6:57); God is Love (agape) (1 Jn 4:8); God is Light (phos) (1 Jn 1:5). Thus Christ, the logos, manifesting the three aspects of the Divine Nature, is Life, Love and Light, and these three are inseparable and constitute the glory. which the disciples beheld in Him, "glory as of the only begotten from the Father" (Jn 1:14). In revealing and giving life, Christ becomes "the light of men" (Jn 1:4). God gives "the light of the knowledge of (his) glory in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:6), and this salvation is called "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor 4:4). Christ is thus the Teacher, Enlightener ("Christ shall give thee light," Eph 5:14 the King James Version), Guide, Saviour of men. ([ISBE - "Light" in Scripture](#))

Beloved, contemplate the phrase "God is light" and then read the familiar and famous Aaronic blessing in that "light"...

*The LORD bless you, and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine on you,*

*And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance on you,
And give you peace.
-- Numbers 6:24-26+*

While we can easily become sidetracked trying to comprehend and comment on the simple but profound phrase "God is light", it is worthwhile seeing how David made this truth practical and personal writing...

The LORD is my light and my salvation;

Whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the defense of my life;

Whom shall I dread?

(Ps 27:1)

Comment: Are David's words not too wonderful for words, God Who is light is my light! My personal light! This truth is surely worthy of pausing to praise Him this very moment beloved! The Infinite One has taken a personal interest in us, and we now can call our Beloved "mine"! [Hallelujah!](#) Amen!

C H Spurgeon: The Lord is *my* light and *my* salvation. Here is personal interest, "*my* light," "*my* salvation;" the soul is assured of it, and therefore, declaring it boldly. "*My* light;" -- into the soul at the new birth divine light is poured as the precursor of salvation; where there is not enough light to see our own darkness and to long for the Lord Jesus, there is no evidence of salvation. Salvation finds us in the dark, but it does not leave us there; it gives light to those who sit in the valley of the shadow of death. After conversion our God is our joy, comfort, guide, teacher, and in every sense our light; He is light within, light around, light reflected from us, and light to be revealed to us. **Note, it is not said merely that the Lord gives light, but that He "is" light**(cp 1Jn 1:5); nor that He gives salvation, but that He is salvation; he, then, who by faith has laid hold upon God has all covenant blessings in his possession. Every light is not the sun, but the sun is the father of all lights. This being made sure as a fact, the argument drawn from it is put in the form of a question, Whom shall I fear? A question which is its own answer. The powers of darkness are not to be feared, for the Lord, our light, destroys them; and the damnation of hell is not to be dreaded by us, for the Lord is our salvation. This is a very different challenge from that of boastful Goliath, for it is based upon a very different foundation; it rests not upon the conceited vigor of an arm of flesh, but upon the real power of the omnipotent I AM. The Lord is the strength of my life. Here is a third glowing epithet, to show that the writer's hope was fastened with a threefold cord which could not be broken. We may well accumulate terms of praise where the Lord lavishes deeds of grace. Our life derives all its strength from Him who is the Author of it; and if He deigns to make us strong we cannot be weakened by all the machinations of the adversary. Of whom shall I be afraid? The bold question looks into the future as well as the present. "If God be for us," who can be against us, either now or in time to come?

F B Meyer: How many-sided is God! He is "light," "salvation," and "strength (defense)." The trusting soul lives behind a triple door. We may shrink from uttering the desire to dwell evermore in Jehovah's house. Yet there is a sense in which even busy people can do this by the grace of the Holy Spirit. God's presence is God's house. Abide in Him! You are "in Him" unless you consciously go out.

Warren Wiersbe: The Lord was everything he needed just as He is everything we need today. He is our light, so we need not fear because of darkness; He is our strength (or stronghold; see Ps 18:2; 31:3-2), so we need not fear because of our weakness; and He is our salvation, so the victory is sure. This is the first time in Scripture that light is used as a metaphor for God (see John 1:4, 9; 8:12; 1John 1:5; Rev 21:23), although in many texts He is associated with the light (Ps 4:6; 18:28; 43:3; 84:11; Isa. 10:17; 60:1, 20; Mic. 7:8). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

The African Bible Commentary: Light illuminates our way and repels the darkness, thus revealing hidden enemies.

J Vernon McGee: This again is a "He and me" psalm. "The LORD is my light and my salvation." "He is my light." He is a holy God. He is the One who directs and guides me by the light of His Word. Later the psalmist will say, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105).

H C Leupold: Any Christian might well wish that he could in times of trouble always occupy as lofty a ground as do these verses. This is as we should always be minded if the Lord is truly our "light and salvation." "Light" means more than intellectual insight, and "salvation" obviously means deliverance from every form of evil.

"Light" includes joy (cf., 97:11), life, and hope. If an individual's heart is thus truly established in God, what or whom could he fear? If one continually takes refuge in Him as the "refuge of one's life," what reason is there for ever being afraid? This is a certainty that faith has often spoken to our hearts. We fail to carry through on the obvious logic of this position.

F F Bruce: light: here a symbol of life (cf. 36:9; 56:13; Job 3:20) and perhaps joy (cf. 97:11; Isa. 9:2) and salvation (cf. Isa. 58:8). The 'Light of Israel' (Isa. 10:17; cf. 60:19 f.) is also the source of life and salvation for the individual (cf. Ps. 18:28). (New International Bible Commentary)

Eric Lane: This is one of the greatest expressions of confidence in God in the whole Bible, perhaps only surpassed by Romans 8:28-39.

Derek Kidner: Light is a natural figure for almost everything that is positive, from truth and goodness to joy and vitality (e.g., respectively, Ps. 43:3; Isa. 5:20; Ps. 97:11; 36:9), to name but a few. Here it is the answer to fear (1, 3) and to the forces of evil.

Robert Bratcher: Only here in the Old Testament is Yahweh called my light; this means he is the source of life and vitality.

Sir Richard Baker: "Light" which makes all things visible, was the first made of all visible things; and whether God did it for our example, or no, I know not; but ever since, in imitation of this manner of God's proceeding, the first thing we do when we intend to do anything, is to get us "light."

Dr Charles Ryrie: Light dispels the anxieties and dangers of darkness...

Donald Williams: As light God is the Revealer (John 1:4, 5),

James Montgomery Boice: When any of us think of God, perhaps trying to visualize him, the best we can do is to think of light, remembering Paul's teaching that God "lives in unapproachable light" (1Ti 6:16). For this reason, it is a bit of a surprise to learn that, although God is often associated with light in the Bible, **this verse is the only direct application of the name light to God in the Old Testament.** Job speaks of heaven as the "abode of light" (Job 38:19). Psalm 104 says that God "wraps himself in light as with a garment" (Ps 104:2). Several verses affirm that "the LORD turns my darkness into light" (2Sa 22:29; cf. Ps 18:28). Ps 36:9 declares, "In your light we see light." However, Psalm 27:1 is the only Old Testament text in which God is actually called light. We have to go to the New Testament to find a good parallel, and when we do, we find that there light is a name for Jesus Christ: "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it... The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world" (John 1:5, 9). John, who makes this identification, also says, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1Jn 1:5). **What is this image supposed to mean?** In the Gospel of John it has to do with understanding, which is why it is applied to Jesus. It is in Him that we see or understand what God the Father is like. In the first letter of John **light** has to do with God's purity or sinlessness, because it is opposed to the darkness of sinful behavior (1Jn 1:7). What about Psalm 27? Here the term is not specifically explained. It could suggest illumination, purity, joy, life, and hope, among other things. But since David is thinking about his enemies and is seeking deliverance from them, Craigie is probably right when he says, "The psalmist is affirming that even in the darkness of the terrible threat of war, he has no fear, for God is the light that can dispel such fearful darkness." (Bolding added)

'My God, how wonderful Thou art,
Thy majesty how bright,
How beautiful Thy mercy seat,
In depths of burning light!

How wonderful, how beautiful,
The sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power,
And awful purity!
--F W Faber

Light (5457) (phos from pháos = to shine) is defined by many lexicons as that which contrasts with darkness. **Light** is the medium of illumination that makes sight possible or makes things visible. In Scripture **phos** can refer to literal, physical light (Ge 1:3), but often is used metaphorically or symbolically, the greatest metaphorical use being used to symbolize Jesus as "the **Light** of the world." (Jn 8:12). See the [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) for over 12 pages of discussion of the imagery associated with **light**.

1. lit.—a. generally Mt 17:2; Lk 8:16; Jn 11:10; Ac 12:7; 2 Cor 4:6; 6:14; Rev 18:23.—b. that which gives light,

light(-bearer) Mt 6:23; Lk 11:35; Jn 11:9; Acts 16:29; Jas 1:17. Fire Mk 14:54; Lk 22:56.—

2. light as the element and sphere of the Divine Jn 1:4, 7-9; 9:5; 12:35f, 46; 1 Ti 6:16; 1 Jn 1:5, 7b.—

3. fig. Mt 4:16; 5:14; Lk 16:8; Jn 8:12; Ac 13:47; 26:18; Ro 2:19; 13:12; Eph 5:13; Col 1:12; 1 Jn 2:8-10. [phospho-, phosph-, photo-, combining forms in a number of words] [[Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) by Gingrich pg 214]

Zodhiates says figuratively phos means "moral and spiritual light and knowledge which enlightens the mind, soul or conscience; including also the idea of moral goodness, purity and holiness, and of consequent reward and happiness. (BORROW [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#) - see page 1462)

Friberg has a good summary of phos...

Literally light; (1) by metonymy (**Ed**: figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute), of sources or bearers of illumination, as (sun)light (Rev 22.5b); (star)light, as one of many heavenly lights (Jas 1.17); (fire)light (Mk 14.54); (lamp)light (Lk 8.16); (torch or lantern) light (Acts 16.29);

(2) as a religious metaphor, used especially of God as the ultimate source of light and of the sphere where he exists (1Ti 6.16; 1Jn 1.5);

(3) figuratively openness; idiomatically "en to photi" = literally in the light, i.e. openly, publicly (Mt 10.27);

(4) figuratively; (a) as divine illumination or understanding given to the spirit and soul of human beings (Mt 4.16); (b) as a person who bears or brings such illumination to others (Ro 2.19); (c) as a person who guides the way he lives by such understanding (Eph 5.8; 1Th 5.5)(BORROW [Friberg, T., Friberg, B., & Miller, N. F. Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament. Baker Academic](#) - See page 404)

Vine summarizes **phos**...

akin to *phaō*, to give light (from roots *pha*— and *phan*—, expressing light as seen by the eye, and, metaphorically, as reaching the mind, whence *phainō*, to make to appear *phaneros*, evident, etc.); cp. English, phosphorus (lit., light-bearing). "Primarily light is a luminous emanation, probably of force, from certain bodies, which enables the eye to discern form and color. Light requires an organ adapted for its reception (Mt 6:22). Where the eye is absent, or where it has become impaired from any cause, light is useless. Man, naturally, is incapable of receiving spiritual light inasmuch as he lacks the capacity for spiritual things, 1Cor 2:14. Hence believers are called 'sons of light,' Lk 16:8, not merely because they have received a revelation from God, but because in the New Birth they have received the spiritual capacity for it. "

Apart from natural phenomena, **light** is used in Scripture of

(a) the glory of God's dwelling-place, 1Ti 6:16;

(b) the nature of God, 1Jn 1:5;

(c) the impartiality of God, Jas 1:17;

(d) the favor of God, Ps. 4:6; of the King, Pr 16:15;

of an influential man, Job 29:24;

(e) God, as the illuminator of His people, Isa. 60:19, 20;

(f) the Lord Jesus as the illuminator of men, Jn 1:4, 5, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35, 36, 46; Acts 13:47;

(g) the illuminating power of the Scriptures, Ps 119:105;

and of the judgments and commandments of God, Isa. 51:4; Pr 6:23, cp. Ps. 43:3;

(h) the guidance of God, Job 29:3; Ps 112:4; Isa. 58:10;

and, ironically, of the guidance of man, Ro 2:19;

(i) salvation, 1Pe 2:9

(j) righteousness, Ro 13:12; 2Cor. 11:14, 15; 1Jn 2:9, 10;

(k) witness for God, Mt 5:14, 16; Jn 5:35;

(l) prosperity and general well-being, Esther 8:16; Job 18:18; Isa. 58:8-10."

Webster's 1828 says **light** is "That ethereal agent or matter which makes objects perceptible to the sense of seeing, but the particles of which are separately invisible."

Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary says "The Bible also speaks of **light** as the symbol of God's presence and righteous activity. Light has been associated with the presence, truth, and redemptive activity of God since creation... Misguided fascination with light caused some cultures of the ancient world to worship the sun and moon."

ISBE adds that **light** "is used throughout the Scriptures as the symbol and synonym of all that is luminous and radiant in the mental, moral and spiritual life of men and angels; while the eternal God, because of His holiness and moral perfection, is pictured as "dwelling in light unapproachable" (1Ti 6:16)." ([ISBE - on "Light" in Scripture](#))

LIGHT - Excerpt from [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) (click for full 12 page discussion on the imagery of light)

The Bible is enveloped by the imagery of light, both literally and figuratively. At the beginning of the biblical narrative, physical light springs forth as the first created thing (Gen 1:3–4). At the end of the story the light of God obliterates all traces of darkness: "And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light" (Rev 22:5 RSV). Between these two beacons the imagery of light makes nearly two hundred appearances, with light emerging as one of the Bible's major and most complex symbols.....

The Conflict Between Light and Darkness. Primitive thinking begins by dividing reality into a dichotomy between light and darkness, viewed as combatants in a perpetual battle for dominance. When light dawns, chaos is again averted. We catch the strains of this primitive outlook in the Bible's creation story, where "God separated the light from the darkness" (Gen 1:4). It is impossible to understand the biblical imagery of light without seeing it as the great antithesis and conqueror of darkness.

With the conflict between light and darkness as a context, light has the properties of rulership over the universe, with an accompanying sense of awe such as a subject might feel toward a benevolent king. We find this motif of rulership in the creation account when on the fourth day of creation God "made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night" (Gen 1:16 RSV). As an image of order, light is the ally of people and their civilized enterprises, protecting them as they battle the forces of chaos and danger.

To the primitive mind, moreover, light is shrouded in mystery, and it retains this quality in the Bible. The voice from the whirlwind in the book of Job includes in its catalog of questions about the mystery of the origin of natural forces the query, "Where is the way to the dwelling of light?" (Job 38:19 RSV). And again, "What is the way to the place where the light is distributed?" (Job 38:24 RSV).

Along with reverence before the mystery of light, biblical writers express a terror about its absence. We catch this strain, for example, in Job's picture of deposed rulers who "grope in the dark without light" (Job 12:25 RSV) or in Isaiah's apocalyptic vision of light "darkened by its clouds" (Is 5:30) or in Jesus' metaphoric vision of good eyesight's producing a "whole body" full of light and its opposite producing a "whole body" full of darkness (Mt 6:22–23). Related are Jesus' memorable pictures of the futility of lighting a lamp and putting it under a basket (Mt 5:15) and of the need to work "while it is day; night comes, when no one can work" (Jn 9:4 RSV).....

Light as Symbol of Goodness and Blessing. At its most general level of symbolism, light represents goodness and holiness as opposed to evil. Evildoers are people "who rebel against the light ... and do not stay in its paths" (Job 24:13 RSV). "Every one who does evil," Jesus explained, "hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (Jn 3:20 RSV). When applied politically light becomes a symbol for the goodness that flows from a ruler who rules justly over his people: "He dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth upon a cloudless morning" (2 Sam 23:4 RSV).

In the NT the sanctified life is repeatedly associated with light. In the famous passage on holy living that concludes the epistle to the Romans, believers are commanded to "cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Rom 13:12 RSV). Equally evocative is the picture in Ephesians 5:8–9: "Once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and true)" (RSV). The calling of Christians is to "shine as lights in the world" (Phil 2:15 RSV).

Light is also a symbol of God's favor and the joy this favor brings. When the Jews were rescued from Haman's planned genocide, they "had light and gladness and joy and honor" (Esther 8:16 RSV). The psalmist does not

hesitate to limit the gift of this light to those who live in fellowship with God: “Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart” (Ps 97:11 RSV; 112:4). Similarly, the book of Proverbs asserts that “the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day” (Prov 4:18 RSV). When Job pictures his former prosperity, God’s favor assumes the qualities of light: “His lamp shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness” (Job 29:3 RSV).

In other contexts light is associated with life, and darkness with death. In the book of Job, to be redeemed from going down to the grave is parallel to one’s life seeing the light (Job 33:28), and to be brought back from the Pit is to “see the light of life” (Job 33:30 RSV). When the psalmist imagines the rich person’s going “to the generation of his fathers,” it calls to mind the picture that he “will never more see the light” (Ps 49:19 RSV).

Light as Symbol of Truth. A further cluster of images links light with truth and understanding as opposed to error and ignorance, and to the illumination that comes from embracing the truth. For example, “The unfolding of thy words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple” (Ps 119:130 RSV). An OT pilgrim equates truth and light when praying that God will “send out thy light and thy truth” to “bring me to thy holy hill” (Ps 43:3 RSV). Daniel is commended as a person in whom are found “light and understanding and excellent wisdom” (Dan 5:14 RSV).

Because truth is represented in the Bible as being a revelation from God, that revelation itself is pictured as light: “Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119:105 RSV). God’s law can be characterized as “enlightening the eyes” (Ps 19:8 RSV). As with the law, so with the prophets: Peter describes “the prophetic word” as “a lamp shining in a dark place” (2 Pet 1:19 RSV).

A related cluster of images associates light with revelation of something that had been secret or hidden. In the hymn to wisdom in Job 28, one of the powers attributed to human ingenuity is the ability to bring to light the “thing that is hid” (Job 28:11 RSV). In the NT this bringing to light is applied to God’s judgment of the individual heart. The Lord “will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then every man will receive his commendation from God” (1 Cor 4:5 RSV). The same motif appears in the OT: “He will bring forth your vindication as the light, and your right as the noonday” (Ps 37:6 RSV).

God as Light. Light also symbolizes God. In the OT we find the evocative image of “the light of [God’s] countenance” (Ps 4:6; cf. Num 25–26). Isaiah’s vision of the final triumph of goodness includes the assertion that “the LORD will be your everlasting light” (Is 60:19, 20). The most succinct statement is found in 1 John 1:5: “God is light and in him is no darkness at all” (RSV). James speaks of God as “the Father of lights” (Jas 1:17). Elsewhere God is simply associated with light as an image of divine glory: he covers himself “with light as with a garment” (Ps 104:2); “his brightness was like the light” (Hab 3:4); “the light dwells with him” (Dan 2:22). Ezekiel’s vision of the divine chariot (Ezek 1) is a riot of brightness, flashing fire, shining jewels and gleaming metals.

By extension, God who is light inhabits a heaven bathed in light. Here light becomes the preeminent symbol for transcendence, dear to the mystics’ and poets’ expressions through the ages. The classic passage is 1 Timothy 6:16, which speaks of God as the one “who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light” (RSV). Colossians 1:12 speaks of the believer’s being qualified “to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” (RSV).

As a symbol for God, light takes the more specific form of representing the Messiah. Isaiah’s prophecy predicted, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined” (Is 9:2 RSV). Jesus applied this prophecy to himself (Mt 4:15–16). The song of Simeon calls Christ “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel” (Lk 2:32 RSV). John’s great prologue in praise of the incarnate Word repeatedly applies the mystical language of light to Christ (Jn 1:4, 5, 7, 8, 9). Christ declared himself to be “the light of the world” (Jn 8:12). Elsewhere he claimed, “I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (Jn 12:46 RSV).....

Summary. In all of the Bible’s references to light, light is not self-generated. It comes (usually unbidden) from outside the earthly and human sphere and transforms that sphere with a transcendent splendor. As a symbol light thus pictures the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of God: it is from above, but it permeates everyday life.

A survey of light imagery in the Bible illustrates the implied thesis of this dictionary—that the main outline of biblical belief and the feelings it generates can be traced by following the Bible’s master images. Light in its varied meanings is at the heart of such central biblical themes as creation, providence, judgment, redemption

and sanctification. It embodies much of the theological teaching of the Bible about God, which explains why light has been prominent in the history of theology (Pelikan). In its literal, physical manifestations, moreover, light contributes significantly to the elemental quality of the biblical world, keeping spiritual reality rooted in the lives that people actually live.

The text within the Bible itself that comes closest to summarizing the range of meanings of light is 2 Corinthians 4:6: "For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (RSV). Here is the link between creation and the new creation, between OT and NT, between the physical reality and the spiritual symbol. (Excerpt from [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) -- click for full 12 page discussion on the imagery of light)

QUESTION - [What does it mean that God is light? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - "God is light," says 1 John 1:5. Light is a common metaphor in the Bible. Proverbs 4:18 symbolizes righteousness as the "morning sun." Philippians 2:15 likens God's children who are "blameless and pure" to shining stars in the sky. Jesus used light as a picture of good works: "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds" (Matthew 5:16). Psalm 76:4 says of God, "You are radiant with light."

The fact that God is light sets up a natural contrast with darkness. If light is a metaphor for righteousness and goodness, then darkness signifies evil and sin. First John 1:6 says that "if we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth." Verse 5 says, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all." Note that we are not told that God is a light but that He is light. Light is part of His essence, as is love (1 John 4:8). The message is that God is completely, unreservedly, absolutely holy, with no admixture of sin, no taint of iniquity, and no hint of injustice.

If we do not have the light, we do not know God. Those who know God, who walk with Him, are of the light and walk in the light. They are made partakers of God's divine nature, "having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" (2 Peter 1:4).

God is light, and so is His Son. Jesus said, "I am the [light of the world](#). Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). To "walk" is to make progress. Therefore, we can infer from this verse that Christians are meant to grow in holiness and to mature in faith as they follow Jesus (see 2 Peter 3:18).

To walk in the light means to [know God](#), understand the truth, and live in righteousness.

God is light, and it is His plan that believers shine forth His light, becoming more like Christ every day. "You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5:5). God is the Creator of physical light as well as the Giver of spiritual light by which we can see the truth. Light exposes that which is hidden in darkness; it shows things as they really are. To walk in the light means to [know God](#), understand the truth, and live in righteousness.

Believers in Christ must confess any darkness within themselves – their sins and transgressions – and allow God to shine His light through them.

Christians cannot sit idly by and watch others continue in the darkness of sin, knowing that those in darkness are destined for eternal separation from God. The Light of the World desires to banish the darkness and bestow His wisdom everywhere (Isaiah 9:2; Habakkuk 2:14; John 1:9). In taking the light of the gospel to the world, we must by necessity reveal things about people that they would rather leave hidden. Light is uncomfortable to those accustomed to the dark (John 3:20).

Jesus, the sinless Son of God, is the "true light" (John 1:9). As adopted sons of God, we are to reflect His light into a world darkened by sin. Our goal in witnessing to the unsaved is "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18).

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all - In "light" of this truth, play the [beautiful vocal rendition of Eternal Light! Eternal Light!](#) composed by **Howard Goodall**

Eternal Light! Eternal Light!

How pure the soul must be
When, placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight
Can live and look on Thee.

The spirits that surround Thy throne

May bear the burning bliss;
But that is surely theirs alone,
Since they have never, never known
A fallen world like this.

Oh, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before th' Ineffable appear,
And on my natural spirit bear
The uncreated beam?

There is a way for man to rise
To Thee, sublime Abode;
An Offering and a Sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God:

These, these prepare us for the sight
Of holiness above;
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the eternal Light,
Through the eternal Love.

CONTRAST OF LIGHT & DARKNESS IN THE SCRIPTURE

There are some 60 passages (both OT and NT) which specifically present **light** and **darkness** in direct contrast. (The following passages would make an interesting study) -

Ge 1:4f, 18; Ex 14:20; Job 3:4, 9; 12:22, 25; 17:12; 18:6, 18; 24:16; 26:10; 29:3; 30:26; 38:19; Ps 18:28; 112:4; 139:11f; Eccl 2:13; 12:2; Isa 5:20, 30; 9:2; 13:10; 42:16; 45:7; 50:10; 58:10; 59:9; Jer 13:16; Lam 3:2; Ezek 32:7; Dan 2:22; Amos 5:18, 20; Mic 7:8; Matt 4:16; 6:23; 10:27; 24:29; Mk 13:24; Lk 11:34ff; 12:3; Jn 1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 46; Acts 26:18; Ro 2:19; 13:12; 1Cor 4:5; 2Cor 4:6; 6:14; Eph 5:8; 1Th 5:5; 1Pet 2:9; 1 John 1:5; 2:8f

Related Resources:

- Light in [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- Light in [The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) (ONLINE) for over 12 pages of discussion of the imagery associated with **light**. Excerpt - "The Bible is enveloped by the imagery of light, both literally and figuratively. At the beginning of the biblical narrative, physical light springs forth as the first created thing (Gen 1:3–4). At the end of the story the light of God obliterates all traces of darkness: "And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light" (Rev 22:5RSV). Between these two beacons the imagery of light makes nearly two hundred appearances, with light emerging as one of the Bible's major and most complex symbols.....The text within the Bible itself that comes closest to summarizing the range of meanings of light is 2 Corinthians 4:6: "For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (RSV). Here is the link between creation and the new creation, between OT and NT, between the physical reality and the spiritual symbol.
- [Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels](#) - BORROW - see page 472 for article on LIGHT
- [Octavius Winslow on THE GOD OF LIGHT](#)

Phos - 70x in 59v in the **NAS** - Translated - fire(1), firelight(1), light(68), lights(2).

Matthew 4:16+ "THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN **DARKNESS** SAW A GREAT **LIGHT**, AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A **LIGHT** DAWNED."

Comment: Here light has a spiritual meaning in context ultimately describing the Messiah (and His message, the Gospel of

Jesus Christ, Mk 1:1)

Matthew 5:14+ "You are the **light** of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

Comment: Here light has a spiritual meaning and refers to Christ followers who let their light shine in the spiritually dark, spiritually blind world (see Mt 5:16 below)

Matthew 5:16+ "Let your **light** shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Comment: This is an amazing verse in conjunction with 1Jn 1:5 - God is light and His children (Jn 1:12, 1Jn 3:1) are His privileged designated spiritual "light" bearers. Not only did He extract us from dark and give us spiritual eyes to see His light, He then gave us the job to go back to the darkness and live in such a way that our visible lives give a proper of the unseen Father in heaven.

Matthew 6:23+ "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of **darkness**. If then the **light** that is in you is **darkness**, how great is the **darkness**!

Comment: "The darkness means that a person's eye is focused upon evil; therefore, his whole being is full of darkness or evil." (POSB)

Matthew 10:27+ "What I tell you in the **darkness**, speak in the **light**; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops.

Matthew 17:2+ And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as **light**.

Mark 14:54+ Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the officers and warming himself at the **fire**.

Luke 2:32+ A **LIGHT** OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Luke 8:16+ "Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the **light**.

Luke 11:35+ "Then watch out that the **light** in you is not **darkness**.

Luke 12:3+ "Accordingly, whatever you have said in the **dark** will be heard in the **light**, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Luke 16:8+ "And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of **light**.

Luke 22:56+ And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the **firelight** and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too."

John 1:4+ In Him was life, and the life was the **Light** of men. 5 The **Light** shines in the **darkness**, and the **darkness** did not comprehend it.

John 1:7+ He came as a witness, to testify about the **Light**, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the **Light**, but he came to testify about the **Light**. 9 There was the true **Light** which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

John 3:19+ "This 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. 20 "For everyone who does evil hates the **Light**, and does not come to the **Light** for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 "But he who practices the truth comes to the **Light**, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

Comment: Here we see Jesus is personified as the **Light** Who offends the sons of darkness and from Whom they flee, for His Light exposes their evil deeds. As **Robert Candlish** says "The clear, open sunshine of the presence and countenance of Him Who is Light is no longer tolerable. The covering of fig-leaves, and the hiding-place of the trees of the garden, are preferred. Light henceforth is offensive." ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

John 5:35+ "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his **light**.

John 8:12+ Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the **Light** of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the

darkness, but will have the **Light** of life."

Comment: When Jesus stated He was the Light of the world, He was clearly (contrary to what so many claim) stating He was God, for God is Light! Darkness speaks of death, ignorance and sin while light speaks of life, truth, holiness (among other things). The Light of the world reprobated the sin of the world (Jn 3:20) and the lost sinners of the world who live in spiritual darkness and death (Eph 2:1-3-note, Eph 4:17-19-note, Eph 5:8-note) and who tragically will spend eternity in darkness (Mt 25:30, 8:12, 22:13) if they die without accepting the Light's offer of life (John 8:24, Rev 21:8-note).

I heard the voice of Jesus say, '**I am this dark world's Light**;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk, till trav'ling days are done.

Horatius Bonar, 1846

John 9:5+ "While I am in the world, I am the **Light** of the world."

John 11:9+ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the **light** of this world. 10 "But if anyone walks in the **night**, he stumbles, because the **light** is not in him."

John 12:35+ So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the **Light** is among you. Walk while you have the **Light**, so that **darkness** will not overtake you; he who walks in the **darkness** does not know where he goes. 36 "While you have the **Light**, believe in the **Light**, so that you may become sons of **Light**." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

John 12:46+ "I have come as **Light** into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in **darkness**."

Acts 9:3+ As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a **light** from heaven flashed around him;

Acts 12:7+ And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a **light** shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off his hands.

Acts 13:47+ "For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A **LIGHT** FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'"

Acts 16:29+ And he called for **lights** and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,

Acts 22:6+ "But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright **light** suddenly flashed from heaven all around me,

Acts 22:9+ "And those who were with me saw the **light**, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me.

Acts 22:11+ "But since I could not see because of the brightness of that **light**, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus.

Acts 26:13+ at midday, O King, I saw on the way a **light** from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me.

Acts 26:18+ to open their eyes so that they may turn from (spiritual) **darkness** to (spiritual) **light** and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Comment: This was Jesus' charge to Paul's ministry to the Gentiles - open spiritually blind eyes to see the spiritual truth about God and the Gospel. In this verse the darkness describes the influence and power of Satan. When one is in darkness that person is under the power (he has the "right" and the "might") of Satan.

Acts 26:23+ that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim **light** both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

Romans 2:19+ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a **light** to those who are in **darkness**,

Romans 13:12+ The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of **darkness** and put on the armor of **light**.

2 Corinthians 4:6+ For God, who said, '**Light** shall shine out of **darkness**,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the

Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Comment: In this wonderful passage Paul uses the imagery of light to adroitly link creation and the new creation, the OT and NT, the physical reality and the spiritual symbol.

2 Corinthians 6:14+ **Do not be bound together** with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has **light** with **darkness**?

2 Corinthians 11:14+ No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of **light**.

Ephesians 5:8+ for you were formerly **darkness**, but now you are **Light** in the Lord; walk as children of **Light**

Comment: Don't miss what Paul is saying -- he is not saying we simply walked in darkness when we were unbelievers, but that in fact we were the very embodiment of darkness! Our very nature and character outside of Christ was darkness!

Ephesians 5:13+ But all things become visible when they are exposed by the **light**, for everything that becomes visible is **light**.

Colossians 1:12+ giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in **Light**.

1 Thessalonians 5:5+ for you are all sons of **light** and sons of day. We are not of **night** nor of **darkness**;

1 Timothy 6:16 Who Alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable **light**, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

James 1:17+ Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of **lights**, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

Hiebert comments: Lights in the original has the definite article, "the lights," and the primary reference is to the well-known celestial lights, the heavenly luminaries that are the sources of light for our earth. As "the Father" of these lights, God is their source of being, and they reflect the glory of their Creator (Ps 19:1; 136:7). As their Creator and Sustainer, He is not to be identified with them. These luminous celestial bodies must not be worshiped as God, but they testify to the Creator's luminous nature. Their glory and dignity declare the nature and essence of God, that "God is light" (1 John 1:5). He is also the Father of all our spiritual illumination (2Co 4:6).

1 Peter 2:9+ But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may **proclaim** (exaggello, cp to anaggello here in 1Jn 1:5 and apaggello in 1Jn 1:2,3) the excellencies of Him who has called you out of **darkness** into His marvelous **light**;

Comment: The motif of bringing a lost, unsaved individual out of **darkness** into **light** is a major Biblical image of redemption. This verse is the only NT use of exaggello, the apostle Peter exhorting us to declare abroad, to make widely known, to report widely, to proclaim throughout, to tell everywhere, the Gospel message that the Light has taken us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of God's dear Son (cp Col 1:13+).

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is **Light**, and in Him there is no **darkness** at all.

1 John 1:7+ but if we walk in the **Light** as He Himself is in the **Light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 2:8+ On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the **darkness** is passing away and the true **Light** is already shining. 9 The one who says he is in the **Light** and yet hates his brother is in the **darkness** until now. 10 The one who loves his brother abides in the **Light** and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

Revelation 18:23+ and the **light** of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

Revelation 21:24+ The nations will walk by its **light**, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.

Revelation 22:5+ And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the **light** of a lamp nor the **light** of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Phos - 122v in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (Lxx)** -

Gen 1:3,4,5, 18; Ex 10:23; 27:20; 35:14; 39:37; Lev 24:2; Num 4:16; 1Sa 25:34, 36; 2 Sam 17:22; 23:4; 2Kgs

7:9; 2Chr 4:20; Esther 1:1; 8:16; 10:3; Job 3:16, 20; 12:22, 25; 17:12; 18:5f, 18; 22:11; 24:16; 26:10; 28:11; 29:3, 24; 33:28, 30; 36:32; 37:3, 11, 15, 21; 38:15, 19; Ps 4:6; 36:9; 37:6; 38:10; 43:3; 49:19; 56:13; 89:15; 97:11; 104:2; 112:4; 119:105; 136:7; 139:12; 148:3; Pr 4:18; 6:23; 13:9; 16:15; 20:27; Eccl 2:13; 11:7; 12:2; Isa 2:5; 4:5; 5:20; 9:2; 10:17; 13:10; 18:4; 26:9; 30:26; 42:6, 16; 45:7; 49:6; 50:10f; 51:4f; 53:11; 58:8, 10; 59:9; 60:1, 3, 19f; 62:1; Jer 4:23; 10:13; 13:16; 25:10; 31:35; 51:16; Lam 3:2; Ezek 32:7f; 41:11; 42:7, 10ff; Dan 2:22; 5:5; 6:19; 10:5; Hos 6:5; 10:12; Amos 5:18, 20; 8:9; Mic 7:9; Hab 3:4, 11; Zeph 3:5; Zech 14:6, 7;

Genesis 1:3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the **darkness**.

Comment: The very fact that creation of light is the first recorded event in the Bible emphasizes its vital role in life. How sad that throughout the millennia, men have chosen to worship the creation rather than the Creator Who is blessed forever. Amen. Indeed, even the creation was commanded to give praise to the Creator in Psalm 148:3 "Praise Him sun and moon. Praise Him, all stars of light!"

Psalm 4:6-[note](#) Many are saying, "Who will show us any good?" Lift up the **light** of Your countenance upon us, O LORD!

Psalm 36:9-[note](#) For with You is the fountain of life; In Your **light** we see **light**.

Comment: Beloved, don't you love this declaration "In Your light we see light"! We were once in spiritual darkness, blind to the beauty of the light of God, but as Peter writes that now as believers we "may proclaim the excellencies of Him Who has called you out of **darkness** into His marvelous **light**" (1Peter 2:9) Paul affirms this great exchange from darkness to light writing "For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (2Cor 4:6) The Spirit of God was given "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (Acts 26:18)

MacArthur comments: Here the psalmist employed a Hebrew parallelism, using two statements to say the same thing. He equates light and life—God is light in the sense that He is life, and He is the source and sustainer of both physical and spiritual life... God, the Source of true light, bestows it on believers in the form of eternal life through His Son, Who was the light incarnate.

Spurgeon: In Thy light shall we see light. Light is the glory of life. Life in the dark is misery, and rather death than life. The Lord alone can give natural, intellectual, and spiritual life; He alone can make life bright and lustrous. In spiritual things the knowledge of God sheds a light on all other subjects. We need no candle to see the sun, we see it by its own radiance, and then see everything else by the same luster. We never see Jesus by the light of self, but self in the light of Jesus. No inward intelligence of ours leads us to receive the Spirit's light, but the rather, it often helps to quench the sacred beam; purely and only by His own illumination, the Holy Ghost lights up the dark recesses of our heart's ungodliness. Vain are they who look to learning and human wit, one ray from the throne of God is better than the noonday splendor of created wisdom. Lord, give me the Sun (Son), and let those who will delight in the wax candles of superstition and the phosphorescence of corrupt philosophy. Faith derives both light and life from God, and hence she neither dies nor darkens.

Psalm 43:3-[note](#) O send out Your **light** and Your truth, let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places.

Psalm 89:15-[note](#) How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O LORD, they walk in the **light** of Your countenance.

Augustus Montague Toplady: The text... does not say, they shall sit down in the light of thy countenance; or, they shall lie down in the light of thy countenance; but "they shall WALK in the light of thy countenance." What is walking? It is a progressive motion from one point of space to another. And what is that holy walking which God's Spirit enables all his people to observe? It is a continued, progressive motion from sin to holiness; from all that is evil, to every good word and work. And the self same "light of God's countenance" in which you, O believer, are enabled to walk, and which at first gave you spiritual feet wherewith to walk, will keep you in a walking and in a working state, to the end of your warfare..

Psalm 104:2-[note](#) Covering Yourself with **light** as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.

Spurgeon: Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: wrapping the light about him as a monarch puts on his robe. The conception is sublime: but it makes us feel how altogether inconceivable the personal glory of the Lord must be; if light itself is but his garment and veil, what must be the blazing splendour of his own essential being! We are lost in astonishment, and dare not pry into the mystery lest we be blinded by its insufferable glory.

Psalm 119:105-[note](#) Your word is a lamp to my feet And a **light** to my path.

Comment: Here the metaphor of light "light" is used in an intellectual sense to symbolize truth which guides our steps along the "highway of holiness." (cp Jn 17:17)

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,

What a glory He sheds on our way!

While we do His good will, He abides with us still,

And with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey*

- James Sammis

Spurgeon: It is a lamp by night, a light by day, and a delight at all times. David guided his own steps by it, and also saw the difficulties of his road by its beams. He who walks in darkness is sure, sooner or later, to stumble; while he who walks by the light of day, or by the lamp of night, stumbles not, but keeps his uprightness. Ignorance is painful upon practical subjects; it breeds indecision and suspense, and these are uncomfortable: the Word of God, by imparting heavenly knowledge, leads to decision, and when that is followed by determined resolution, as in this case, it brings with it great restfulness of heart.

Proverbs 6:23-note For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is **light**; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life,

Tis like the sun, a heavenly light,
That guides us all the day;
And through the dangers of the night,
A lamp to lead our way.

Isaiah 2:5-note Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Isaiah 5:20-note Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute **darkness** (Lxx = skotos not skotia) for light and light for **darkness**; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Isaiah 9:2-note The people who walk in **darkness** Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

Comment: Here **light** (phos) prophetically symbolizes the coming of the Messiah, a prophecy Jesus specifically applied to Himself in Mt 4:15, 16.

Isaiah 42:6 "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness (**Father is here speaking to the Messiah, His Son**), I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, as a **light** to the nations (Gentiles),

Comment: Messiah, the Light of the world (Jn 1:9, 8:12, 9:5) is prophesied to be the One Who would bring light to the Gentiles (cp Paul's ministry to bring light to the Gentiles - Acts 26:18, 23). Messiah is personified as a "Covenant" and indeed in Jesus we find the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that "in you all the families (Jew and Gentile) of the earth will be blessed", the ultimate fulfillment being in Jesus becoming the Mediator of the New Covenant. (See related studies - Covenant: Abrahamic versus Mosaic; New Covenant in the Old Testament ; Covenant: Why the New is Better; Covenant: Abrahamic vs Old vs New).

Isaiah 49:6 He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; (**Father is speaking to His Son**) I will also make You a **light** of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Comment: Paul quoted this verse in Acts 13:47 showed that he clearly understood God's intention for the Jewish nation to be a light to the Gentiles, which was ultimately fulfilled by the Messiah, the Light of the world (Jn 1:9, 8:12) Acts 28:23 says the Messiah "would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

Isaiah 60:19,20 "No longer will you have the sun for **light** by day, Nor for brightness will the moon give you **light**; But you will have the LORD for an everlasting **light**, And your God for your glory. 20 "Your sun will set no more, Neither will your moon wane; For you will have the LORD for an everlasting **light**, And the days of your mourning will be finished.

Comment: In the future, at the dawn of a new age, when God's "Light" triumphs over the World, the Flesh and Satan's "Darkness" it is only fitting that the God Who is light should be the only Source of light forever and ever! Try to get your mind around that truth beloved!

Daniel 2:22-note It is He Who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the **darkness**, and the **light** dwells with Him.

Norman Harrison has this discussion of **God as light**...

To know light, and therefore what it means to be in fellowship with light, we must trace it back to its source. As the swift-winged sunbeam that kisses our cheek, when passed through the spectrum, yields up the qualities of the energizing sun from which it emanated, just so is all spiritual light. "God is Light." And again, "In Thy light shall we see light." In GOD is light in the absolute, such light as, coming from GOD, makes known to men His being and nature.

1. LIGHT IS PURE. It suffers no admixture of anything foreign to it. It is incapable of adulteration or contamination. Nothing extraneous can by any possibility attach itself to it. What a picture of our Lord JESUS CHRIST manifesting the purity of Deity in His walk among men. Touching the unclean, He was not defiled. Passing through the haunts of sin and iniquity, in sympathetic contact with the shame and sorrow of human life, He emerged sinless and stainless. What a portrayal, as well, of the purity that must ever attach to and characterize the life that partakes of the divine nature.

2. LIGHT IS PERVASIVE. It enters the least opening accessible to it. It searches out the recesses that otherwise would remain dark, dank and dismal. It penetrates the gloom, leaving it no alternative but to flee before its presence. Science long since disclosed the value of this pervasive quality of light in laying hold of every lurking germ of disease, whether in the homes of men or in the human system. Such is the ministry of Him who came as the world's Light. So far from sin fastening upon Him, it could not even stand in His presence. How often men found themselves confronted with the penetration of His searching insight, only to yield up the sinful unworthiness of their thoughts and actions.

3. LIGHT IS POWERFUL, with a power that is peculiarly its own. No agency known to man travels so swiftly or so far, yet does its work so silently and unobtrusively. From the farthest stellar spaces it reaches to us, revealing yonder worlds upon worlds. From our sun it bears upon its beams a multiform ministry for the sustaining of life and the maintaining of industry. The power put forth in a single day is wholly beyond compute. Yet all is done noiselessly - there is no sound; and gently - there is no jar, but a quiet persistent putting forth of its powers to heal and help.

All of this, and so much more, is our wonderful Light, in whom is "no darkness at all," and with whom He has brought us into fellowship, to a privileged sharing of these qualities with Himself. ([1 John 1:7 Walking in the Light](#))

David Legge asks a good question about why does John begin with God is light instead of God is love (1Jn 4:8, 16)?...

'Why can't you just come in there right away and tell them that God loves them?'. Now you must do that, but if you don't talk to them of God's holiness (God is light), if you don't speak to them of sin and how men personally have broken God's law - do you know what you do? You cheapen the love of God! 'How is that so?', you say. Simply because you cannot understand the greatness of God's love until you understand both His holiness, His awesome holiness, and the magnitude of your personal iniquity. If you go to a jewelers and you look through the front window, and you see there beautiful diamond rings. But you know those diamond rings are being offset by a black backdrop of black velvet, black as the coal that the diamonds came from. It is that black backdrop that offsets the diamond, that causes the light to shine through it, to see its splendor, to see its glory - it's exactly the same with the love of God. You can never appreciate Calvary love until you appreciate the awesome holiness of God and your awful sinfulness (**Ed**: The "black backdrop" of our fallen humanity)!

Do you know what that means? A message that ignores the holiness of God, and a message that fails to preach against sin and declare God's judgmental wrath because of the broken law of His holiness, is not the message that Christ gave to the early disciples: **God is light, in Him is no darkness at all** In some pulpits in our land you dare not even mention sin, judgment, or hell - it's unfashionable, it's not trendy! Well, it's not the message of Christ if you don't preach it! ([The Gospel According To Christ](#))

Steven Cole has some powerful and pithy comments on 1 John 1:5...

To have fellowship with God, we must begin with God and His authoritative revelation of Himself.

John is not sharing with us his speculations on what God may be like. He doesn't throw out an idea and suggest that his readers discuss what they think about it. Rather, John says, "We heard this straight from Jesus and we announce it to you." It wasn't a discussion point; it was an authoritative pronouncement from Jesus through the apostles to the readers. To have fellowship with God, we must start with His authoritative revelation in His Word.

Note, also, that John does not begin with his hearers felt needs. He doesn't discuss where they may be hurting, or bring up how this message will help them have a happy family life or a successful personal life. Rather, John begins with God and he brings us face to face, not with God's love, but with His holiness. Coming after verse 3, about having fellowship with God, you would expect John to

say, “To have fellowship with God, you need to know that He loves you very much.” But, rather, he bluntly says, “God is light.” Then, so that we don’t dodge the uncomfortable implications of that, he states the negative, “and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones makes this point (Fellowship With God [Crossway Books], p. 100), that we must always start with God. He argues that our main problem is our self-centeredness, and so we come to the Christian faith looking to have our needs met. I’m not happy; can God make me happy? I’m looking for something that I don’t have; can God give it to me? How can Christianity help me with my problems and needs? But to approach the Christian faith in that manner is to cater to our main problem, which is self! He says (p. 101), “The first answer of the gospel can always, in effect, be put in this way: ‘Forget yourself and contemplate God.’” He adds (p. 102), “The way to be delivered from self-centeredness is to stand in the presence of God.”

The entire church growth movement, including one of its most famous leaders, blatantly contradicts this. Robert Schuller, in his heretical book, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation* ([Word], p. 64), argues that classical theology “erred in its insistence that theology be ‘God-centered,’ not ‘man-centered.’” So he calls for a new Reformation that puts man, not God, at the center!

Following his lead, other church growth leaders have started with the “religious consumer.” They have gone to people with the question, “What would you like in a church? What would get you to come back and try the church again?”

People have responded, “We’d like a church that is a happy, upbeat place. We don’t want to hear about sin or a holy God who threatens sinners with His wrath. We want help on how to have happy families, how to be successful in reaching our full potential, and how to recover from divorce, drug addiction, and sexual addictions. We don’t want sermons that make us uncomfortable. Give us more drama and less preaching. In fact, don’t preach at us; share with us. Tell more stories and jokes. Don’t bring up controversial issues. Make it positive.” So, the church marketers go back to the drawing board and re-design the church to meet the felt needs of the consumer. The result is amazing growth. But, have people come face to face with the living God?

John says, first, to have fellowship with God, we must begin with God and His authoritative revelation of Himself, not with ourselves. ([1 John 1:5-10 How to Have Fellowship With God](#))

The Power of Light

TODAY’S READING: 1 John 1: 1–10

God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. -1 John 1:5

Even as the darkness of death was present in his sickly body, Augustin-Jean Fresnel persisted in working on his powerful light. Finally, in the early 1820s, he tested the first Fresnel lens in France’s Cordouran lighthouse.

The lens—a ring of beehive-like prisms—allowed sailors navigating dark, troubled waters to glimpse life-saving beams many, many nautical miles from land. Called “the invention that saved a million ships,” Fresnel’s work was featured in thousands of lighthouses by the 1860s.

Although he died of tuberculosis in 1827 at just thirty-nine years old, the light from his lens would save the lives of countless seafarers over the coming decades.

As a part of His perfect plan, God chose to send Jesus, His only Son, to bring light to our troubled world. As John wrote, “God is light, in him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Christ pushed back the darkness of sin and death as He shared the good news of life and forgiveness (vv. 2, 9).

Because of Him, we can live “in the light, as God is in the light,” . . . for “the blood of Jesus . . . cleanses us from all sin” (v. 7).

Like Fresnel, Jesus also died in his thirties, but He rose again—providing light and life for all who believe in Him (Acts 16:31). In Christ, we find the power we need to walk in His light. By Tom Felten (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What does it mean for you to walk in the light of Christ? In what practical ways can you shine for Him?

Jesus, thank You for the light You’ve brought to this world and to my heart. Please help me, by Your power, to radiate Your love and ways.

Jon Courson - 1 John 1:5

People who are depressed in their spiritual lives because they think being a Christian is so hard don’t match up with true Biblical Christianity because John says there’s no dark side to God; there’s nothing negative about Him; there’s not a mean bone in His

body. Therefore, a sour, dour, dark, and discouraged Christian is an oxymoron, a contradiction of terms.

'Wait a minute,' you say. 'Wasn't Jesus the Man of Sorrows?' (Isaiah 53:3).

Yes. Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). He wept at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35). When Jesus wept, however, it was always for others.

What about when He wept in the Garden of Gethsemane?

The night before He would go to the Cross, Jesus sweat blood because He was terrified not by the pain of the Cross, the spittle that would run down His face, or the flagellum that would rip into His back. Jesus was almost literally scared to death by the thought of being temporarily separated from His Father when He would be made sin on our behalf.

'What if I can't pay the bills?' we wonder. 'What if the car doesn't work?' 'What if I lose a loved one?' 'What's next?' 'Who else?' These are the things which frighten us. But separation from the Father? We don't even give it a second thought. God have mercy on us. We're terrified of all the wrong things. (See [Jon Courson's Application Commentary: Volume 3, New ... - Page 1613](#))

John MacArthur - 1 JOHN 1:5 (Borrow [Strength for today](#))

God's truthfulness and holiness are powerful motives not to sin.

Light and darkness are familiar metaphors in Scripture. Intellectually, light refers to truth, and darkness to error; morally, light refers to holiness, and darkness to evil.

Intellectually, the Bible reveals God as the God of truth. In Exodus 34:6 God described Himself to Moses as "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth." Both Psalm 31:5 and Isaiah 65:16 refer to Him as the "God of truth." In the New Testament, Jesus called Himself "the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

Not only is God true, but so also is His Word. In 2 Samuel 7:28 David exclaimed, "O Lord God, Thou art God, and Thy words are truth." The Lord Jesus prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The Bible, "the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), imparts the light of knowledge. In the familiar words of the psalmist, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105).

Morally, light describes God's absolute holiness and separation from evil. Psalm 5:4 says of Him, "No evil dwells with Thee." "Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil," said the prophet Habakkuk to God, "and Thou canst not look on wickedness with favor" (Hab. 1:13). Because God is light in the sense of truth, He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). When His Word promises that things will go well with the righteous (Isa. 3:10) and that sin brings consequences (Prov. 11:5), we can be certain that is exactly what will happen. Because God is moral light, we know that He is neither the cause of any evil we encounter, nor the source of our temptation (James 1:13).

Understanding the truth that God is light is foundational to dealing with sin in our lives.

Suggestions for Prayer: Praise God that He has revealed His truth in the Bible. ✧ Ask God to give you a deeper understanding of His holiness as you study the Scriptures.

For Further Study: Read Proverbs 11:3; 19:3; James 1:13–15. Based on those passages, how would you answer someone who blames God for the bad things that happen to him or her?

Warren Wiersbe (See [Be Real : Turning from Hypocrisy to Truth - Page 184](#)) - The world boasts of enlightenment, but a Christian walks in the real light, because God is light. The world talks about love, but it knows nothing of the real love which a Christian experiences because "God is love." The world displays its wisdom and learning, but a Christian lives in truth because "the Spirit is truth." God is light, love, and truth; and these together make a life that is real.

But it makes no difference what a man believes so long as he is sincere!" This popular excuse hardly needs refutation. Does it make any difference what the pharmacist believes, or the surgeon, or the chemist? It makes all the difference in the world.

Shed a tear for Jimmy Brown;
Poor Jimmy is no more.
For what he thought was H2O
Was H2SO4

(H2O is water. H2SO4 is sulfuric acid.)

A Christian has "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thes. 1:9). Idols are dead, but Christ is the living God. Idols are false, but Christ is the true God. This is the secret of the life that is real!

So John's admonition, "Keep yourselves from idols," can be paraphrased, "Watch out for the imitation and the artificial and be real!"

James Smith - GOD John 4:24; 1 John 1:5; 4:8, 16

How simple is the language of the Book. Some of the greatest possible Biblical truths God has written in monosyllables. The simplicity of Holy Writ is so appealing and satisfying. On the mysteries connected with the Being of God we have three profound monosyllables. These contain more information about God than all the sacred books of the East put together.

I. "God is a Spirit." The Spirituality of His Being (John 4:24).

1. This is one of the most sublime revelations in the Bible of the nature of God.
2. It really could be written: "God is Spirit," not a, nor the, but Spirit.

II. "God is Light." The Brilliancy of His Being (1 John 1:5).

1. Not a light, nor even the light, but Light.
2. Strictly speaking, white is no colour, but combination of all colours. When the Apostle wrote, "God is Light," he meant that God is not a hue, nor a colour, not a tone, nor a shade. He is the combination of all colours, all shades, all hues.

III. "God is Love." The Warmth and Attractiveness of His Being (1 John 4:8, 16).

1. Not "God loves," though of course He does. Not that He shows love, but that He is love.
2. We usually say that Love is one of the Divine attributes. Strictly speaking, this is hardly correct. He is Love. Love is His very Being.
3. He is Love to us because He is essentially and eternally Love in Himself.

John Butler - GOD IS LIGHT 1 John 1:5

The message John would proclaim is "God is light." Such a message will involve many things. Light speaks of what God is and does for us. We note four things which come from the fact that God is light.

FIRST—THE HONOR FOR GOD

"God is light." Light is associated with the glory of God. "Brightness of his glory" (Hebrews 1:3) and "Great is the glory of the LORD" "The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens" (Psalm 113:4). The glitter of this world pales into nothing in the light of the glory of God.

SECOND—THE HOLINESS OF GOD

"God is light ... in him is no darkness at all" Light speaks of the holiness of God. God is absolute holiness. "There is none holy as the Lord (1 Samuel 2:2); "He loveth righteousness" (Psalm 33:5). Where sin abounds, the lights go out. Pushing God out of our land, as our courts and the ACLU are doing, is like turning off the lights. We live in dark days because we live without God. You will note that taverns and bars and dens of iniquity do not have high light bills because they turn off or dim the lights. What they do not realize is that the conduct they advocate is darkness compared to God.

THIRD—THE HELP FROM GOD

"God is light." Light illuminates. Without light we walk in the darkness and will not know where we are going and will stumble over objects and fall and injure ourselves. But God will give us light so we will know where our soul is going and He will provide us light to keep us from falling and injuring ourselves. Our trouble is that we do not want the light of God. We want to walk on the path of life without God. But you will never walk on the path of life without the light from God. We think we know more than God and do not need illumination from him about what is right and what is wrong and perilous. God has given us a book which gives us the light of God about life. But if we do not read or study it to be illuminated and thus instructed regarding the ways of God it will not do us any good.

FOURTH—THE HAPPINESS FROM GOD

"God is light." Without light nothing will grow properly. Crops must have the light of the sun or they will not produce. Life comes from light. And what is life without happiness. If you want true happiness, you need true light. When the lights go out people scream, panic, and mourn. Darkness does not bring happiness. It may bring a superficial joy, but it will not last. But as long as there is light, and God is the eternal light, there will be

eternal joy. With God the light is always on and happiness reigns in contrast to darkness. True joy is when we can say, "The Lord is my light and my salvation" (Psalm 27:1).

([Butler's Sermon Starters](#))

Hymns Related to 1 John 1:5

- [Blessèd Sunlight](#)
- [Father of Light, We Sing in Thy Praise](#)
- [Father of Lights](#)
- [Heavenly Sunlight](#)
- [Holy Spirit, Lord of Light](#)
- [Light of Light, Enlighten Me](#)
- [Lord of True Light](#)
- [O God of Light](#)
- [O Light That Knew No Dawn](#)
- [O Unity of Threefold Light](#)
- [Once More Our Grateful, Strengthened Hearts](#)
- [There'll Be No Shadows](#)
- [Thou Lord of Light, Across the Years](#)

AND IN HIM THERE IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL: kai skotia en auto ouk estin (3SPAI) oudemia:

- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

ABSOLUTELY NO DARKNESS IN GOD

And in Him (God) **there is** (present tense) (ouk - absolutely) **no darkness** ([skotia](#)) **at all** ([oudeis](#) = absolutely nothing at all) - John uses two negatives, both negatives being the strongest available in the Greek language. He could have used just one, but instead couples them for greater emphasis! "**Ou**" means absolutely not. "**Oudeis**" literally means "but absolutely not one." More literally this phrase could be read "*And darkness there is not in Him, no, not in any way*" or "*In Him is no darkness at all, not even the smallest portion of it.*" The Greek does not translate well into English, but John's point is to refute in the strongest way the teaching that God had even one iota of darkness in Himself! In other words, God is the very essence and nature of Light, perfect Light, Light without defect of any kind!

Vincent observes that "It is characteristic of John to express the same idea positively and negatively. See John 1:7, 8, 20; 3:15, 17, 20; 4:42; 5:24; 8:35; 10:28; 1 John 1:6, 8; 2:4, 27; 5:12.

John's use of the light/dark contrast may have something to do with the false teaching he was seeking to counter for as **Smalley** writes that "Gnosticism itself, furthermore, was in effect a "religion of light" (developed in the dualist systems of Manichaeism and Mandaeism), in which **light and darkness** stood over against each other as hostile and independent powers (See [1, 2, and 3 John, Volume 51: Revised - Page 18](#))

Wayne Grudem says that in 1Jn 1:5 "**light** has a suggestion of both moral purity and full knowledge or awareness. If there is "no darkness at all" in God, but He is entirely "light," then God is Himself both entirely holy and also entirely filled with self-knowledge." (Page 151 in [Systematic Theology](#))

John Piper explains that **in Him there is no darkness at all** "means that if you draw near to God, you do not find a dark and foreboding truth. You find freedom and hope and joy. In God the stumbling logs and rattlesnakes and cliffs and low-hanging branches are all exposed and we are made safe from them. Our goal of ultimate and eternal joy is secured in God because there is no darkness in God. That is, there are no lurking shadows in God. There is no hidden agenda, no small print. He is light, and in him is no darkness at all... There are absolutely no regrets for those who come to God with all their hearts. He is all light. He is the pathway to perfect and eternal joy with no disappointments. In the the light of God you will not be destroyed by the rattlesnake of sin; you will not fall over the cliff into hell. Light is the promise of hope and joy. Darkness is the threat of despair and misery. And God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. This is the message that John heard from Jesus. Jesus came into the world to reveal it. It's the foundational message of this book. ([1 John 1:5-10: Let Us Walk in the Light of God](#))

I love **Robert Candlish's** beautiful description of God as the Light Who invaded this world's darkness for our sake -

The darkness is laid hold of by the Light. He who is Light enters into the darkness; sounding its utmost depths; searching its inmost recesses. Where guilty fear crouches; where foul corruption festers; He penetrates. He even makes the darkness His own. He takes it upon Himself. Its power, "the power of darkness," is upon Him; its power to wrap the sin-laden spirit in a horror of thickest night, in the gloom of hell. Yes! For our sakes, in our stead, in our nature, He Who is light is identified with our darkness. And yet "**in Him is no darkness at all.**" In the very heat and crisis of this death-struggle, there is no surrender of the Light to the darkness; no concession, no compromise; no making of terms; no allowance of some partial shading of the Light on which the darkness presses so terribly. No! "He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." All still is clear, open, transparent, between the Son and the Father. Even when the Father hides His face, and "His sword awakes against the Man that is His Fellow," and the Son cries as one forsaken; even in that dark hour there is no evasion of heaven's light; no trafficking with the darkness of earth or hell. There is no hiding then; no shrinking; no feeling as if truth might become a little less true, and holiness a little less holy, to meet the appalling emergency. The worst is unflinchingly faced. In the interest of light triumphing over darkness, not by any plausible terms of accommodation, but before the open face of eternal righteousness, pure and untainted, the Father gives the cup and the Son drains it to the dregs. In that great transaction, thus consummated, before all intelligences, between the Father and the Son, it is clearly seen and conclusively proved that "**God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.**" ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

Darkness (4653) (**skotia** from **skotos** = darkness) means literal darkness in some NT uses (Jn 6:17, 20:1), but more often (14/16x) is used figuratively to refer to **spiritual darkness**. In every NT figurative use, **darkness** is contrasted with **light** in all but one passage (1Jn 2:11). As noted below "**Darkness** has no existence by itself, being definable simply as an absence of light."

In the spiritual sense **darkness** describes both the state and works of a person. It symbolizes evil and sin, everything that life should not **be** and everything that a person should not **do**!

The apostle John uses **skotia** in 1Jn 1:5 and **skotos** in 1Jn 1:6. **Wayne Barber** distinguishes between these two words for darkness stating that...

skotia means the result of darkness. If I walk outside in the darkness and fall over a stump and break my leg, I have been out in the darkness. But I have suffered the consequence of being in that darkness. The word **skotos** in 1Jn 1:6 means the essence of darkness itself. Look in John 3:19 (Ed: Where darkness = **skotos**)... Why does he bring up the word "darkness" and why does he contrast it with light? He is dealing with false doctrine. Any false doctrine is darkness. It is clear here that darkness is the environment in which men seek to hide their sin. "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness." This is not the consequence of the darkness because they haven't realized the (consequence) yet, but they love the essence of darkness. They love the darkness "rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed." (Jn 3:19-20). So we see that darkness, **skotos**, is something that hides a man's sin. He likes it because no one knows what is going on in the darkness. But Jesus is the **Light**, and when Jesus comes into a man's life, He turns on the light and exposes what is going on. That is why men would not respond to the **Light**. That is the judgment that has come into the world.

Zodhiates adds that "As **light** is not only the emblem of happiness but is also itself beneficial, **darkness** in like manner works unhappiness and death (John 12:35; 1Jn 1:5; 2:8, 9, 11 [cf. Job 37:19]). Thus, **skotía** is not only a figurative term for sin itself, but also for the consequences of sin. ([Zodhiates, S. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament. AMG](#))

See DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL IMAGERY for full discussion of which this is only an excerpt...

Darkness has no existence by itself, being definable simply as an absence of light. It is a physical and spiritual reality as well as an apt symbol for some of the profoundest human experiences. With approximately two hundred references, darkness is a major actor in the biblical drama... Darkness stands out from virtually all other literary images, which are finally ambivalent (having both good and bad manifestations), because it is uniformly negative in its import... **Throughout the Bible, darkness is an implied contrast to light, regardless of whether the darkness is physical or symbolic.** In fact, sixty verses present light and darkness as a contrasting pair, and being brought out of darkness into light is a major biblical image of redemption... If light symbolizes understanding, darkness represents ignorance (Ps 82:5), folly (Eccles 2:13-14), a silencing of prophetic revelation (Mic 3:6), the state of the human mind unilluminated by God's revelation (2Pet 1:19), falsehood (1 Jn 1:6) and the loss of walking in God's truth "because the darkness has brought on blindness" (1 Jn 2:11NRSV). If light symbolizes good, darkness is the corresponding image for evil people "who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness" (Pr 2:13NRSV; cf. Pr 4:19). In Jesus' mysterious picture of the eye as "the lamp of the body," physical blindness becomes a metaphor for the lost state (Mt 6:22-23; Lk 11:34-36).

Related Resources:

- Darkness in [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- Darkness in [The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

Skotia - 16x in 12v in the **NAS** - Translated - dark(3), darkness(14). To help see the frequent contrast of darkness with **light**, the latter is in **bold red lettering**.

Matthew 10:27 "What I tell you in the **darkness**, speak in the **light**; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops.

Luke 12:3 "Accordingly, whatever you have said in the **dark** will be heard in the **light**, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops.

John 1:5 The **Light** shines in the **darkness**, and the **darkness** did not comprehend it.

Comment: The darkness means that a person does not understand the Light and is powerless to extinguish the Light.

John 6:17 and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea to Capernaum. It had already become **dark**, and Jesus had not yet come to them.

John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the **Light** of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the (spiritual) **darkness**, but will have the **Light** of life."

John 12:35 So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the **Light** is among you. Walk while you have the **Light**, so that (spiritual) **darkness** will not overtake you; he who walks in the (spiritual) **darkness** does not know where he goes.

John 12:46 "I have come as **Light** into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in (spiritual) **darkness**.

John 20:1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still **dark**, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is **Light**, and in Him there is no **darkness** at all.

1 John 2:8 On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the **darkness** is passing away and the true **Light** is already shining. 9 The one who says he is in the **Light** and yet hates his brother is in the **darkness** until now.

1 John 2:11 But the one who hates his brother is in the **darkness** (skotia) and walks in the **darkness** (skotia), and does not know where he is going because the **darkness** (skotia) has blinded his eyes.

Skotia - 3x in 3v in the Septuagint - Job 28:3, Micah 3:6, Isaiah 16:3.

An Illustration of Spiritual Darkness - A new preacher came to town and was meeting the people.

He asked a stranger, "Are you a Christian?"

"No," the man responded. "Name is Jones. The Christians live a block over."

"No, you don't understand," the preacher continued. "I mean, are you lost?"

"Lost?" the man queried. "No, of course I'm not lost. I've lived here all my life."

"You still don't understand," the preacher continued. "I mean, are you ready for judgment day?"

"When will it be?" the local resident questioned. "It could be today, it could be tomorrow," responded the preacher.

"Well," the man answered, "don't tell my wife. She'll want to go both days!" (Brian Harbour)

1 John 1:5 Andrew Murray

Father, cleanse me through Your Word. Let it search out and bring to light all that is of self and the flesh in my faith. Let it cut away every root of self-confidence, that the Vine may find me wholly free to receive His life and spirit. . . . Only You are my hope. Amen.–

1 John 1:5-7 TODAY IN THE WORD

Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe is the story of a stranded sailor who lives for more than two decades on an island alone. One day he rescues from execution (by neighboring cannibals) a young native whom he calls "Friday." Friday proves to be a good student, helper and companion. Through Crusoe's witness, he even comes to faith in Christ. After so many years without fellowship, Robinson Crusoe at last had a Christian brother! Although it may sometimes feel as though we are as stranded as Crusoe, God intends fellowship to be an important part of the body of Christ.

Today's "one another" text is similar to the passage we will study tomorrow from 1 Corinthians 12. That is, the phrase "have fellowship with one another" is not a command, but a simple declarative. That means our fellowship as believers is a product of something else--our fellowship with God (1Jn 1:6-7).

The progression of thought in 1 John 1 is this. Since God is pure light, meaning He is utterly apart from all sin and darkness, we must live in the light if we are to know Him. Obviously, we are not without sin, but God has made provision for our sin in the blood of His Son (1Jn 1:7, 9).

Therefore, even though we are sinful we can enjoy intimate fellowship with God by believing His Word, taking His Son as our Savior, and living in obedience to Him. When we do this, we will find ourselves in company with others who have also found forgiveness and new life in Christ.

John's point is that our fellowship as Christians is founded on the truth of the gospel. A person cannot claim to know God and yet knowingly live in sin. His life makes his witness a lie (1Jn 1:6). John wanted true believers to have fellowship, but only in the truth (1Jn 1:3).

APPLY THE WORD

What does today's study have to do with doughnuts and coffee before Sunday School or a potluck supper in the church dining hall? Not much, really, although there is nothing wrong with the get-togethers we often label "fellowship." But John is talking about something much deeper--the unique union between God and His children and among His children.

1 John 1:5-9 Transformation – Jim Wilson

Scientists claim they have a new state of matter by creating a form of aluminum that is transparent to extreme ultraviolet radiation. The study detailed in the journal, Nature Physics, sound like something from science fiction lore. To create the new state of matter, a short pulse of high intensity laser light "knocked out" a core electron from every aluminum atom in a sample without destroying the metal's crystalline structure.

Professor Justin Wark of Oxford University's Department of Physics says the new form of transparent aluminum only existed for a short time, but could lead to new insight into the nature of matter, and harnessing the power of nuclear fusion. Wark said, "What is particularly remarkable about our experiment is that we have turned ordinary aluminum into this exotic new material in a single step by using this very powerful laser. For a brief period, the sample looks and behaves in every way like a new form of matter." Wark added, "What we created is a completely new state of matter nobody has seen before. ...it's almost as surprising as finding that you can turn lead into gold with light."

Scientists Claim New State of Matter Created, <http://www.livescience.com/technology/090728-new-state-matter.html>, July 28, 2009, Illustration by Jim L. Wilson and Jim Sandell

Exposure to the Light transforms lives too!

1 John 1:5-2:6 TODAY IN THE WORD

God is faithful, through Whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. . - 1
Corinthians 1:9

David Shannon began his career at the age of 5, writing and illustrating a book about a naughty boy with the same two-word phrase on each page: "No, David!" He's since remade the book, No, David!, which won the Caldecott Honor Award (given to children's picture books) in 1999. "I thought it would be fun to do a remake celebrating those familiar variations of the universal "'no' that we all hear while growing up."

Some Christians think that the Bible is a sophisticated version of No, David! But God cares about the list of "dos" and "don'ts," not

for His heavenly bookkeeping but because of His love for us. His call to holiness is a call to friendship. Yesterday, we saw it begin before Adam and Eve. Since then, it has continued without change. In Leviticus 11:45, God tells Moses that He wants to be Israel's God. "Therefore, be holy, because I am holy."

John makes it plain and simple why every Christian must be holy: "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1Jn 1:5). Light stands for all righteousness, purity, and truth. Darkness is sin, deception and impurity. If Christians want to know God and walk with God, they must not deliberately choose sin over obedience. This is why the prayer of every Christian should come from Psalm 19:12-13: "Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me."

Lest we become paralyzed by fear of falling short of this call, today's passage makes clear that "walking in the light" does not equal perfection. Christians should strive to learn the commands of God and obey them (1Jn 2:1), yet when they fail, they should turn to confession, not cover-up. We can confess to God our failures, asking for His forgiveness. We can know He grants His forgiveness through Christ. We should also confess to one another where we have failed. The pretense of "having it all together" isn't fooling God or others. We only deceive ourselves when we pretend we're self-reliant.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

This emphasis of consistent obedience in today's passage doesn't neglect the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The themes that we've already explored in our study of sanctification emerge again here. Because we sin, we need the grace of God through Christ. No fellowship with God is possible apart from Christ (2:1-2). But holiness is an unmistakable by-product of that grace. 1 John 2:6 is the marching order of every Christian.

Christ's Light Shines Bright

God is light. 1 John 1:5

Today's Scripture & Insight : 1 John 1:5-7

When the lights went out on the streets of Highland Park, Michigan, a passion for another light source—the sun—found a home there. The struggling town lacked funds to pay its utility company. The power company turned off the streetlights and removed the lightbulbs in 1,400 light poles. That left residents unsafe and in the dark. "Here comes a couple of children right now, on their way to school," a resident told a news crew. "There are no lights. They just have to take a chance on walking down the street."

That changed when a nonprofit group formed to install solar-powered streetlights in the town. Working together, the humanitarian organization saved the city money on energy bills while securing a light source that helped meet residents' needs.

In our life in Christ, our reliable light source is Jesus Himself, the Son of God. As John the apostle wrote, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). John noted, "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" (v. 7).

Jesus Himself declared, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). With God's Holy Spirit guiding our every step, we'll never walk in darkness. His light always shines bright. By: Patricia Raybon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

How have you experienced the light of Jesus in your life? Today, who can you tell about Him?

Let Your light shine bright, dear God, in every corner of my life.

The Right Light -

Eating in the dark is no fun. Low light in a restaurant is one thing; eating in a room with no light at all is another. The same is true in our walk with God. Unless we take advantage of the light He gives, we will miss seeing what He is doing for us.

We have an Old Testament picture of this—the tabernacle. As the priest entered a room called the Holy Place, he could see only by the light of a golden lampstand (Exodus 25:31-40). Like everything else in the room, it had been carefully fashioned according to the pattern God gave Moses (v.40).

The lampstand is a picture of spiritual light. The gold speaks of value. The oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The six branches coming out from the center shaft portray unity in plurality. The symbol of the almond blossom is linked to God's anointed priesthood (Numbers 17:1-8). When all this is combined with a New Testament reference that uses a golden lampstand to represent the church (Revelation 1:20), we have the complete picture. God gives light through the Spirit, who works through His congregation of anointed people (1Peter 2:9).

Yes, the Holy Spirit provides us with the light we need. Are we daily spending time in prayer and reading God's Word so that we can take advantage of it?— by Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Holy Ghost, with light divine,
Shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away,
Turn my darkness into day.
—Reed

**The light of God's holiness
convicts the sinner
and guides the saint.**

Secrets - "God is light," the apostle reminded us, "and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5). But if that is true, how can a holy God have anything to do with the likes of us?

Fyodor Dostoevsky, in Notes from the Underground, writes what we all know:

There are certain things in a man's past which he does not divulge to everybody but, perhaps, only to friends. Again, there are certain things he will not divulge even to his friends; he will divulge them perhaps only to himself, and that too as a secret. But, finally there are things which he is afraid to divulge even to himself, and every decent man has quite an accumulation of such things in his mind.

If we have so many deep dark secrets, how can we hope to have fellowship with God? An illustration from Martin Luther's life shows us. Luther had a dream in which he stood before God. Satan was there to accuse Luther, and when the books were opened the accuser pointed to sin after sin in his life. Luther despaired. Then he remembered the cross and, turning to the devil, he quoted 1 John 1:7, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."

Because of Jesus, sinners can be forgiven and stand before a holy God. How do you stand today?— by Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Thinking It Over

"God is light" (1 Jn. 1:5). What does that mean?

What creates distance between us and God? (1 Jn. 1:6,8,10).

What is the solution to the problem? (1 Jn. 1:9).

**No sin is so secret
that it is beyond God's forgiveness.**