

*“How to Walk in the Light in a Dark World”*  
*1 John 1:5-7*  
*Pastor Brent McDougal*

God wants more than your belief. God wants more than you having the right doctrine or the right identifier in your life as a Christian. God wants you to have an experience as you walk daily with Him, such that you would say, “I’m walking in the light. God is working in me. The Holy Spirit’s power is in me.”

But walking in the light is hard in a world full of darkness. And the deeper problem is that sometimes we prefer the darkness.

Darkness can mean different things for different people. To be a child in a country where there is war could be called a “dark time” in someone’s life. The school shooting in Michigan — there’s an element of darkness. People wear dark clothes at funerals. For some, mental illness can be a kind of darkness. Or maybe if you have a chronic illness. Temptation can be a darkness. You may have a dark side of hating a certain group of people. Not caring is a darkness. Acts 26:18 records what Peter heard on the road to Damascus. Jesus said that He was sending Paul to the Gentiles, “To open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.”

So there is a general darkness in the world through evil, and then there is personal darkness. It makes people ask, “Where is God?” And “How do we live in a world like this?”

1 John was written to believers who lived in a dark time. It’s all about assurance. How do you know if you’re right with God? How do you know if you have eternal life?

1 John 5:13 (NIV) says, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”

Here’s tonight’s scripture:

“This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:5-7, NIV)

To walk in the light, you’ll need to address the darkness, seek Jesus intentionally, and light the way for others.

## **1. Address the darkness.**

To live in the light, we have to deal with the darkness. Both “out there” and “in here.”

“They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts” (Eph. 4:18, NIV).

“For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6, ESV).

You have to allow God to help you confront your shadow, the darkness within you. Your shadow is what you refuse to see about yourself, and what you don't want others to see. This is your stage mask, or what some people call your persona, the image of yourself you have cultivated that you want others to see.

## **2. Seek Jesus intentionally.**

Walking in the light is really about constant communion with God. It's having a life that is filled with light. That has to start with your mind, letting God rework all of that negativity. It's like you and I have to unlearn something before we can learn something new. The early church fathers and mothers and the mystics called this “contemplation” as they took on the mind of Christ.

True contemplation is letting go of our thoughts — our anxious thoughts, the thoughts that make us rush here and there, our negative thoughts.

## **3. Be a light for others.**

A few practical applications:

Never demonize or dehumanize another human being.

Remember that you bear Christ's name.

Keep the mission of God front and center.

Make pleasing the Lord your priority.