

LIFE IN THE LIGHT
Part II
(1 John 2:3-11)

The "Light" metaphor introduced in 1:5 is continued here. Though the immediate affect of the light is to expose sin, its primary purpose is to reveal righteousness. Jesus told His disciples that when the Holy Spirit came, He would "convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment" (John 16:8). Life in the Light requires us to deal with sin, but on the positive side it enables us to walk in righteousness. Life in the Light will be evidenced in a lifestyle of righteousness. John gives us three tests by which we can determine if we are living in the Light. Each test is associated with a claim.

I. THE TEST OF OBEDIENCE (3-5)

- A. THE CLAIM** – "I have come to know Him" (v.4). The English word *know* translates a Greek variant of **ginosko**. It is the term Paul used when he wrote, "that I may know Him" (Philippians 3:10). Paul wasn't expressing a desire to obtain more facts about Jesus; rather he was expressing his heartfelt desire to be personally and intimately acquainted with Him. Those who have experienced a kidney stone know what it's like; everyone else knows about it. Those who have given birth to a baby without an epidural know what it's like; everyone else knows about it. The mother's knowledge is the product of personal experience, while the father's knowledge is a second hand fact. The LXX uses this Greek term to translate the Hebrew word YADA, a term that is often used to describe sexual intercourse between a man and his wife. In essence it is a personal experiential knowledge. In their book *EXPERIENCING GOD*, Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King wrote:

Knowing God does not come through a program, a study, or a method. Knowing God comes through a relationship with a Person.¹

You will never be satisfied just to know *about* God. Really knowing God only comes through experience as He reveals Himself to you. ...To know God by name required a personal experience of His presence.²

- B. THE COUNTERFEIT** - "The one who says, 'I have come to know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." Paul told Timothy about these people when he wrote: "They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work" (Titus 1:16). They preach cream, but live polluted water.
- C. THE CONFIRMATION** – "And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ...but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him" (3, 5). Love is being fulfilled in us when we keep God's word. When we keep God's word, obey Him, then love is accomplishing in us what it was designed to accomplish. The New Testament in Everyday English says, "truly in this person God's love has accomplished its purpose."

II. THE TEST OF CHRISTLIKENESS (5c-6)

- A. THE CLAIM** – "I abide in Him."
B. THE CONFIRMATION – "The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked" (v.6).

III. THE TEST OF LOVE (7-11)

- A. THE COMMAND (7-8)** – "Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which you have heard. 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." According

¹ Blackaby and King, *Experiencing God*, page 1.

² Blackaby and King, *Experiencing God*, page 5.

to 3:11, the commandment in view is that we are to love one another. It is as old as Leviticus 19:18 and as new as John 13:34-35. Jesus took the whole of the Law and simplified it into one statement: Love God and love your neighbor.

B. THE CLAIM – "I am in the light" (v.9).

C. THE COUNTERFEIT – "The one who says he is in the light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now" (v.9). "...the one who hates his brother is in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (v.11). The English word *hate* is the diametrical opposite of love. It denotes intense, settled dislike for a person or thing that causes one either to avoid him or it scrupulously or to be his or its bitter enemy. To hate is to abhor, detest, loathe or hold in total contempt. For a definition of "hate" all one has to do is read 1 Corinthians 13 with a view to its opposite. For instance: "Hate refuses to put up with others for any length of time and is unkind; hate is full of envy; hate brags and is arrogant, hate acts unbecomingly; it seeks its own, is easily provoked, takes into account and seeks revenge for any wrong suffered, it rejoices in unrighteousness, but despises the truth; it tolerates nothing, doubts everything, expects nothing, endures nothing" (13:4-7).

D. THE CONFIRMATION – "The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him" (v.10). Those who abide in the light are living expressions of 1Corinthians 13 and will not be a stumbling block to others.

CONCLUSION

John does not ask his readers to evaluate the reality of their fellowship with God on the basis of feelings, rather he asks them to examine themselves for *objective evidence* that affirms their fellowship with God.

All too often the Church's unity is a matter of compromise and accommodation, a "unity which emerges as we discover that we must yield some of our interests in order to achieve others, a unity produced by 'enlightened self-interest.' From a Christian point of view, this is not so much unity as it is a fragile truce, a marriage of convenience to be dissolved whenever the self-interest of one partner requires it. ...The unity sought by the church is not achieved through calculation and manipulation, but received through contemplation and vulnerability and self-giving."³

Christianity is more than good Sunday services, it is a life lived in the Light. As those who know Him, abide in Him and live in the Light, we are a community of obedient Christlike believers who love one another. Anything less than this is flawed and in need of revival. If we are to be what God has designed us to be, then we must take Him to the public by living the Light.

³ Parker J. Palmer, *The Company of Strangers*, page 24.