

Session 2: Loving Light Living

1 John 1:5-2:17, 3:14-18

Stephen McQuoid

John now introduces us to one of his major themes – God is light. This will dominate much of his thinking and is one of the most important images in the New Testament.

Grasping who God is (1:5)

Light is diffusive, penetrating, pure and incorruptible and unselfish. This image helps us grasp something of who God is. We need to grasp this aspect of God's being if we are to live credible in relationship with him.

Getting serious with a holy God (1:6-10)

We cannot take God for granted. We need to take his holiness seriously and realise our fallenness. There is no point deluding ourselves into thinking we are ok. To do so is to insult God and his holy nature.

Approaching him means that we need to experience real change. This change is possible provided we are intentional about dealing with the real issue of sin in our lives. For this we are completely dependent on Jesus and our relationship with him, we simply cannot get rid of sin ourselves no matter how hard we try. This realism should characterise our Christian lives.

Finding forgiveness as we struggle on (1:9; 2:1-2)

While the Christian life is a life of victory, we are nevertheless fallen. This is not an excuse for sin but recognition of our character even as Christians. We need to be motivated to do good, but when we fail have a safety net, a saviour who bears our sin and pleads on our behalf. The Christian life is about finding forgiveness when we fail to be holy.

This cycle of falling and forgiveness means that each day is a fresh start. We try to obey because we are motivated by who God is what his forgiveness has meant for us. This should not trivialise our sin but should enable us to marvel at the grace of God.

Discussion questions

- 1. What do we mean when we say that God is light?*
- 2. What does this aspect of God's character teach us about our relationship with him?*
- 3. Are we ever casual about sin, if so why?*
- 4. Many Christians are held back by guilt as they beat themselves up about their unworthiness. Others are self-righteous and turn a blind eye to their sin. How do we get a proper balance between these two positions?*
- 5. In what practical ways can the church help people to live holy lives?*