



Christ's Commission Fellowship

Los Angeles

DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDE
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INSPIRATION not Discouragement

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not be partakers with them; ⁸for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light ⁹(for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; ¹²for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. ¹³But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴For this reason it says, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.."

Ephesians 5:6-14

Recap: Selfishness and Pride is the root cause of all sin. It is only by the cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ that all our sins are removed. Part of God's plan for us is to conform us to the image and likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ. This means that we must emulate Jesus' characteristics of selflessness and humility. As we continue to grow in Christlike-ness, we become less selfish and proud. When this happens we begin to sin less and less and in exchange begin to obey God more and more. When we obey God, we are showing God that we want to please Him, that we love Him. In the course of our obedience to God's word and submission to His plan for us, we will begin to enjoy our Christ-likeness more and more.

Inspire: a verb; which means to fill with an animating, quickening, or exalting influence. The *I* in CHRIST, is to be an inspiration to other as we continue to grow in Christlike-ness. We are to be the inspiration to the lost so that they will see the light and the way out of darkness. Jesus say in John8:12 ***"I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."***

People today are lost in darkness, they are doomed to be destroyed. This darkness is sin. And it is this sin that will condemn and destroy us. Some people actually enjoy living in sin. . . as Jeremiah says in 9:5 ***With practiced tongues they fool and defraud each other; they wear themselves out with all their sinning.*** There are so many who are lost and in the dark. Sometimes we look around us and think that there is a large number of Christians, but the actual truth is -- there are more people living in the deception and destruction. They are blind to their own sins not knowing the doom that awaits them. ***Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.***

We often talk about God's love and His mercy but we should also remember that our God is a just God. A holy God who will not tolerate sin. . . and if we continue to live a life of disobedience, we will experience His wrath. ***Romans 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*** This is Righteous Judgment. The judgment of severe punishment by the righteous God for those who continue to choose to disregard Him.

Jonathan Edwards, was a renowned Puritan preacher, philosopher, theologian and the leading intellectual figure of colonial America in the early 16th century. He wrote the sermon "Sinners in the hands of an Angry God". And although he was equally fervent and eloquent in his preaching on all of God's infinite attributes, especially His love and mercy, he is remembered most for this powerful portrayal of God's infinite HATRED of sin.

In his writing, Jonathan Edwards said that the judgment of God upon the sinner will be more terrible and painful than we can ever comprehend. There were three things he cited:

1. Unrepentant sinners face terrible judgment.
2. Time is short for the unrepentant.
3. God's wrath is overdue and will come suddenly, unexpectedly.

It is only God's free choice that those punishing hands are held up ... to extend mercy & provide another opportunity for sinners to repent. Remember it is not a matter of IF. . . it is only a question of WHEN. When God says "Enough!" and comes back.

Deut 32:35 Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them. The bible tells us that people who are living in sin are like walking on slippery slope. They constantly have to maintain balance because at any time they can just slip and fall. These sinners are moments away from falling, it is only by God's grace that they are being given chances to repent and return to God.

Matthew 10:28 Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Until we understand and fully grasp this truth of God's divine wrath and its implication we will never see our hopelessness and doom and therefore need for divine salvation. Until we fully understand this, we will not have the urgency to go out and share the love and mercy of God to others. This is the essence of the sermon of "Sinners at the hand of an Angry God". The sermon says . . . **"If they can only find one ray of light, they will find THE WAY to THE LIGHT to be delivered from darkness and away from the hands of an angry God. If only they had found one ray of light, they would have lived."**

There are so many people who are lost and in the dark. . . if only they could find one ray of light. . . we can be that light, if we choose to be. If we continue to pursue Christ-likeness and let Jesus' light shine through us, then we can be a beaconing light to those who are living in the dark. . . the light that beacons to them home to God.

Ephesians 5:8 says **"for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light "**. We should walk as children of light and inspire people.

What does light mean? In the bible it has two meanings: 1) refers to truth. Referring to the intellect side. This is the opposite of lies, darkness. 2) referring to holiness. Meaning living right and doing good. This is practice. The opposite is blindness. **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 the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"**

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. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷but 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.

This leads us to discipleship. We cannot walk in the light if we do not continue to grow in Christlikeness. We must stand out in a crowd, like a city on top of a hill. . . our light should not be hidden or dimmed.

How do we walk in the light?

1. Know & declare how GREAT & DESIRABLE your position in the light is versus the UGLINESS of the dark. Colossians 1:13-14. 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5.
We should be able to appreciate where we are. We are in a very privileged position, we are no longer blind. We have been set free.
2. SHOW the FRUIT of LIGHT in you.
What are the fruits of the light? GOODNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, and TRUTH

Goodness pertains to "agathos" Gk moral excellence.

Righteousness pertains to being right with God.

Truth pertains to integrity.

If we want to shine brightly we have to show them our moral excellence, we have to show them that we are right with God in that we obey His commandments, and lastly we should have integrity, we have to do what we say.

As we continue to grow in a discipleship relationship, we are able to see, expose and discern darkness/sin. This does not mean that we will no longer sin, but rather we will sin less and less. And when you are in a discipleship relationship, even when we fall into the temptation of becoming selfish and proud, we can be easily called to accountability and the sin is easily exposed unlike when we were still in the darkness.

WORKS: Journaling Task

1. Is there any darkness left in your life? Is there still any sin left in your life?
2. How have you become an inspiration to others? How have you become a discouragement to others?
 - a. My spouse
 - b. My children
 - c. My family
 - d. My co-workers
 - e. My friends
3. *"Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.."* – What does this mean to you?

4. **PARABLE OF THE CANDLES**

Here is a question for you, when was the last time you shared the gospel to someone? This world is full of darkness, with many people stumbling around trying to find their way. You can be a light for them, and believe me, there's a light waiting for you. It can all happen with something as sharing the faith, to just a smile across the room, to a quick hello to a forgotten friend.

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN." Matthew 5:14-16