Preparation for Small Group: Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

1. What do these verses tell me about God?
2. What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
3. What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
4. What does God want me to know?
5. What does God want me to do?

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“Turn on the Light”
1 John 1:5-10

Main Idea: Because God is light without darkness, dealing honestly with sin in your life is essential to fellowship with God and with other believers.

ESSENTIALS for dealing with sin for fellowship with God and with other believers:

If you're living in sin, you're kidding yourself if you think you have fellowship with God (6).

Verse 5 sets the foundation for everything that follows in 1 Jn. 1:6-10. What John and the others heard from Jesus and proclaimed to others was that “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” In the language of the New Testament, the language is emphatic that there is absolutely nothing related to darkness in God. In other words, God is completely, totally true, holy, sinless, and perfect. Based on this truth, verse 6 begins a series of conditional statements that point to what the result is “if” several different things are true in a person’s life. The first conditional statement is a simple yet profoundly important truth: If we “say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.” John didn’t mince words. In plain and powerful words, God’s Word made it clear that if you walk in darkness — practice or live in sin — you are lying about having fellowship with God. It’s that simple.

1. What does it mean to “walk in darkness?” Discuss in general, and discuss specific examples.
2. What are the implications of lying to yourself and others about your fellowship with God?
3. What are some examples of common sins that many people walk in even though they may confess to have fellowship with God? Make a list, and discuss. Why are these common and commonly justified?

Fellowship with believers and forgiveness of sin is evidence of fellowship with God (7).

If it’s true that walking in the darkness was evidence of a lack of fellowship with God, John quickly turned to the next conditional statement, which affirmed the alternative reality that walking in the light was evidence of fellowship with God. If we walk in light — practice or live in God’s truth — then we have fellowship with God, which is evidenced in two important aspects in the believer’s life. First, fellowship with God is based on the work of God in bringing forgiveness from all sin into the life of a believer. An experience of repentance from sin and God’s grace in the forgiveness of sin is essential to true fellowship with God. Equally true is the fact that fellowship with others in the gospel is an essential outflow of true fellowship with God. Basically,
God’s Word provides encouragement in offering the evidence of walking in the truth, which includes an assurance of forgiveness and the blessing of fellowship.

1. What does it mean to walk in the light? Discuss in general, and discuss specific examples.
2. Based on this verse, how can we assess if we are walking in the light? What are some ways that you can do this in your life? How can your small group help?
3. What cleanses you from all sin? Is it your walking in the light? What does this verse say? Why is this important?

Denying sin is evidence of walking in the darkness (8, 10).

Verses 8 and 10 are connected in that they both address a heart issue related to sin. In verse 8, the first issue dealt with those who deny the present existence of sin in their lives. In verse 10, the second issue dealt with those who deny that they have sinned. In either case, the failure to honestly assess and deal with the reality of sin pointed to the deception of sin in the heart. This deception is seen in continued hiding from and resistance to the truth of the gospel. In other words, if you think that you are sinless, you are only fooling yourself, and the presence of God’s truth is not in you. A sure sign that someone is walking in the darkness is that they fail to see and to deal with the obvious reality of sin in life. So what is the right way to deal with the reality of sin in this life?

1. Verse ten points to the requirement for stepping from the darkness into the light, which is the recognition of sin in life. Share your testimony of when and how this happened in your life.
2. Verse eight points to the importance of recognizing sin in an on-going way. What does this look like in a healthy way? What causes people to deny the reality of sin in their hearts?
3. Why is denying sin so dangerous? Pray for the convicting work of the Holy Spirit for God’s work of forgiveness that leads to fellowship with Him and with other believers.

Confessing sin is evidence of walking in the light (9).

Verse 9 is the key to understanding the connection between sin and forgiveness. For the believer, who is justified and saved by grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, sin is forgiven when sinfulness is truly recognized and confessed. Fellowship with God and with others can only be experienced with the joy that God desires when an individual comes to the place in their life where God’s light shines into the darkness of the heart and where exposed sin in the heart is recognized and acknowledged. Confessing is agreeing with God that sin is sin. Confessing is recognizing sin for what it is and not diminishing or denying the depth of depravity in sin. The beautiful promise of God in the gospel is that sin is forgiven and is washed away when it is confessed. Knowing this, a believer who is walking in the light is constantly exposing themselves to God’s truth, which is progressively shining light on sin that needs to be confessed and crucified. While the believer is justified for eternity in Christ, confession is a huge part of living in the light and growing in Christ, allowing the life of Jesus to live in and through the life of a believer more-and-more every day.

1. What is the connection and difference between justification and confession? In other words, what does initial confession accomplish in the life of a believer, and what is the role of on-going confession in the life of a believer who has been justified?
2. Connect verse 9 with the truth about God in verse 5. Why is confession so important when it comes to our fellowship with God? Why is confession important in relationship to our fellowship with other believers?
3. With whom do you need to share these truths about God, confession, and forgiveness? Pray for that individual, and commit to one another to pray for one another and to have gospel conversations with these individuals in the coming week.