

August 15/16, 2009

Walk Together in the Freedom of Transparency

Today's Timeless Truth:

To get through dark, difficult and discouraging times you need two things...

- 1) A tight relationship with Jesus Christ who has all the grace you need for all the challenges you face.
- 2) A tight relationship with other believers who provide the faith-filled and forgiving fellowship we all need.

You get the best of both of these critical, deeply supportive relationships by living in honest, trusting transparency with God and other believers.

John calls that liberating lifestyle—"Light Walking"

1 John 1:1-10 – *"The one who existed from the beginning is the one we have heard and seen. We saw Him with our own eyes and touched Him with our own hands. He is Jesus Christ, the Word of life. This one who is life from God was shown to us, and we have seen Him. And now we testify and announce to you that He is the one who is eternal life. He was with the Father, and then He was shown to us. We are telling you about what we ourselves have actually seen and heard, so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy will be complete. This is the message He has given us to announce to you: God is light and there is no darkness in Him at all. So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness. We are not living in the truth. But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from every sin. If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that His word has no place in our hearts."*

1. God is light, and His creation is designed to grow and thrive in light, including us.

Genesis 1:14-16

2. We weren't designed by Him to run from Him when we sin but to run to Him. Hiding hurts us and others. Denial over sin is darkness, and it drains us of the vitality God wants to give us to get through life. We lose fellowship with God and real fellowship with other believers when we lie to ourselves, to others and to God about the sin and even the hurt in our lives.

Genesis 3:8-13; Psalm 32:3-4

3. We hide our sins and hurts because of pride, pain, shame and possible consequences. But, confession of sin or our hurts is how we get the draining darkness out of us and receive cleansing, liberating forgiveness and healing.

1 John 1:5-9; Psalm 32:5-7

4. We can always come to His throne of grace and find the freedom we desperately need from Satan's, our own and others condemnation. Our High Priest and Advocate has made complete payment for all our sins. *1 John 2:1-2; Hebrews 4:15-16*

5. One of the best ways to truly receive the light and love of Christ's forgiveness is honest confession to other believers in a safe small group. So much healing comes to everyone when we are honest with each other about our sins, hurts and struggles.

James 5:16; Matthew 18:19-20; Romans 8:1

Honesty brings healing, connectedness and support. But, transparent honesty comes by building trust, and trust is built through compassionate confidentiality.

Proverbs 17:9 – *"He who conceals a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends."*

Want to lighten your life? Be a Light Walker!

1 John 1:7 – *"But if we are living in the light of God's presence, just as Christ is, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from every sin."*

Discussion Questions:

1. What is your greatest challenge right now? How discouraged are you? Do you have a tight relationship with God or other Christians? Do you have a tight relationship with other believers?

2. Did you know that you grow best in the light? Isn't it exciting to know that the more honest you are with God the faster you grow?

3. Do you run to God or away from Him when you sin or hurt? Why? What can you change so that you will be a "light walker?" Do you have safe friendships that you can confess your sins and hurts to? Are you that kind of friend? Why not start a small group or join one to do that?