



## **The Great Adventure**

### ***What Is Your Top Priority?***

Years ago our family went camping and on the trip we visited an underground cavern. We trooped down a long, curving pathway that eventually brought us to the floor of that room in the cave. Filled with stalactites and stalagmites that shimmered in the soft lights that illuminated them, we stood in awe at all the beauty surrounding us. The guide who brought us down told us some bits of information about the mysteries of the cave and its history and then informed us she was going to turn off all the lights. All at once we were in total darkness. I could not see even a bit of my hand as I held it in front of my eyes. For the first time, I knew what it was like for someone to be totally blind and to rely on all the other senses to make a go of understanding the world. Dread began to creep over me as the moments of darkness continued. Now what made the experience so disconcerting for many of us there was that we knew what it was like to see. It was a sudden loss of something we took for granted that threw us. What would it have been like for someone who had never been able to see even the least bit of light, let alone all the sights around them? It would have been just another day. John the Apostle tells us that God is light. In turn it is possible to walk in darkness and it would seem not know it.

John makes this point. **This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him. If we say, "We have fellowship with him," and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth.** (1 John 1: 5-6 CSB) There are two declarations made by John. 1. God is light and not a shred of darkness is found in Him. 2. You can believe you are connected to God and not be because you are walking in darkness. Now, God being light can be taken many ways. It could mean He is like a lighthouse who points the way for us. We may take it as meaning that He sees everything and is never in the dark. He has not a bit of ignorance in any matter. He sees and understands and knows everything there is to know. A third way to look at it is to say God is the source of all knowledge, insight and understanding. Whatever there is to know comes from Him. However, John is not using the light characteristic of God to indicate His ability to know what is up or to point the way to others. It is a declaration of God's sinlessness. Everything that follows in this passage has to do with sin or not sinning. Note what is stated in verse eight. **If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.** (1 John 1: 8 CSB) What is the chief concern? Sin. Take verse nine. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** (1 John 1: 9 CSB) What is the big problem to solve? Sin and its impact on us. Consider verse ten. **If we say, "We have not sinned," we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.** (1 John 1: 10 CSB) Once more, what is the central issue? It is sin.

In our time, we have disregarded the impact of sin on us. Recently a U.S. senator is in the news because he is downplaying the magnitude of a certain manifestation of sin and arguing that it is fine engaging in it and the sinfulness of it ignored. One of our great cities is facing monumental trouble because it has dismissed theft as a concern. We have had presidents who scorned the command to not commit adultery and have even been cheered for their brazen disregard for the rules of morality. It is no wonder that right and wrong are undervalued today in large segments of society when so many, like a former governor of California crowed that there is no heaven and thus not an ultimate reckoning of right and wrong, good and evil. Yet, what if so many are wrong in their assumption that right and wrong are not real concepts or that God will not ever do anything about it? What if they have completely missed it on the damage sin causes them and everyone else around them? John calls us back to re-evaluate the matter of sin and its effect on us.

So it is in the context of John declaring that anyone thinking they are without sin are only fooling themselves that he states that God is light. Light is not a metaphor here of knowledge or insight or the ability to point the way for those who don't know where to go. It is an indication that God is without sin. Not even a shadow of evil is in Him and His goodness is pure in every way. We see this symbolized in Matthew's account of Jesus and three of his disciples up on what is now known as the Mount of Transfiguration. **After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.** (Matthew 17: 1-2 NIV) So what was going on here? Was this one of those miraculous signs people long to have to get them to believe something about God? Did this transfiguration amount to just a way to get the disciples to notice Jesus? Consider this statement made by the author of the book of Hebrews. **Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.** (Hebrews 4: 14-15 NIV) Like the Father who is without sin, so too Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world lived without sin and His transfiguration was God's way of pointing out that to His disciples and the rest of the world.

Let us take a moment, far too short a moment to consider one of the most monumental statements made in Scripture and the basis of Christian psychology. **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.** (1 John 1: 7 CSB) Consider two axioms of sin. 1. Sin brings death and separation from God. It is the greatest horror in life. 2. You don't have to sin. You can walk in the light and gain freedom over it. Next time we meet we will take a closer look at how we can gain mastery over sinning. But for now, let us take a deep breath and ponder what life will be like without sin. We will have a perfect, unbroken relationship with God and nothing stripping us of our joy at being together. Every dream Christ puts in your heart will come to pass and you will be undiminished in your peace and hope will always lead to fulfillment and success. You were not made by God for sin but for perfect union with goodness and holiness and fellowship with God and all His people. Take heart and make it your desire to do what is right and good each time you have a choice. You may fail and fail miserably. You may make a mess of things and beat up your conscience and damage yourself psychologically by what you do this week. But as we will see next week, Christ will pick you up and wash off your sins by His death and give you a fresh start. Don't think sinless living is beyond you. It is because of Jesus living in you that you and Him together can and will develop a perfect and holy life.