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<sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; <sup>7</sup>but 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. <sup>8</sup>If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1John 1:5-10)

This passage begins a section that refers to sin nine times. There is a stark contrast between walking with God (in the Light) and walking in sin (in darkness).

There is also a stark contrast between living the life to which God calls us and making false claims in pretense. One test of our true fellowship with God is that our lives support our claims to be "Christians". To be "Christian" means to follow Christ and to strive to be like Him.

John has a crucial message to convey that He heard straight from Christ (v.5). God is holy - sinless and perfect in every way. In Him there is no sin (darkness). He does not tolerate sin; it must be dealt with. *Romans 6:23* tells us *"the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord"*.

To explain more fully, God is holy and will not tolerate sin in His presence. Man chose sin and earned the wages of death. This death (separation) is not simply the death of our earthly body, but rather is (eternal) separation from God. By His grace, God's gift to us is eternal life (with God), but only through Christ Jesus, who paid the price for the sin for all. But, to receive that gift we must receive the Giver of the gift - we must receive Christ as Lord.

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Memory Verse: *"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*(Romans 10:9)

Three times (v. 6, 8, 10 - and later in 2:4) in this passage John writes *"if we say"*. It is essential that we "walk the walk" rather than just "talk the talk".

Our "walk" is our lifestyle - how we live our lives. To walk in the darkness means that our life is characterized by sin (disobedience to God). The Bible speaks of "sins" (acts of disobedience to Him) and "sin" (a nature or a lifestyle apart from God and His ways). The difference is important to understand.

We cannot "walk in sin" and be in fellowship with God. Jesus Christ came to save sinners (*1Tim 1:15*) but He is often misrepresented because He engaged sinners and offered forgiveness. To be clear, He never tolerated or sugarcoated sin at all. His message was one of repentance (*Matt. 4:17*). To repent is to agree with God about the evil of sin and to turn away from it.

It is only the shed blood of Jesus Christ at His crucifixion at Calvary that cleanses us from all sin (*Hebrews 9:22, 1Peter 2:24*). As those who have received Christ and been indwelt with the Holy Spirit of God, we are united in Him. When we "walk with God", we have fellowship with Him and with other believers who are walking with Him as well.

If we say we have no sin (we are good and don't need Christ and the cleansing He gives), we lie. We lie to ourselves, to others, and to God. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (*Romans 3:23*). None are righteous; no not one (*Rom. 3:10*).

God promises the believer that if we confess our sins - agree with Him that we have committed a sin and turn away from it - He will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Psalm 103:12 says He removes our sins from us as far as the east is from the west!

If we say we have not sinned, we not only lie, but worse - we are calling God a liar. His Word is clear that we have all sinned. Later in 1John, John writes *"the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son."* To deny God's Word is to call Him "liar"-very serious indeed!