

Next Steps

1. What are some tangible things you can do to stop the cycle of sin in your life?
2. Consider someone asking someone in your community group to help you walk away from sinful areas of your life by becoming your accountability and prayer partner.

New River Prayer Requests

1. Pray for God to plainly show you how you can serve others by volunteering at New River over the summer months.
2. Pray for our Costa Rica mission team as they continue training for their trip. Pray that lives will be changed here and in Costa Rica.
3. Pray for new doors to be opened to sharing the love of Jesus with people in our community.
4. Pray for men to courageously lead their families and others toward a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

My Community Group Prayer Requests

Unleashed

Stand Alone Message

May 23rd and 24th, 2009

Suggested Scripture Reading This Week:

1 John 1 and 2

A church can be a greenhouse for redemptive work in the world. A church is a community of people who have found new life in Christ and yet are on a journey which constantly brings their brokenness to the surface. There's enough room in the cracks and the crevices of our brokenness for darkness to thrive.

Within as little as sixty years after Jesus' death, questions were being raised about who Jesus really was. If the body is evil and Jesus had a body, some wondered, could Jesus really have been God's Son?

Suddenly the church was trying to navigate a whole host of differing perspectives about Jesus, and things got ugly fast. Having been one of Jesus' disciples, John addresses the situation the only way he knows how: love.

John had been there from the beginning. He'd seen Jesus' compassion toward the sick and the needy. He'd watched his rabbi wash feet at the last supper. He was there when Jesus looked down from the cross and told him to take care of his mother Mary. He knew that in the face of overwhelming darkness, Jesus had been a light that shined. And what made that light so brilliant was love. So John's words to a hurting group of people were "Whoever claims to be in Him must live as Jesus did." In short, "You have got to love one another."

Living in anger, bitterness, and resentment is like stumbling around in the dark. It's possible for the darkness to grow so furiously in the cracks and crevices that we become blinded by darkness. It is equally possible for the light of God to permeate human lives so deeply that darkness is burned away.

Just because darkness happens to us doesn't mean that darkness has to happen in us. To live a life that shines is to focus our attention on those things that have been done for us rather than those things that have been done to us. We seek to live lives of gratitude rather than lives of entitlement. We want to "grasp how wide and long and high and deep is this love of Christ" so that we can experience "the fullness of God".

My takeaway from this message is:

2. Read 1 John 1:6 What does it mean to walk in “darkness”

This week I am going to:

3. Read 1 John 1:7 How can we “walk in the light”?

4. What are the pitfalls of denying the sin within us?

5. What role does the following play in helping your stop habitual sins in your life?

- Reading Scripture
- Memorizing Scripture
- Prayer
- Accepting forgiveness
- Confessing sin to God
- Confessing sin to one another

Community Group Discussion

Quick Overview: Looking back over your sermon notes, was there any particular point or passage of scripture that most challenged, confused, or caught your attention?

My Story

What are some behaviors, attitudes or habits that some people say are inappropriate behavior but are in fact, sinful, according to scripture?

Exploring

1. Read 1 John 1:1-4 What are some of the reasons that John wrote this book?