

Speaking to the soul



Live in the light

If anyone claims, “I am living in the light,” but hates a fellow believer, that person is still living in darkness. Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble. 1 John 2:9-10

The letters in the New Testament give us a great insight into the life of the early Church. These were exciting years for the Church, but enormous struggles were going on. There

were people teaching heresy and others making great claims about themselves whose lives showed that they were a sham. There were the Gnostics, who claimed to have discovered deep mysteries and to have encountered the light, but their lives told a completely different story. So John set out some very clear guidelines to help the believers understand who was truly living for God and who wasn't. The key test was love. If someone showed true love for their fellow believers, you could be sure that they were living in the light, but those who were showing hatred towards others were walking in the darkness.

Even in a church, it isn't easy to love other people all the time. It might be relatively easy to love our Christian brothers and sisters within the confines of a service of worship, but when you work hard alongside them, it can be a very different story. We all see things somewhat differently from one another, and we choose to do things at different speeds. Some are cautious and careful in their approach, and others are eager to launch into bold new initiatives. Some feel that evangelism should be the church's priority, and others feel deeply committed to social action. Some love to sing the latest worship songs, and others are much happier with singing hymns. Some are thrilled with the church leaders, and others think that they leave a lot to be desired. I could go on! Churches are filled with a wide variety of people, and loving everyone isn't always easy, but this is God's way, and it is the only way to live in the light.

QUESTION

How do you manage to love people who are very different from you?

PRAYER

Lord God, I thank you for all my Christian brothers and sisters. Please fill me with your love for everyone, especially those who I find most difficult to love. Amen

Photo - On the river Bann at Coleraine

