

# 1 John 1 - Relationship of the Believer to Sin; The Believer's "Bar of Soap"

## I. Reality of Christ's incarnation (1 John 1:1-4)

(1) Subject: Incarnated Christ (1:1-2)

(2) Purpose: (1:3-4)

(A) Fellowship (1:3)

(a) With apostles (1:3a)

(b) With Christ (1:3b)

(B) Joy (v4)

## II. Relationship of the believer to sin (1 John 1:5—2:6)

(1) No moral darkness in God (1:5)

(2) Believers' relation toward sin and God outlined in five conditional sentences (1:6-10)

(A) If we live in sin we cannot have fellowship with God (1:6)

(B) If we walk in the light we have fellowship with Him (1:7)

(C) If we say we have no sin then the truth is not in us (1:8)

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## 1 John 1

### I. Reality of Christ's incarnation (1 John 1:1-4)

(1) Subject: Incarnated Christ (1:1-2)

**1** What was **from thebeginning**, what **we** have heard, what **we** have seen with our eyes, what **we** have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning **theWordof Life**—

**1** What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

**1** What existed from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we observed and touched with our own hands—this is the Word of life!

**1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

- There is no "greeting" (or "conclusion") to this letter; thus, we can conclude that this is not so much a letter as it is a sermon

- "...from the beginning" - *apo archē*, this phrase is used 5x in 1 John (1:1; 2:7; 2:24 [2x]; 3:11); in the three other uses it refers to a point in time soon after John's audience became

believers

— This is not a technical phrase, thus the meaning/referent must be determined from the context. In 2:13-14 it refers to God's eternity; in 3:8a it points back to Satan's fall.

- "...we" [3x] - John and the other apostles were all eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ

— John opens with a strong declaration of the reality of Christ, which was "heard," "seen," "looked at", and "touched"

— Notice the increasing intensity and closeness that John describes through these verbs. The essence of fellowship is increasing intimacy. Our fellowship with God must involve drawing closer to Him and viewing Him more intently all the time.

— This is a firm rebuttal to the teaching of the Gnostics, who, in various styles, denied the tangible existence of the Christ. This teaching does not follow the truths originally witnessed by the apostles.

- "...the Word of Life" - the message about Jesus Christ (the gospel)

2 and the **life** was **revealed**, and we have **seen** and **testify** and **proclaim** to **you the eternal life**, which was **with** the Father and was revealed to **us**—

2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

2 This life was revealed to us, and we have seen it and testify about it. We declare to you this eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us.

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

- "...life" - a title of Christ, similar to how John called Jesus "the Word" in John 1

— Grace and truth explain the Word in John's Gospel (John 1:14), but "light" and "love" describe the "Life" in this epistle

- "...revealed...seen...testify...proclaim" - while the verbs in v1 (heard, seen, looked at, touched) reflects increasing attention on Jesus as the root of fellowship, the verbs used in v2 show the result of contemplating Jesus and enjoying His fellowship: bearing witness

- "...you" - John's original audience/readers, believers only (not a mixed group of believers and unbelievers)

- "...the eternal life" - Jesus Christ

- "...with" - indicates that this Being, Jesus Christ, who is eternal and is eternal life Himself, is distinct from the Father

- "...us" - John and the apostles

- "...—" - the em dash at the end of both v1 and v2 indicate that v2 is parenthetical. This is further confirmed by the fact that the KJV puts the entire verse in parentheses.

— This means that v1 and v3 make sense without reading v2. However, the passage does not make interpretive sense without v2 because it contains the five neuter relative

pronouns (v1: What [4x]; v3: what [1x])

— At first glance, it is tempting to say these five relative pronouns refer to Jesus Christ. However, they are all in the neuter (not masculine) gender. So while these verses are theologically correct in that they state if it were to refer to Jesus, John's grammar shows that this cannot be his point.

(2) Purpose: (1:3-4)

(A) Fellowship (1:3)

(a) With apostles (1:3a)

(b) With Christ (1:3b)

3 what **we** have seen and heard **we** proclaim to **you** also, **so that you too may have fellowship with us**; and indeed **our** fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

3 What we have seen and heard we declare to you so that you, too, can have fellowship with us. Now this fellowship of ours is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus, the Messiah.

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

- An invitation from John, who had close fellowship with Jesus, to his readers to join in his fellowship with Jesus. If John's readers were to adopt any of the doctrines of these false teachers (gnostics), it would destroy their fellowship with both the apostles and with God.

- "...we [2x]...us...our" - refers to John and the apostles

— The use of "we" and "you" in this verse are exclusive, meaning those referred to by "you" (the readers) are not included in "we" (first person plural)

— John had fellowship with God already, but regards it as potential for the readers to have fellowship

- This is the purpose statement for this epistle: that John's readers would enjoy the close fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ

— There are five purpose statements in 1 John: (1:3-4; 2:1,26; 5:13) plus 10 imperatives (2:15,24,27,28; 3:1,7,13; 4:1 [2x]; 5:21), any one of which could provide John's purpose statement, but v3-4 give John's most comprehensive primary and secondary purposes for writing

- "...you" [2x] - the recipients of this epistle/sermon must have been genuine believers based on how John referred to them (Cf. 2:12-14,21,27; 5:13)

— They did not know Jesus in the flesh as the apostles had, so John wrote to them so they could enter in to, and continue to enjoy, the intimate fellowship with Him that the apostolic

eyewitnesses enjoyed

- "...fellowship" - *koinonia*, one of the greatest words in the Bible: a close mutual relationship; participation; partnership; communion; fiduciary. Sharing something together. This is the main topic of this epistle.

— Alongside "to have fellowship with God" (1:3,6), John expresses the same idea by saying "to be in God" (2:5; 5:20); "to abide" (2:6,24; 3:24; 4:13,15,16); "to have God (or the Son)" (2:23; 5:12; 2 John 9); "to know God" (2:3,13,14)

— Fellowship with God is the whole object, the ultimate goal of all Christian experience and all Christian endeavor, and it is the central message and purpose of the gospel

— The reason we as sinful human beings can even have fellowship with God is because Jesus is who John says He is (v1-2)

— It is a monumental interpretive mistake to confuse the word "fellowship" as though it means whether or not someone is saved

— It is two-dimensional: horizontal: fellowship with one another; and vertical: with God the Father

— But the astonishing aspect of our fellowship is vertical: with God. He talks to us (through His Word); we talk to Him (through prayer).

— "fellowship with us" - John first considers fellowship with God's people because this is often how people come to experience a relationship with God: they first encounter God through relationships with God's people

A translation of the message of 1:1-3:

1 **That** [message] **which** was from the beginning [of our contact with Christ], **which** [message] we have heard, **which** [content] we have seen with our eyes, **which** [message] we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning **the message of life—**

2 the **life** was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that **eternal life** which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

3 **that** [message] **which** we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

This paragraph declares that John was an eyewitness to the message concerning eternal life, which Christ manifested from the Father.

The declared purpose is that John's readers would have fellowship, not only with the Father and with Christ, but also with John, who has fellowship with the Father and with Christ.

This purpose relates to John 10:10b, the purpose statement for the non-sign sections of John's Gospel (John 13-17; 21): *I have come that they may have life, and that they may*

*have it more abundantly.* That is, *fellowship* is the message of life (v1) to believers, who already have eternal life. This message is that they may have it *more abundantly*.

(B) Joy (1:4)

4 **These things we write**, so that our **joy** may be made complete.

4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

4 We are writing these things so that our joy may be full.

4 And these things write we unto you, that **your** joy may be full.

- "These things we write" - this phrase is used 4x in 1 John (1:4; 2:1,26; 5:13)

- The referent paragraph for 1:4 is 1:1-3
- The referent paragraph for 2:1 is 1:5-10
- The referent paragraph for 2:26 is 2:18-24
- The referent paragraph for 5:13 is 5:6-12 (esp v11-12)

— Many [Reformed] scholars point to 1:4 and 5:13 as an *inclusio* that bookend this epistle, but that assumes that there are only those two references to "these things I write."

However, there are four, and each only refers to the paragraph that directly precedes it. See additional notes on 5:13.

- "...joy" - the result of fellowship with God; when there is no joy, there is no fellowship (Cf. John 15:11; 16:24)

— What brought John and the apostles "joy" was when those they had led to Christ, or nurtured in the faith, were true to their faith (in fellowship with the Lord)

- John's purpose for writing 1 John is selfish in nature (author-centered)...it is so that his readers would have the same type of fellowship with God, on the same level, as himself and the other apostles. The result of this fellowship between his readers and God was that *his* joy would be full (Cf. 2 John 4; 3 John 4).

— So many interpreters get this wrong, they stumble over the obvious. In contrast to John's Gospel, which is a large gospel tract to unbelievers, 1 John declares the truth about Jesus Christ so that believers may have daily fellowship with God and Jesus Christ, with its evidences in their Christian lives.

— "Joy" is an abiding sense of optimism and cheerfulness based on God, as opposed to "happiness" which is a sense of optimism and cheerfulness based on circumstances

— John 15:11: **These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.**

— Jesus had joy because He obeyed His Father's commandments perfectly; we will have that same joy if we abide in His love by obeying His commands

— Joy in this life is possible, but it is not certain. John wrote with a desire that believer's would have joy, and if their joy was inevitable, he would not have written this

— Things that zap our joy include: external circumstances, moods and emotions, and sin. But our joy is not found in the things of this world.

- "...your" [KJV] - a mistranslation; both the Majority Text and the Critical Text correctly say "our joy" rather than "your joy". John is referring to his own joy, not his audience's joy (Cf. 2 John 4; 3 John 4).

1 John 1:4 indicates that the author-centered purpose for writing these things (the contents of 1 John 1:1–3) is to fulfill John's joy. However, 1 John 1:1–4 consists of two sentences (1:1–3 and 1:4) containing two distinctly different and yet similar purpose clauses. Verses 1–3 expresses John's audience-centered purpose for announcing his message, while v4 gives the author-centered purpose. In other words, John sought for his readers to benefit from fellowship with God, while he desired (as a result of their fellowship) to have greater joy. Therefore, the prologue (v1–4) has two inter-related purposes reflected in each of the two sentences.

### Summary of Introduction (1:1-4)

1. John began with the *beginning* – the eternal God, who was before all things.
2. He told us that this God was physically manifested, and that he and others could testify to this as eyewitnesses.
3. He told us that this God is the *Word of life*, the *Logos*.
4. He told us that this God is distinct from the person of God the Father.
5. He told us that we may have fellowship with this God, and that we are often introduced into this fellowship with God by the fellowship of God's people.
6. He told us that this eternally existent God, the *Word of Life*, who was physically present with the disciples and others (and present for fellowship), is God the Son, named Jesus Christ.
7. He told us that fellowship with Jesus leads to a life lived in fullness of joy.

*It would be difficult to find any single passage of Scripture more crucial and fundamental to daily Christian living than 1 John 1:5-10. Here, in a few brief verses, John has laid down for us the basic principles which underlie a vital walk with God. [Hodges]*

### II. Relationship of the believer to sin (1 John 1:5—2:6)

(1) No moral darkness in God (1:5)

**5** 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**.

**5** 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.

5 This is the message that we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness—none at all!

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

- John now begins to explain what it means to walk/live in the light of God's fellowship by stressing the importance of obedience...

- This isn't John's message to his readers (us), this is God's message to us. These aren't his own words or descriptions about God...John tells us about what God has said about Himself.

- We can't be confident in our own opinions or ideas about God unless they are genuinely founded on what God has said about Himself.

- "...God is light" - crucial to understand if we are to have fellowship with God

- We must understand what makes this fellowship possible. We must understand who God is in Himself, and who we are as creatures of God.

- By definition, light has no darkness at all in it. For there to be darkness, there must be an absence of light.

- What this means is that if there is a problem with our fellowship with God, it is our fault, not His. It can't be the fault of God because there is no sin or darkness in Him at all.

- Any approach to relationship with God that assumes, or even implies, that God might be wrong is blasphemous and directly contradicts what John clearly states here

- "...in Him there is no darkness at all" - this statement is so emphatic in Greek ("darkness is not in Him at all—none!") that it's likely that the gnostics taught that there was darkness in God

- In the first century, pagan concepts about the gods may have influenced an anti-biblical revelation of God. The gnostics may have thought of Him as being dual-natured, having both light and darkness.

- If they did have this view of God, they could argue that moral distinctions were invalid. Because it was so vital the John's original audience have no misunderstanding on this point, John is emphatic in his declaration here.

### **Exegetical Insight**

After stating the purpose for writing this epistle to believers in Christ about having fellowship with God (v1-4), John begins to debunk three false claims about fellowship with God (v6,8,10), and underscores two required and related conditions to experience daily fellowship with God (v7,9).

What is important to understand is the exegetical pattern John uses in this passage. In each clause, there is a distinct pattern of one condition or claim, followed by two consequences or results.

Truth (v5): 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.

False claim #1 (v6): If [third class conditional clause] we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness [consequence #1], we lie, and [consequence #2] do not practice the truth.

Required condition #1 (v7): But [third class conditional clause] if we walk in the light as He is in the light, [consequence #1] we have fellowship with one another, and [consequence #2] the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

False claim #2 (v8): If [third-class conditional clause] we say that we have no sin, [consequence #1] we deceive ourselves, and [consequence #2] the truth is not in us.

Required condition #2 (v9): If [third class conditional clause] we confess our sins, [consequence #1] He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and [consequence #2] to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

False claim #3 (v10): If [third class conditional clause] we say that we have not sinned, [consequence #1] we make Him a liar, and [consequence #2] His word is not in us.

(2) Believers' relation toward sin and God outlined in five conditional sentences (1:6-10)

(A) If we live in sin we cannot have fellowship with God (1:6)

6 **If we say** that we have **fellowship** with Him and **yet walk in darkness**, we lie and do not **practice the truth**;

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

6 If we claim that we have fellowship with him but keep living in darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

- John first deals with a *false claim* of fellowship. Based on this, we understand that it is possible for someone to *claim* a relationship with God that they do not have.

— "If we say" - Cf. v6,8,10; John is countering the teaching of false teachers. These were real statements made by people in the church to which John was writing.

— "If" - all of the "if" clauses in 1:6—2:1 are third class conditions, meaning the condition of possibility or potentiality. The believer may or may not follow through and do what is noted in each verse; the decision is up to the individual believer.

— We can also say it's possible for someone to *think* they have a relationship with God that they do not have

— Many Christians are blind to their current condition. They are saved/justified and are going to heaven one day, but they do not live in true fellowship with God.



- "If" - third class condition, the condition of possibility (you may or you may not, I don't know). It's the conditional clause of choice and volition, with nothing assumed.
- "we" - notice the change in pronouns from v1-5 (we, us, our - referring to John and the apostles; "you" referring to John's readers) to v6 through the rest of the epistle ("we" referring to John and his readers together) (Cf. 2:1-2; 2:25; 4:7,11,19; 5:11,19,20)
- This shift in pronouns to put John in the same group as his readers is strong evidence that he is writing to believers, not unbelievers
- "...fellowship" - the primary theme of this epistle: fellowship (*koinōnia*) is a relational and conditional term, whether it's referring to fellowship with God or with others
- "...walk in darkness" - "walk" speaks of a pattern of living, not an occasional lapse; a "lifestyle" of darkness. It means to hide from God and refuse to acknowledge what is known about Him.
- Since God has no darkness at all (v5), if we claim to be in fellowship with God, yet disobey His commands ("walk in darkness"), that is not a truthful claim. We are lying to ourself and are thus not in fellowship with Him
- A practicing sinner cannot have close fellowship with a holy God, although his practice of sin does not affect his eternal salvation. This truth is revealed throughout Scripture.
- We do not need to re-establish our *relationship* with God every time we sin, though we do need to re-establish our *fellowship* with Him
- A Christian who temporarily (or permanently) walks in darkness is still saved, but is not in fellowship with God
- Calvinism interprets the phrases "have fellowship with Him" and "walk in the Light" as describing salvation/justification rather than fellowship
- This is in keeping with their "perseverance of the saints" theology, which believes that a believer must persevere in good works until the end in order to confirm they are saved.
- What this belief does is ruin a person's assurance of salvation and adds works as a condition for our salvation
- "...practice the truth" - to act consistently with the truth
- To claim fellowship with God while walking in darkness is to behave contrary to the truth about God's holiness

(B) If we walk in the light we have fellowship with Him (1:7)

7 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.**

7 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.

7 But if we keep living 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.

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

- The positive side of walking in the Light...

- "...if" - third class condition, the condition of possibility (you may or you may not, I don't know). It's the conditional clause of choice and volition, with nothing assumed.

- "...walk in the Light" - live an obedient life, without harboring known sin or resisting the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit

- It means to live in God's presence, exposed to what He has revealed about Himself

- "Walking in the Light" is possible, however sinless perfection is not. Walking in the Light does not imply perfect obedience, but rather utilizing God's resources (His Word and the Holy Spirit) to empower us to not be sinless, but to sin less.

- "...as He Himself is in the Light" - since God is Light (v5), when we walk in the Light we walk where He is. We have fellowship with Him.

- "...we have fellowship with one another" - we would expect John to say that if we walk in the Light, we have fellowship with God. However, he instead says we have fellowship with one another.

- It's possible "one another" here is talking about our fellowship with God...

- Our fellowship with God is already encompassed in "walking in the Light as He Himself is in the Light." What John is getting at here is that if believers do not have fellowship with one another, then one or both parties are not walking in the Light.

- Believers who are in fellowship with God will also be in fellowship and right relationship with one another

- "...the blood of Jesus" - refers to Jesus' violent, sacrificial death. In general, the blessings that the Bible show to be accomplished or achieved by the blood of Jesus are equally said to be accomplished or achieved by the death of Jesus (i.e., justification, Rom 3:21-26; 5:6-9; redemption, Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; Rev 5:9).

- If John tells us that the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ purifies us from every sin, he is informing us that our hope for continued cleansing and forgiveness rests not on our own goodness while our life is a sham (Cf. v6, probably directed against proto-Gnostics) but on continual walking in the light and on continued reliance on Christ's finished work on the cross.

- "...cleanses us from all sin" - present tense, not future tense, meaning we can do more than just "hope" we will one day be cleansed. Because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross, we can be cleansed now.

- Two things are true of believers who walk in the Light:

1. We have fellowship with other believers (and God)
2. We experience cleansing from all sin

- We need a continual cleansing from sin because the Bible says we continually sin and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). Even though we have been "bathed" in a general sense, our "feet" still need to be washed on a regular basis (Cf. John 13:10).
- This "cleansing" doesn't just deal with the guilt or penalty for sin, it also deals with the "stain" of sin that hinders our moment-by-moment fellowship with God.
- "all sin" - "all" means "all"! We can be cleansed of the sin we inherited from Adam, the sin we committed as kids, the sins of our growing up, the sins against our parents and our siblings, the sins against our spouse and our kids, the sins against our friends and our enemies, against our employers and employees, the sins of lying, cheating, stealing, adultery, hatred, murder, and even sins we didn't even know we committed. All sin can be cleansed by the blood of Jesus.
- The only way we can be in fellowship with a Holy God is by getting rid of our sin problem, and the only way to get rid of our sin problem is by the blood of Jesus

*Does my walking in the light take away my sins? Not at all. I am as much a sinner in the light as in the darkness, if it were possible for me to be in the light without being washed in the blood. Well, but we have fellowship with God, and does not having fellowship with God take away sin? Beloved, do not misunderstand me – no man can have fellowship with God unless sin be taken away; but his fellowship with God, and his walking in light, does not take away his sin – not at all. The whole process of the removal of sin is here, 'And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'* [Charles Spurgeon

(C) If we say we have no sin then the truth is not in us (1:8)

8 **If** we say that we have no **sin**, we are deceiving ourselves and **the truth is not in us**.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

8 If we say that we do not have any sin, we are deceiving ourselves and we're not being truthful to ourselves.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

- After talking about being cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus, John clarifies that he's not saying that a Christian can become sinless or perfect

— To *think* we're sinless is to deceive ourselves; to say we're sinless is a lie

— *Our deceitful heart reveals an almost Satanic shrewdness in self-deception... If you say you have no sin you have achieved a fearful success, you have put out your own eyes, and perverted your own reason!* [Spurgeon]

— There aren't many people who think they are sinlessly perfect, yet many don't think of themselves as *sinner*s. They say "I make mistakes" or "I'm not perfect" or "I'm only human," but they say such things to excuse or *defend*. This is different from knowing and admitting "I am a sinner."

- To say that we have no sin puts us in a dangerous place because God's grace and mercy is extended to sinners, not to "those who make mistakes" or "I'm only human" or "no one is perfect" people, but *sinners*.
- We need to realize the victory and forgiveness that comes from saying, "I am a sinner – even a great sinner – but I have a Savior who cleanses me from all sin."
- "If" - third class condition, the condition of possibility (you may or you may not, I don't know). It's the conditional clause of choice and volition, with nothing assumed.
- "...sin" - *hamartia*, singular noun, referring to the sin nature
- If we say that we don't have a sin nature, we deceive ourselves
- "...the truth is not in us" - God's truth, as Scripture reveals it, does not have a full hold on us...it is not controlling our thinking if we say that we have no sin
- The "truth" in this context, what God's Word says about our sin nature
- This does not mean that the person in question is not saved/justified. John continues to use the personal pronouns "we" and "us" (beginning in v5), indicating the readers believing status.
- If the truth has its proper effect on believers, they will not fall into this trap. If they do fall into it, the truth does not reside in us as an active and controlling force that shapes our thoughts and attitudes.
- "in us" - does not suggest that we don't have the facts in our mental grasp, but that they do not have control over us; we aren't affirming in our mind what we know to be true

(D) If we confess our sin Christ cleanses us (1:9)

- 9 If we **confess** our sins, **He is faithful** and **righteous**, so that **He will forgive us our sins** and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- 9 If we make it our habit to confess our sins, in his faithful righteousness he forgives us for those sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.
- 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- Verse 9 is the opposite of v8...acknowledging our sin is the opposite of saying that we have no sin when we do
  - Although sin is always present in the life of a believer, it need not be a hindrance to our fellowship with God
  - "If" - third class condition (*ean* + subjunctive), speaking of possibility or potentiality. The believer may choose to confess their sins, or they may not. The decision is up to them.
  - "...confess" - *homologeō*, *homo*, "the same"; *logeō*, "to say" — it literally means "to say the same thing"

— We are to say the same thing that God says about our sins, not that they are “only” mistakes, errors or blunders. That is, from His point of view. We need to acknowledge ownership of our sin. We need to commit to forsake our sin.

— It's in the present tense, subjunctive mood, meaning we should continually confess our sins rather than a "once-and-for-all" confession of sin. The subjunctive mood means "in case" or "provided" we confess our sins, He will forgive us. We may confess our sins, we may not, it's up to us.

— "If" - third class condition, the condition of possibility (you may or you may not, I don't know). It's the conditional clause of choice and volition, with nothing assumed.

— Restoring broken fellowship for believers is one of the works of Christ during His Present Session. See [Present Ministry of Christ](#) for details on what Jesus is doing from heaven today.

- This verse is not a Gospel presentation...in context, this verse speaks of what a believer needs to do to restore broken fellowship with God (Cf. 2:1-2). It doesn't outline a condition of salvation for an unbeliever.

— As Christians, to restore broken fellowship with God, we need to come before Him and agree with Him that what we've done is wrong and ask Him to restore fellowship with us

- Our sins are not forgiven because we confess them. If this were true, if forgiveness from sin could only come with confession, then we would all be damned because it is impossible for us to confess every sin we commit.

— However, confession is vital to maintain fellowship with God. As the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin that is hindering our fellowship with Him, we must confess it and receive forgiveness and cleansing to remain in full fellowship with God.

- Some teach that this verse doesn't apply to Christians because God has already provided forgiveness at the point of faith, so we do not need to ask again for what we already have

— However, this view fails to recognize the difference between judicial forgiveness (received at the point of faith) and "family" forgiveness, which believers need to receive constantly in our daily lives

— Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:1-11) demonstrates the difference between judicial forgiveness (Cf. "has bathed," *louō*) and "wash" *niptō*, v10)

— The fact that Jesus has removed the penalty for our sins at the point of faith (1 Cor 6:11; Eph 1:7; 4:32; Col 2:13) does not remove the necessity of confessing our sins frequently

— Conversion (judicial, forensic, positional) forgiveness makes us acceptable as members of God's family. Continual (parental, family, practical) forgiveness enables us to experience intimate fellowship as God's children in His family.

- "...He is faithful" - God doesn't get tired of forgiving our sins because the penalty for all of our sin, past, present, and future, have already been paid for

- By confessing our sin, we are leveraging the payment that Jesus already paid for sin on our behalf. We can't out-sin Jesus atonement for our sins.
- "...righteous" - *dikaios*, because of the shed blood of Christ (v7), there is no compromise of God's righteousness when He forgives sin
- "...He will forgive us of our sins" - this reality should lead us into sin by saying, "I'll go ahead and sin because God will forgive me." It should lead us out of sin because we know God could only be faithful and just to forgive us because the wrath we deserve was poured out on Him.
- Each sin we commit carries its own measure of wrath, so in a sense each time we sin we commit added to the agony Jesus bore on the cross
- There is no more sure evidence that a person is out of fellowship with God than for them to contemplate or commit sin with the idea that "I can just ask for forgiveness later."

*Sin interrupts fellowship but cannot change relationship.* [Scofield]

*The effect of the Christian's sin upon himself is that he loses his fellowship with God, his joy, his peace, and his power. On the other hand, these experiences are restored in infinite grace on the sole ground that he confesses his sin.* [Chafer]

*The Christian religion is the religion of sinners. The Christian life is a life of continued repentance, of continual faith in, thankfulness for, and love to the Redeemer.* [Matthew Henry]

More Christians have probably memorized 1 John 1:9 than Rom 6:12-13. 1 John 1:9 deals with how to handle sin *after* we have committed it; it is corrective theology. Rom 6:12-13 deals with how to handle sin *before* we commit it; it is preventive theology. We need to pay more attention to Rom 6:12-13. One of the purposes of 2 Sam 13 is to help the reader prevent this type of sin, rather than to help us to recover from it, having fallen. It is a strong warning against letting our passions lead us, because of the consequences that will follow.

(E) If we say we have no sin then the truth is not in us (1:10)

- 10 **If** we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.
- 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.
- 10 If we say that we have never sinned, we make him a liar and his word has no place in us.
- 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
- "If" - third class condition, the condition of possibility (you may or you may not, I don't know). It's the conditional clause of choice and volition, with nothing assumed.

- When sin is revealed, believers either confess it or claim that what we did was not sin. If a believer chooses the latter, they are not in fellowship with God.
- Sin is always present, but so is its remedy, so sin should never be a hindrance to our fellowship with God
- The false claim here is that the sin we have committed is not really sin. We don't "confess" (see our sin as God sees it). When we do this, we put aside God's revelation and make ourselves the authority for what is and is not sin.
- Doing this disregards God's revelation of sin and makes people the authority for what is and is not sin. To claim this says that God is wrong in His judgment of people and is thus a liar.