

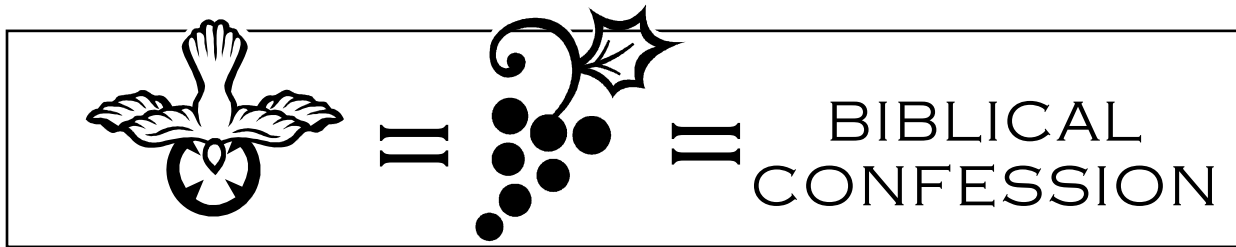
## Chapter 13

# Reigning Grace and 1 John 1:9

<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 to forgive us our sins  
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”

(1 John 1:8, 9).



### AN INITIAL COMMENT

“Grace Living, 1 John 1:9, and Conditional Forgiveness,” is a work made up of two sections. Part one is in response to specific questions asked concerning the topic under consideration. Part two is a treatment of 1 John 1:9 in context.

For whatever reason most Christians live in a state of perpetual bondage because of their inability to embrace a complete

forgiveness from God and a full fellowship with God that is merited by grace alone and maintained by grace alone. Most have tragically drawn a sharp distinction between their positional justification in Christ and their progressive sanctification in the world.

It is my prayer we would once more rest in a finished work where our greatest strength is our weakness and our greatest boast is His cross.



### Questions concerning forgiveness

1. “If I understood right, you said that we do not need to ask God for forgiveness when we sin, but rather confess and thank Him for the forgiveness given. What about the Lord's Prayer? Did not Jesus teach his disciples to ask for forgiveness?”
2. “Since we know that at the point of salvation we receive full forgiveness from past, present and *future* sin, how are we to understand Matthew 6:14, 15?”
3. “Do Christians have to confess and ask forgiveness for the sins they commit after salvation?”
4. “Is the purpose of confession for our benefit to declare to God that we are going to turn from sin? If we are already forgiven then why does 1 John 1:9 say he will forgive our sins *if* we confess?”

5. "How does God's holiness fit in with the idea that our sin does not break fellowship with God? If He hates sin, how can we still have fellowship with Him if we are in sin?"
  
6. "In relation to how God sees me, which is through His Son's blood, can He see my sin? I know God is all-knowing and can see anything and everything, but in relation to how God sees me, this is my question."

A word of encouragement for those who have slipped - and who has not? The only remedy is to confess your sins at once.<sup>1</sup>



## Answers

The answer to these questions intersects several times with other doctrinal truths. I am grateful for the hard questions. It is essential we become *Bereans* (Acts 17:11). It is not enough for us to blindly accept all that we have been taught. Even if what we come to believe runs contrary to the tradition taught, we must have the fortitude to stand, even if alone. Our Bible is always the final court of appeal.

There are several issues involved in the answer.

- First, what is the idea of fellowship with God?
- Second, how full is the payment in the area of sins forgiven?
- Third, what is the true believer's present standing in Christ?

- Fourth, what is the larger context of Matthew 6:9-15 and how does it affect my application of this text?
- Finally, what is the larger context of 1 John 1:9 and how does it affect my application of this text?

I am convinced if we examine the above thoughts, a biblical response can be found to the questions being addressed.

Closely tied to the idea of our forgiveness by God is our fellowship with God. Salvation establishes our fellowship with God. Some would suggest our sin breaks this fellowship and can only be restored after our sin is confessed and hence forgiven. Some would equally suggest our fellowship with God is also contingent on a walk of faith or obedience or by being led of the Spirit or walking in the Spirit. Because of the tie binding fellowship with forgiveness, it is impossible to separate the two ideas. We will begin this study by noting our fellowship with God.



## FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

As already noted, this area is problematic for most Christians. In a popular Counseling Ministry, those who teach their material make the following statements:

Guilt through unconfessed sin interrupts our fellowship with God (1 Jn. 1:1-10).

Guilt is removed through confession and repentance (1 Jn. 1:9; Ps. 32:5).<sup>2</sup>

On one hand the group notes how, "Guilt for believers was removed eternally at the cross (Col. 2:13-14; Heb. 10:1-18),"<sup>3</sup> yet on the other hand they make the previous two statements in the same listing on the same page.

Our challenge is to face a misunderstanding of such ideas as fellowship and forgiveness. We will begin with some initial thoughts concerning our fellowship with God.

First, our fellowship with God was lost when Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden. Prior to the Fall, Adam had unhindered fellowship with God. After the Fall, his fellowship with God was broken. God restored fellowship by offering up a blood sacrifice. This animal blood sacrifice was a temporal type of a future permanent antitype found in Jesus Christ. We will note this idea in the next section.

In commenting on 1 John 1:3, Charles Spurgeon makes the following statement:

They who have by his grace believed, and have by the precious blood been washed, have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord, they are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God," and they have access with boldness into this grace wherein we stand. **So they who are in the kingdom, and under the dispensation of the second Adam, have restored to them in all its fullness that fellowship which was lost to them by the sin and disobedience of their first federal head.**<sup>4</sup>

This is the essence of our justification before God by the person and work of Jesus Christ. Our justification “involves the forgiveness of sins, and restoration to divine favor. The Bible clearly teaches that the fruit of justification is much more than pardon. They who are justified have ‘peace with God,’ . . .” <sup>5</sup>

God not only completely pardons but equally accepts. It is unlike King David inviting his son Absalom back into the kingdom, but refusing to meet with him (2 Sam. 13, 14 [Note 14:24, 28-33]).

Second, fellowship with God in the Old Testament was contingent (thus tentative) on the offering of blood, whereas in the New Testament (i.e., Covenant) fellowship is permanent because of the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Third, because fellowship with God is a consequence of His cross work, nothing we do can break this fellowship. This is a point of Hebrews 4:14-16.

<sup>14</sup> “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Therefore **let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need**” (Heb. 4:14-16).

Believers come with confidence to the throne of grace. Neither our obedience nor rebellion bars us from this throne. If the throne was marked by justice, then none would come. But it is a throne characterized by grace.

Pastor John Piper of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis Minnesota makes a summary point from 1 John 1:1-4.

Through this incarnation we obtain fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>

Fourth, we can fail to enjoy our fellowship with God by neglect or willful choice. This enjoyment, however, does not break fellowship; it is only a failure to enjoy what is true.

Finally, if obedience maintains fellowship and rebellion breaks fellowship, then we will never rest from our work, since we will never know if we have done enough obeying or too much rebelling.



The extent of our Lord's death

The second question concerns the extent of our Lord's death, "How full is the payment in the area of sins forgiven? It is unfortunate believers can sing a song such as *It Is Well with My Soul*, then turn right around and not understand the full extent of Christ's work on the cross in behalf of sin. Consider the third stanza:

*My sin – oh, the bliss of this glorious thought, My sin – not in part, but the whole, Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.*

Why do so many believers still bear the burden of sin? It is not because they are sinners. That truth will not change until the loss of the old man. It is because they do not understand the full extent of Calvary's work on sin.

If you've been taught all of your life that the way to get forgiveness is by going to a confession booth or responding to an altar call, don't expect that habit to disappear overnight. 'Why am I walking down this church aisle to get my sins forgiven all over again?' 'Why am I constantly asking for what I already have? Could it be unbelief in what God said is finished?' <sup>7</sup>

Consider the following passages. Throughout the book of Hebrews, the intent is to show the superiority of Christ. One of those areas accented is that of His sacrificial work. Within the book there is constant reference being made to the *once and for all* nature of His sacrificial act (Hebrews 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10, 11, 12).

<sup>12</sup> “and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. . . . <sup>26</sup> Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; **but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.** . . . <sup>28</sup> So Christ also, having

been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him” (Heb. 9:12, 26, 28).

<sup>10</sup> “By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**. <sup>11</sup> Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; <sup>12</sup> **but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time**, sat down at the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:10-12).

Because this sacrifice paid for sin in full, the impact forgave *all* sin forever. This appears to be the clear teaching of Scripture. Consider the following passages as they relate to the impact of Christ's death on sin (Acts 13:38, 39; Col. 2:13; 1 John 1:7, 9; 2:12).

<sup>38</sup> “Therefore, let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, <sup>39</sup> and **through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things**, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses” (Acts 13:38, 39).

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, **having forgiven us all our transgressions**” (Col. 2:13).

<sup>7</sup> “But if we walk in the Light, as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one with another, and the blood of Jesus **His Son cleanses us from all sin**. . . <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and **to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**. . . <sup>12</sup> I am writing to you, little children, **because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake**” (1 John 1:7, 9; 2:12).

Those who come by faith and appropriate the provision of Calvary for themselves have their sins forgiven: past, present and future.

“The power of Christ's death *pays in full* God's outrage against it.”

In fact, in eternity past when such an act was considered and then manifested in time, all of our sin was still yet future. He died for our sin before it was ever committed. The only thing lacking was an expression of our faith that would take God at His Word. If *all* sin has been forgiven, then for what sins are we asking to be forgiven?<sup>8</sup> Instead, we should be thanking God daily for the fullness of His forgiveness. This does not negate the necessity to be forgiven on a daily basis, but it does negate the idea that such forgiveness is conditional.

When a Christian asks God for forgiveness of his sins, he implies that Jesus' work on the cross isn't finished even though Jesus clearly said that “it is finished.”<sup>9</sup>

The power of His forgiveness continues to this day. He is even now interceding in our behalf, providing a forgiveness that is unmerited and unconditional

If Christ only acted as my advocate when I asked, then I would be of all men most miserable.

(1 John 2:1, 2; Rom. 8:34). Such a picture is beautifully acted out in John 13 when our Lord washed the feet of the disciples. Jesus told Peter that even with soiled feet he was *still* clean even though his feet were soiled (John 13:10). The stunning element in the story is how Jesus washed Peter's feet even though Peter *never asked!* Jesus washed his feet

unconditionally, without being asked. If Jesus forgave us *only* when we asked, there would still be unforgiven sin in the life of the true believer. Such an individual, as identified by our Lord, "has no part with Him" (John 13:8). This person is not saved.

We can right now rejoice in a forgiveness that is full and sufficient. We can enjoy a forgiveness that is lacking in nothing. We can, as a believer, rejoice in the fact that we are forgiven.

To ask for forgiveness indicates that we don't really believe we are forgiven people. Friend, *there is nothing more that God is going to do about your sin.* [emphasis his] <sup>10</sup>



### The believer's identity in Christ

The third area of application is as follows, "What is the true believer's present standing in Christ?" According to Romans 6, believers have been baptized into Christ (v. 3) and now walk in newness of life (v. 4). Because of this fact, they are now dead to sin (v. 2) and the body of sin is destroyed (v. 6). Thus, they no longer have to serve sin (v. 6). They are free from sin (v. 7) and no longer have to obey its dictates (v. 9). Colossians 3:1-4 speak of this same truth. They are dead (v. 3). The life they live in the flesh is according to Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3, 4). Jesus Christ is their life. They have no existence apart from Him. He has become

"Sin has no inherent power to act on us. It has no authority over us. It cannot dictate or direct. Its reign over us has been broken."

their all and all. He is their sufficiency and satisfaction. The fact of the matter is this: in our position our life has been swallowed up, by, and into the life of Christ. God the Father sees us in His beloved and blessed Son. In Him, we are as received, accepted, and satisfying to the Father as His only begotten Son.

There are two aspects of sin needing to be addressed.

- First, sin's dominion
- Second, sin's demerit

As a believer, we are no longer under sin's dominion. Though we are no longer under the dominion of sin, we will still face the inherent demerit of sin. Thus, when we sin we are not under sin's dominion though facing its demerit.

Also coming into play is the whole area of two primary doctrines: justification and imputation. The doctrine of justification sees the sinner as being *declared* righteous. It is the canceling of sin's debt against him and then treating him as such. In the doctrine of imputation, the righteousness of Christ is placed into the sinner's account so that God now sees him as having the righteousness of Christ. Both doctrines have tremendous import on this area.

Unfortunately, we fail to practice positional truth. Though we have been declared righteous, given the righteousness of Christ and are positionally in Christ, we continue to live as if it all depended on

us. The act of making the truth experiential is mapped out for us in Romans 6:6–13 and 12:1. Do you know the truth of your position? Are you considering it true? Yet is it something that is merely theoretical, or can it actually become experiential?

There is always a need to clarify what it means to “experience the victorious life.” **One’s experience might never change. Circumstances, events, and experiences do not determine whether someone is having victory.** Victory is in one’s position, not in one’s performance. Victory is seeing His victory as being our victory. Victory is when we rest knowing He is victorious, despite our debilitating circumstances. Victory is seeing past the moment, and finding rest knowing He is performing His perfect will. Experiencing the victorious Christian life is in mind renewal, not behavioral modification or circumstantial amendment.

It is only as we follow the pattern of victory that implements positional truth that we can experience our position in Christ *in* and *through* our earthen vessel. Yet, let us not fall into the trap of thinking this is in any way dependent on us. Philippians 2:12 and 13 assures us of God’s providential working in and through us.

<sup>12</sup> “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> **for it is God who is at work in you,** both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12, 13).

The outworking of positional truth is also seen in the area of personal sanctification. We understand sanctification, like salvation, to be a monergistic work. In other words, it is the work of one. God is working in us and through us His good pleasure (Phil. 2:12, 13; Heb. 13:21).

<sup>20</sup> “Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, <sup>21</sup> equip you in every good thing to do His will, **working in us that which is pleasing in His sight**, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13:20, 21).

Faithful is He who calls us who will also do it (1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

<sup>23</sup> “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> **Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass**” (1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

God will glorify that which He predetermines (Rom. 8:30).

<sup>29</sup> “**For those whom He foreknew**, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; <sup>30</sup> and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, **He also glorified**” (Rom. 8:29, 30).

This does not negate our responsibility but it does help us to put a proper slant on the whole issue. It lifts the burden of looking at

our Christian walk from a man-centered perspective to that of a God-centered perspective. God, not man, will maintain their walk with Him, and the basis for fellowship is not found in man but in Christ alone. We are “responsible” to believe all that God has said is true. We are to yield ourselves up to His truth.



## THE LORD'S PRAYER

What is the larger context of Matthew 6:9-15, and how does it affect my application of this text?<sup>11</sup> As most acknowledge, Matthew 6 is part of the larger context of Matthew 5-7 which forms what is commonly called our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. Here are some initial observations.

(1)The Sermon on the Mount describes life under the King. It has direct application to those who will inherit the earthly millennial kingdom of God. This does not mean there is no application, but it does mean we are obligated to understand the idea inside of God's overarching *Story*.

It's important to remember when Jesus was talking about this prayer to His disciples, they were still living under the old covenant - under the law (i.e. a different chapter within the one *Story*).<sup>12</sup>

(2)The descriptions found throughout Matthew 5-7 are the characteristics of those exist under the direct and immediate reign of the King.

(3) There is a sense we have misappropriated the Lord's Prayer and recite it without thinking what our Lord meant by what He said. As it relates to the idea of forgiveness, verses 14 and 15 use a first class condition construction. Such a construction assumes the truth of the statement. It might not be true, but it will be assumed true for the sake of the argument. The "if" could be understood as "since" in a first class condition. Hence, verses 14 and 15 are simply saying "since you forgive, God forgives." Such a statement is true of all believers.

(4) Luke's passage brings this out even better when it says, "And forgive us our sins; *for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us*" (Luke 11:4). All true believers forgive, because they have been forgiven. The principle illustrated in Matthew 6:14, 15 is that those who have experienced God's forgiveness forgive (Eph. 4:32). Thus, we forgive the same way God forgives: unconditionally and without merit.

(5) The same is true with reference to Mark 11:24-26. Colossians 3:13 gives us the "grace" twist to such a principle as found in Mark 11:24-26. Mark 11 makes it conditional, whereas Colossians exhorts us to forgive even as we have been forgiven. The principle of forgiving without limit or condition is clearly stated by our Lord when discussing the issue with Peter in Matthew 18:21 and 22. How often do we forgive

others? Only as often as he asks or is truly repentant and sorrowful? NO, we forgive without limit.

(6)It is of interest that this conditional forgiveness is only in the gospels and not in either Paul's writings or non-Pauline writings. Why the difference?

Nowhere in the New Testament, after the crucifixion, is the concept of asking God's forgiveness even mentioned. The apostle Paul never broached the subject - he didn't have to. He stood firm in the fact that he was a forgiven person and that those to whom he wrote were forgiven people.<sup>13</sup>



1 John 1:9<sup>14</sup>

The message of our complete forgiveness in Christ is so clear. Yet invariably, after all those hours of teaching, someone raises his hand to ask, "What about 1 John 1:9?" For many believers this is the only verse they have memorized that deals with forgiveness.<sup>15</sup>

I believe that through an improper understanding of what this verse really means [1 John 1:9], we have negated the power of the cross of Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup>

What is the larger context of 1 John 1:9 and how does it affect our application of this text? The book of 1 John provides contrasts between two groups of people. Consider the contrasts listed below:

THE UNBELIEVER	THE BELIEVER
People who are liars (1:6, 2:4)	People who walk in the light (1:7, 2:6, 10)
People who do not the truth (1:6)	People who are cleansed from all sin (1:7)
People who do not have the truth (1:8, 2:4)	People who confess sin as sin (1:9)
People who do not keep His commandments (2:4)	People who are forgiven (1:9, 2:12)
People who hate their brothers (2:9, 4:8ff)	People who are cleansed (1:9)
People who are in darkness (2:9)	People who know Him (2:3)
People who love the world (2:15, 4:5)	People who keep His commandments (2:3)
People who do not have the love of the Father (2:15)	People who have the love of God (2:5)
People who deny the incarnation (2:22)	People who abide in Him (2:6)
People who practice sin (3:4ff)	People who love their brothers (2:10, 3:11)
People who are of the devil (3:8)	People who are the Sons of God (3:2)
People who have fear (4:18)	People who are purified (3:3)
People who call God a liar (5:10)	People who do not practice sin (3:4ff)
	People who are born of God (3:9, 5:4)
	People who are hated by the world (3:13)
	People who have answered prayer (3:22)
	People who have the Spirit's assurance (3:24)
	People who believe in the incarnation (4:2)
	People who have no fear of future judgment (4:18)
	People who have overcome the world (5:4, 5)

The question we have to ask ourselves is, “Who are these people?” The contrast is between those who are unsaved and those who are saved. It does not refer to three groups of people – those who are saved and right with God, saved and out of fellowship with God, and the lost. Believers are never described by such language as that found in the left column.

The people in 1 John 1:9 are saved individuals. What are these saved people doing according to the first chapter of John’s letter? Well, for starters they are identified as those who walk in the light, are cleansed from all sin, confess their manifestation of sin, and are forgiven and cleansed from all unrighteousness. How does this help us in understanding 1 John 1:9? First, all true believers are walking in the light and confessing their sin. Both walking and confessing are present active subjunctives.

The subjunctive mood is the mood of possibility and potentiality.<sup>17</sup> The action described may or may not occur, depending upon circumstances. Conditional sentences of the third class (“ean” + the subjunctive) are all of this type, as well as many commands following conditional purpose clauses, such as those beginning with “hina.” On what is the action of walking and confessing contingent? Why may these activities not happen? Why is it only a potential? Because whether or not an individual walks or confesses is completely dependent on whether or not they are saved or lost. We have created a third type of person in 1 John, that of a “lost-saved”

person, one who is “dark-light” or a “hating-lover.” John says this is not the issue. You are either saved and walking in the light and confessing sin or lost and not walking nor confessing. Moreover, it is because we are walking and confessing that we are fellowshiping, cleansed and forgiven. The result of walking and confessing is entirely dependent on the cleansing and forgiveness. In addition, it is because we have been cleansed and forgiven that can now walk in the light and confess sin.

The “cleansing” of 1:7 is a present active indicative speaking of its continual action. The “forgive” and “cleansing” of 1:9 is an aorist active subjunctive speaking of an action that has potentially taken place in the past. The beauty of these two verses is evident. True believers have been forgiven in full *judicially* (1:9) and are being *experientially* forgiven (1:7) unconditionally. Evidence of such forgiveness and cleansing reveals itself by a walking and confessing that is supernatural in origin and completely contrary to that of the unsaved. The unsaved will never walk in the light. In fact, John tells us they hate the light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19, 20).

The verb “cleanses” occurs only twice in 1 John (1:7, 9). In 1:7, it is a present active indicative and in 1:9 it is an aorist active subjunctive. Like the word “cleanse” the word “forgive” is found only twice in 1 John (1:9; 2:12). In 1:9 it is an aorist active subjunctive, and in 2:12 it is a perfect passive

Lost people <i>are not</i> walking nor confessing. Saved people <i>are</i> doing both.
--

indicative. It is the faithfulness of God that produces the forgiveness and cleansing of 1:9. As His children (1:7), we enjoy the fellowship which produces the cleansing from all sin. The question is not *if* for the true believer, but only *when*. Thus the issue is not an un-confessing believer, for all true believers confess, but between true believers and those who are lost unbelievers. Saved people are confessing and are being cleansed because they have been forgiven and cleansed.

We often look at 1 John 1:9 as *the* verse for maintaining one's relationship with God, and to consider an alternative look is difficult. The desire is not to stir up controversy but to know truth. To see the magnitude of God's forgiveness and love and to understand His Word more intimately so that we might know Him more personally is the end of all Bible study. God has provided for us a salvation that is fathomless in scope.

If we constantly have to monitor our sin, we have unknowingly shifted our focus away from Him to our sin. Moreover, such a focus is wrong. We are to be looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, not making checklists of sins committed.



### What to do with 1 John 1:9?

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

In light of the evidence, instead of creating a new category for believers confessing their sin, why do we not simply make this a salvation verse? This would seem to make the most sense. Yet the immediate context as it stands in parallel to verse seven keeps me from seeing it as being salvific.

Without exception, the idea of confession is inseparably linked to that of salvation. This acknowledgement leads to salvation.

The Geneva Bible comments on this verse in this way:

Therefore the beginning of salvation is to acknowledge our wickedness and to require pardon from him, who freely forgives all sins, because he has promised to do so and he is faithful and just. So then our salvation depends on the free promise of God, who because he is faithful and just, will perform that which he hath promised.

What then is the idea behind 1 John 1:9? Listen carefully to John Gill, an old puritan.

Forgiveness of sin here intends not the act of forgiveness, as in God, proceeding upon the bloodshed and sacrifice of Christ, which is done at once, and includes all sin, past, present, and to come; but an application of pardoning grace to a poor sensible sinner, humbled under a sense of sin, and confessing it before the Lord; and confession of sin is not the cause or condition of pardon, nor of the manifestation of it, but is descriptive of the person, and points him out, to whom God will and does make known his forgiving love. <sup>18</sup>

It is only as we recognize the magnitude of our depravity that we see the abundance of God's forgiveness.

The darkness of sin will not and cannot enter into the light of God's presence. For us to enjoy the light of God we must be purged of the darkness. This purging of darkness takes place at Calvary through the blood of His Son. We are now children of light (Eph. 5:7).



### Conclusion:

Like many other passages, we have tried to make 1 John 1:9 say more than is there. The only way we can enjoy fellowship with the Father and His Son is if we are in the light. Calvary is the only way to become a child of the light.

---

<sup>1</sup> L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1945), 82

<sup>2</sup> *Foundations of Biblical Counseling*, Biblical Counseling Center, 3233 N. Arlington Heights Rd., Suite 302, Arlington Heights, IL 60004, 60.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *Fellowship With God*, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, (Sermon No. 409 delivered on Sunday September 15, 1861); available from <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0409.htm>; Internet.

<sup>5</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (new ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 513.

<sup>6</sup> John Piper, *Eternal Life Has Appeared in Christ*, Desiring God Ministries, (Sermon No. 475 delivered on Sunday January 27, 1985); available from [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1985/475\\_Eternal\\_Life\\_Has\\_Appeared\\_in\\_Christ/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/1985/475_Eternal_Life_Has_Appeared_in_Christ/); Internet.

<sup>7</sup> Bob George, *Faith that Pleases God*, (Eugene: Harvest Publishers, 2001), 87

<sup>8</sup> William Ames correctly notes how, "Not only are past sins of justified persons remitted but also those to come, Num. 23:25. God sees no iniquity in Jacob or perverseness in Israel. Justification has left no place for condemnation." However, he does, incorrectly, continue with, "Yet those who are justified need daily the forgiveness of sins." William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. John Dykstra Eusden ([Latin 1629] Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1968), 163, 164.

<sup>9</sup> Steve McVey, *Grace Rules*, (Eugene: Harvest House, 1998), 150.

---

<sup>10</sup> George, *Faith that Pleases God*, 126. In addressing 1 John 1:5–10, Pastor John Piper makes the following comment, “Some people say that a Christian should never pray for forgiveness because his sins are all forgiven in Christ. It is finished in the cross and no more forgiveness is possible. There is truth in this, but to me it smacks of artificiality. At least we should say, ‘Father, I have sinned and am not worthy to be called your child. Please apply the blood of Christ to this my sin and count it among those which you forgave when he died for me on the cross.’ But if that is too complex, I am sure the Father would gladly receive the words, ‘Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.’ From this author’s perspective, John has the right idea but fails to connect the theological dots.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 6:12 and the experiences of the Psalmists are consistently used to justify the action to pray daily for the forgiveness of sins (Cf. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 514). Such usage of the aforementioned passages is a misuse of the text against the larger context both biblically and systematically. His treatment of daily confession and forgiveness is a typical presentation of the material. It is scripturally unsubstantiated and theologically illogically. Ibid., 514, 515.

<sup>12</sup> George, *Faith that Pleases God*, 112.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>14</sup> “This text is a theological conundrum: It could be treated as purpose, result, or purpose–result.” Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 474.

<sup>15</sup> George, *Faith that Pleases*, 102

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>17</sup> For a thorough study of the subjunctive mood and its complexity in the Greek text see further, Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 461.

<sup>18</sup> John Gill