

1 John 1:8-10
“Confession of sin”

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I. Intro

John’s *brief letter on fellowship* has moved beyond the “*Benefits of fellowship with God*”:

- 1. 1:4 “*Fullness of joy*”
- 2. 2:1 “*Freedom from sin*”
- 3. 2:26 “*Foresightedness against deception*”
- 4. 5:13 “*Faith filled assurance*”

To now looking at the four things affect our fellowship with God though Jesus Christ:

1:5-2:14 *Conditions of fellowship*

2:15-27 *Cautions to fellowship*

2:28-5:3 *Characteristics of fellowship*

5:4-21 *Consequences of fellowship*

The context of this section was to counter act the gnostic heresy of the *Nicolaitans* who had many false teachings but the one that John addressed last week was “*Anti..nom..ian..ism*” which was held by the *Nicolaitans* mentioned in Revelation 2:6. The word means “*against law*” and the *teaching resulted in two things both of which John is combatting specifically in verse 5-6.*

- 1. That in the nature and character of God evil.
- 2. That the person who lives in and habitually practices sin can still enjoy fellowship with God.

John reveals to his readers by the use of the word sin used 8 times in this section that the number one enemy to fellowship with God is our own sin. And in the verses before us this morning he will again address a gnostic heresy as well as instruct the believer in what to do with "SIN" when it separates our fellowship with God.

II. Vs 8 The sin of no sin nature

Vs. 8 Again John uses the contrast of what a professing believer says but in this case it is their confession that is off. Notice that the word "SIN" is singular where in verses 9-10 it is plural "SINS" and "SINNED". That is an important interpretive observation as the heresy that John counters here is one that was aimed at fallen humanities "SIN NATURE". There were some who professed faith in Christ who denied that they ever had a depraved or sin nature.

This left only two possibilities:

- A. First, that they never had a sin nature, were born without the effects of the fall upon them. Such a condition would have to mean:
 1. They were sinless which would make them God.
 2. It would also remove the uniqueness of the Son of God.
 3. It would have removed the importance of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as there was no need for His incarnation.
- B. The second possibility was that somehow they had "evolved" and had now come into a state that no longer battled the flesh. Know that this was Gnostics then perhaps they taught that it was their higher knowledge that enabled them to arrive at a higher state. Either way the above false results would apply as well.

Theologically speaking this heresy is known as “perfectionism” and claims either that it never had a sin nature or that it has come into a new sphere of complete eradication of a sin nature. Here the problem is far more difficult than deception of others it is self-deception. Others can clearly see their sin, but they can no longer recognize their own fallenness. This point to another more contemporary problem within the body Christ today and that is not necessarily “perfectionism” but a “spiritual blindness” that enables the believer to be ignorant of their sin and the separation of fellowship that it has caused with God. John says that in the case of this heresy that those who held this position were in reality people who “the truth was not in”. Today I would say that those who held such a lie as this were either unsaved, misinformed or mistaken and ought to be aware of the lie they claim as a truth!

III. Vs 9 The cleansing confession

Vs. 9 John now instructs the true believer what to do with their sin instead of denying that they have sin or have arrived a sinless “perfectionism”. There are two things that humanity can do with sin if they wish to enjoy true fellowship with God and the reason for this as there are only two types of people:

1. Unsaved sinners: Believe if the only begotten Son as we read in Acts 4:12 “*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*”
2. Saved sinners: We are to confess our sins that have separated our fellowship with God. The Greek word for “confess” means to agree with another and as it relates to the context of this passage it means that the Christian is to agree with God both to the reason for the separation of fellowship with God our sin and agree with God and call it what He calls it.

But that confession also ought include three other aspects:

- a. **Hatred**: We need to hate not only the consequences of sin but sin as well. We know the damage that sin will cause, and it is only when we hate it that we will avoid it.
- b. **Contrition**: It should break our heart as we see the damage that it has caused and the hurt in has inflicted.
- c. **Determination**: The above two it will cause us to not only be more aware but more determined to avoid the temptation.

David wrote in Ps 51:17 that “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart, these, O God, you will not despise.*” There is never a need for our sins to interfere with our fellowship, God has given us instructions on how to reestablish our fellowship.

Confession will not only shorten the separation it will increase the honest communication. John reminds the reader that such confession comes with the assurance that God is “*faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” God will always be faithful and true to His nature and promises so we have no need to delay our confession as such our delay only hurt and delays that which is beneficial too us. God will remit the separation, penalty as well as the guilt if we but agree with Him. **Because of our relationship with God our sin and confession is not between a criminal and a judge but between a loving father and his beloved child!**

IV. Vs 10 The danger of denial

Vs. 10 The final hindrance to fellowship with God due to our sin is the denial of the specific acts that have caused separation in fellowship. Here at issue is that the person has committed the act of sin then lies about it and the outcome is even worse as our action makes God a liar. This is an

argument with God as it relates to what He says in His word separates the sinner from His fellowship. That is what people do all the time when they disregard the truths about what sin is saying that it isn't a sin. The contradiction to the truth of the word of God is calling Him a liar so we can say we aren't a sinner. This person doesn't have the Word of God in them and is a nonbeliever no matter what their profession is.