

5 CONFESSION

Turn away from what the Bible calls sin

But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." - 2 Timothy 2:19

If in physical life we need to be regularly cleansed, in spiritual life we also need to be regularly cleansed from sin. Confession is a Christian's daily spiritual washing.

Q Read 1 John 1:5-10 and 1 John 2:1-2

What does this passage say about God (v5)? What is the evidence that we have fellowship with God, that we belong to God (v6-7)? What do we need to do if we fall into sin (v9-10)

GOD IS LIGHT

God is HOLY and PURE. We are commanded to also be holy (1 Peter 1:16). God's ideal is for the Christian not to sin anymore - to live a holy life. In fact we are also commanded to be blameless and innocent, without blemish in our conduct in the midst of a crooked and twisted world.

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world - Philippians 2:14-15

According to 1 John 1:5, God is light and in him there is no darkness at all and we are to also walk in the light as well as shine as lights in this world. *"If we say we have fellowship with God and belong to Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" - 1 John 1:5-6* This passage raises some questions: What is light? What does it mean to walk in the light?

Q What do you think of these commands, doable or impossible? Do you sense an inner desire towards holiness and blamelessness?

What is light? Light reveals the WAY TO GOD. Light reveals WHAT IS RIGHT. Light EXPOSES THE WRONG we need to steer away from. Walking in the light means walking according to God's perfect will. God's light or perfect will consists of the following ...

1. THE BIBLE

As you read and study God's Word, the Bible, you will know God's instructions on how to live and work for Him, the will of God. We must always seek to obey truths we have learned from God's Word.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105 (this is the path of God's perfect will)

Q Spending time in God's Word daily, reading, meditating, and applying - is like carrying a small oil lamp or candle in the midst of a dark forest in the middle of the night. The small lamp illuminates only the next few steps ahead of you. Keeping the lamp close to you at all times as you walk is the only way for you to see the path through the forest.

Discuss with your mentor the implications of this illustration of Psalm 119:105 (What can you learn?). For instance, what happens when you leave the lamp behind for a moment? Why a lamp instead of a brighter light like the sun that can illuminate miles ahead of you?

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

God's Word shows you God's perfect path - his perfect and pleasing will for you, the truth (Teaching or Doctrine). God's Word shows you when you have strayed from the path (Reproof or Conviction) and also shows you how to return to the path (Correction). God's Word shows you how to keep staying on the path (Training).



Q *If your life is like a journey, discuss with your mentor what it means for God's Word to be a "lamp" and "light". Ask your mentor to share an experience that illustrates the drawing above (ex. how God reproofed and corrected).*

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT

Knowing God's Word in your mind is not enough. The Holy Spirit must apply specific truths from the Bible to specific areas and situations in your life (*we'll look into this more in Riverlife Discipleship 102*). He helps us remember and obey God's Word. We must always seek to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you. - John 14:26 (especially in the moments you need it the most)

The Holy Spirit will convince you of what is right in God's eyes (*he will also expose what is wrong*). *"And when he comes, he will convict (persuade) the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" - John 16:8*

He shines the light of Christ into the hearts of unbelievers. He will bring awareness of spiritual realities - awareness of his sinfulness, awareness that he does not measure up to God's righteousness, and awareness of God's coming judgment (*eternal death*) - ultimately leading them to faith in Christ.

Q *Right before you came to Christ, have you experienced a sense of guilt or God's judgment (ex. fear of what will happen after death)?*

Now that you are a child of God you have the Spirit of Christ as your helper. Therefore in everything you do, acknowledge the Lord, ask for wisdom and guidance, give thanks when he gives you understanding. Be constantly aware of his presence and He promises to direct your path. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. - Proverbs 3:5-6*

Q *Ask your mentor to share an experience where he/she needed to trust the Lord instead of his/her own understanding? (salvation and the gospel is a great example of learning to fully trust the Lord)*

3. THE CONSCIENCE

There is also a voice within us that tells us whether what we are doing is right or wrong. By itself, our conscience will sometimes go astray. Consistent disobedience can dull or sear your conscience (*through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared - 1 Timothy 4:2*). Therefore our conscience must be guided by the clear teachings of God's Word and enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

One good rule for the conscience: When you're not sure, pause and wait for clearer guidance. Even when you believe you are sure, you must always test everything by God's Word and always ask for the Spirit's guidance.

Paul says *"I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men" - Acts 24:16*

Q *Read Romans 9:1 - What is the meaning of "my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit"? (Read translations like the NLT, AMP)*

WORK IN PROGRESS

No Christian is perfect, we are all *"work in progress"*, we are still prone to sin because of lack of knowledge, weakness, immaturity, and the presence of the sinful nature. Christians, even within the same church, are of different maturity levels, that's why you need to be patient with others (*bearing*) within the church. Don't expect people within the church - even its leaders to be flawless.

with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love - Ephesians 4:2

We need to be sanctified (*cleansed*) and this is a lifelong process. That's why we are to *"work out"* our salvation in *Philippians 2:12*. To *"work out"* means to bring to completion, to cultivate, or to put into effect, in other words - *"now that you are saved, live like one!"*

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling - Philippians 2:12

Though we are imperfect - SIN for a Christian is an EXCEPTION rather than the norm.

*My little children, I am writing these things to you **so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin**, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. - 1 John 2:1-2*

The norm is *"so that you may not sin"* and the exception is *"But if anyone does sin"*. But, if anyone does sin, that is in case we fall into sin, we have an advocate with God the Father, Jesus. He is the provision for our sins.

Q *When you fall into sin what do you think you should do?*

WAY OF FORGIVENESS

Let's look at what the Bible says. God has provided a way of forgiveness for a Christian's sin; this way includes the following truths, as explained in *1 John 1:9-2:2* (which we read at the beginning).

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

1. CONFESSION

To receive forgiveness, a Christian must humbly confess his sins to God. Confession is agreeing with God and admitting that what you have done is sin. All sins are ultimately against God, so we go to Him for forgiveness. Only God has the authority and power to forgive our sins. We confess by telling God exactly what we did (*be specific*). If we told a lie we can say, "Lord, I told a lie today; please forgive me, cleanse my heart from this sin", "Lord, I have an unforgiving heart towards my sister; help me forgive and cleanse my heart of this sin"

2. BLOOD OF CHRIST

God forgives us on the basis of the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ represents His work of redemption on the cross which He accomplished once and for all, never to be repeated. All sins - past, present, and future, were already paid for by Christ by His one sacrifice on the cross. *"But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." - Hebrews 9:26*

3. ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God assures us of forgiveness and cleansing the moment we confess our sins to Him. We do not have to wait until tomorrow or next week to know that we are forgiven. His forgiveness removes our guilt and grants us peace.

4. WALK IN THE LIGHT

Ask the Lord to help you walk in the light, to give you the strength to obey His commands daily and do what is right in His sight. This strength comes as you daily spend time in His Word (*your daily bread*) and prayer (*your spiritual breathing*).

WHY DEALING WITH SIN IMMEDIATELY IS IMPORTANT

"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil" - Ephesians 4:26-27.

"do not let the sun go down" means that sin needs to be dealt with immediately. Why? It keeps the devil from taking advantage of the situation like an untreated and uncovered wound exposed to the elements (*note: though anger in itself is not sin, it has the potential to lead you to sin*). While a Christian's relationship with God is secure (*meaning, God will not disown you when you fall into sin*), unconfessed sin breeds pride as well as guilt that can hinder your prayers and fellowship with God. Unconfessed sin diminishes your faith and confidence in prayer and your desire for God's Word. Unconfessed sin can stifle your joy and peace. Unconfessed sin grieves the Holy Spirit.

SATAN'S LIES

There are four dangerous lies of Satan that we must guard against

"Don't confess immediately. Aren't you ashamed to approach God right away after committing a sin?" - Don't believe this lie. As a young Christian, you are like a child who is learning to walk. When a child falls and soils himself it is shameful for him to cry for help? God wants you to ask Him to clean you up immediately. He wants you to rise up quickly.

"You are a bad Christian. God does not love you anymore" - This is another lie. Think of this: When did God start loving you? While you were still a lost sinner. God's love will never change just because you committed a sin. *"But God proves His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* - Romans 5:8

Q	<i>Read Romans 8:38-39 - From this verse, is there something that can separate you from the love of God?</i>
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"You must make sacrifices before God will forgive you" - This lie insults Christ because it implies that human effort can add to the redemption Christ has done for us. There is only one basis for forgiveness - the blood of Christ, His death pays for all your sins.

"Go ahead, keep on sinning. After all, God will forgive you when you confess" - This is the most dangerous lie of all. God's forgiveness is not a license for us to continue sinning. As a Christian who is learning to walk, you may sometimes stumble and fall into mud. This doesn't mean that you will keep on wallowing in mud. The Lord wants you to grow in faith so that the times you fall become less and less frequent. If a so-called Christian continues in sin and has no fear of God or any desire to obey Christ at all, the Lord Jesus has a fearful warning against him. It may be that he was never a Christian to begin with.

Q	<i>Read Matthew 7:21-23 - In your own understanding, who are these people that Jesus rejected? (keyword: "I never knew you")</i>
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APPLICATION

- ☐ Together with your mentor, spend a few minutes confessing any sin the Holy Spirit brings to mind.
- ☐ Include daily confession of sins to your daily time in prayer.
- ☐ Memorize 1 John 1:9 (our confidence is in God's faithfulness)

DAILY CONFESSION

If you fall into sin, don't be discouraged, rise up quickly, don't stay discouraged for too long. Confess your sin to God and ask for His forgiveness and cleansing. Ask Him to give you his grace and strength to overcome this sin and keep on following Christ. Include a time for confession of sins during your daily prayer Time.

MEMORIZE

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