

1 John 1:8-10

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. *NKJV*

The forgiven confess. When a person has placed his faith in the substitutionary work of Christ on the cross, and thereby received forgiveness of his sins, that does not mean that he stops confessing. Now, as one who has been forgiven of his sins, he actually has an increased awareness of his sinfulness. His faith, his obedience were not just once demonstrated at the moment of conversion and then never repeated again, and neither is his confession. The emphasis of this passage is not that the sinner is not forgiven until he confesses, but that the one who has been forgiven will continue to confess.

What does it mean to confess? **Confession means “to say the same thing as; to agree.”** When we confess to God, we are saying that we take His side of things, His viewpoint, about ourselves and our sin. **Confession is when we take God’s side against ourselves in light of God’s perfection, admitting that we have offended Him.** Because *sin* does not stop in our lives after we believe on Jesus Christ for salvation, neither does *confession*. In fact, because of the ongoing problem of sin in the Christian’s life there is an increasing awareness of its despicable presence and persistence in our lives.

Confession is not to give us a “perfect standing” before God, but indicates the forward progression of God’s grace in our lives in an ongoing transformation into the image of Jesus Christ. Without confession in the Christian’s life, there really can be little to no progress made toward Christ-likeness. One could make the strong case for a lack of conversion if a “Christian” is not maintaining a close communion with God through confession.

Confession of sin is both a moment by moment event and an attitude of life. It is walking in the humility of desiring a closeness to God despite the reality that at times the Christian will choose to move away from God to satisfy his pleasures elsewhere.

John’s purpose for writing about confession and forgiveness is actually to inspire the true Christian not to sin, or to abide in sin, at all! He is saying that the forgiven confess because they sin, but they do not sin just because they have been forgiven and can confess. The forgiveness of God does not give an excuse, pardon or pass for the Christian to sin.

Romans 6 NKJV

¹ *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*

² *Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

Like Paul in his book of Romans, John argues that the *forgiven* confess because they do not want to abide in a state that would otherwise reflect that they may be *unforgiven* in the first place. **They confess because they are forgiven.**

To conclude, **it is likely that the Christian is a better confessor after he has placed his faith in Christ than before.** He continues on and on practicing confession because he has been forgiven – and so a Christian is a good confessor. He doesn’t see the need to hide his sin or deny it. Because He has been forgiven, he admits his sin freely, but then turns away from it in his walk of repentance.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- 1. What does it mean to be forgiven?**
- 2. What is the definition of confession?**
- 3. How does confession indicate “forward progress” in God’s transformation of our lives?**
- 4. Does Romans 6:1-2 also illustrate these truths? Explain.**
- 5. How is a Christian a better “confessor” after he has been saved?**
- 6. Confession is not because of insecurity in our relationship with God. It actually demonstrates a security in walking with God because of an increased awareness and appreciation of His forgiveness. It also demonstrates an increasing hatred for sin. Do you have a growing hatred and loathing for sin in your life? Have you been forgiven?**