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### How Believers Confess Their Sins

W. O. Vaught

*Ouachita Baptist University*

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## HOW BELIEVERS CONFESS THEIR SINS

A STUDY OF 1 JOHN  
NUMBER 5  
1 JOHN 1:9-10

Dr. W. O. Vaught  
Immanuel Baptist Church  
Little Rock, Arkansas

1 JOHN 1:9-10 "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."

In verses 6-10 of this chapter, we have some of the most important words in all the Word of God for believers. Let us look at these words again--

1 JOHN 1:6-10 "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 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. 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."

In verses 6 and 8 and 10 we have the illustration of mixed up believers saying something that is contrary to doctrine. They are mixed up believers and they speak without having any doctrinal knowledge. Then in verses 7 and 9 we have two verses which explain the functioning of the faith-rest technique. If we are to take in Bible Doctrine and if we are to erect an edification complex in the soul, we must understand how to stay in fellowship and how to remain in the bottom circle and be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit.

Look at verse 8 again. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Here we saw the heresy of believing that we have no old sin nature after we are converted. John defines this heresy with the words "we deceive ourselves." The word for "deceive" is planao and it means to deceive ourselves mentally. It is bad to be deceived by someone, but it is even worse to deceive ourselves by false beliefs. The way to avoid self-deception is to take in Bible doctrine every day. As doctrine flows in, deception flows out. It is just as simple as this. Deception cannot remain in the soul where doctrine abides.

### The Subtlety Of This Deception.

Many people will try to tell you that you are taking in too much doctrine. They will tell you that you should live up to the light you already have and then take in more doctrine. That is absolute nonsense! You actually live off of the overflow and it is absolutely impossible for you to take in too much doctrine. You can't have too much of Christ within you, and that's what doctrine is, it is the Mind of Christ. Those who criticize the ones who always go to Bible class say something like this--"You are a stagnant lake. You are always taking in and are never giving out. You are just like the Dead Sea." Now this is a Satanic attack and is not valid. On the contrary, the whole basis for your spiritual growth is the intake of doctrine every day. You can't erect an edification complex in your soul apart from the intake of doctrine. Paul calls this edification structure oikodome and when it becomes a finished structure in your soul, he calls it an oikodomia.

### The Whole Emphasis Of Galatians

Paul wrote the Book of Galatians to say that you can't add your work to God's work. Salvation by grace is God's work and you can't add anything to it. Most Christians just don't understand this. Many believers are always trying to add something to faith. No one comes to the cross by faith plus works. If anyone ever comes to the cross in saving faith, it never involves any human work or effort. You cannot come to the cross by faith plus something. Faith is a non-meritorious system of perception. God The Son did all the work at the cross. If you add anything to the cross, you destroy grace and this is the entire teaching of the Book of Galatians.

GALATIANS 2:16 "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." When you mix your works with faith then it is no longer faith.

GALATIANS 2:21 "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." You frustrate the work of God when you try to add something to the adequate work of Christ on the cross. He did all the work on the cross and that's why he said, "It is finished." He meant the work was finished and no one could ever do any work to be saved. This is the simplest grace test. The work of salvation was accomplished at the cross, and if you try to add anything to it, then "Christ died in vain" as far as you are concerned. Therefore, 1 John 1:8 says that if we try to add works to grace "The truth is not in us." That word for "truth" is aletheia and that means categorical doctrine. Therefore, verses 6 and 8 and 10 all present the picture of a mixed up believer. These people in verse 8 are saying this--"Since we do not have an old sin nature, we have no need of confession of sin." Verse 3 warns us that living the Christian life in fellowship depends on rebound.

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." This verse is an answer to the mixed-up Christian. This verse turns the spotlight on the road to recovery. (The greatest work ever accomplished on this earth was the work Christ accomplished on the cross when he paid for all of our sins. Just imagine placing beside that perfect work our feeling sorry for our sins, or the act of baptism, or the act of joining a church, or anything else any human can do. It is blasphemous even to think about it.)

### A Second Non-Meritorious Act

Faith in Christ for salvation is a non-meritorious act. Confession of sin for restoration and pardon is equally non-meritorious. When you confess your sins that's all you do, so don't start hustling around and try to do a lot of things to help God accomplish your restoration. God erases the sin you confess and that's that.

This "if" is a third class condition, meaning maybe you will confess your sins and maybe you won't. "Confess" is from homo logeo which means to speak the same thing you did, to site the sin, to acknowledge the sin, to say to God, "I did this." You do this apart from how you

feel about it. How you feel about those sins is inconsequential. Feeling sorry for sins and saying that you will never do it again is your effort, your trying to help God and he doesn't need any help. Now I know that some of you cling to the idea that you are not really forgiven unless you feel real sorry for your sins, unless you truly repent. HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SIN DOESN'T CHANGE A THING. What God does about the sin when you name it to him is what matters. He says that you name it and he will forgive it.

Why is this true?

The reason is this. That sin you name went to court more than 1900 years ago and Christ paid for that sin. He did a perfect job and the sin was paid for in full. So you site it to God, he checks it off and you can pick yourself up again and move on.

(Now get a very important point right here. I am not contending that you name your sin and get it forgiven so you can run right back out and do it again. I have never said that. You must obey other parts of the Word of God just like you obey this confession command. You pray, you take in doctrine, you worship and you grow. Gradually as all this goes on, you will be getting stronger and stronger and the sins that once tripped you up, don't bother you anymore.)

We confess our known sins, and God forgives them. Then he also goes the second mile and takes away the sins we don't even know about. Penance is work and there is no place for work either in salvation or in confession.

A Tragic Mistake

All our lives we have heard that you've got to renounce that awful thing, you must feel crushed over that terrible sin, you must be real sorry for it and if you are just sorry enough, then God will forgive you. It is like this--

BELIEVE

(A non-meritorious act)

This side of the cross.



CONFESS

(A non-meritorious act)

The other side of the cross.

It is exactly the same on both sides of the cross. You believed in Christ without any of your own works mixed in, and were saved. Now after salvation you confess your sins, without any of your own works mixed in, and you are forgiven.

Be Specific!

This verse says that we must be specific with God. We site the sin, we name exactly what we did. We say something like this--"I was angry--I was jealous--I had that lustful thought--I told that lie--I was a hypocrite pretending to be something I am not..." Now that's all you do. You name it and God does all the rest. That song is scripturally correct "Take your burden to The Lord and leave it there." Now that is what confession is and that's all it is.

"Our sins" refers to our known sins. The word is hamartia and it means missing the mark. Tresspasses refers to the violation of known standards. Then it says "He" and this refers to God. "Is" is the present, active, indicative of eimi and it means God's attitude is always the same. You name it, he forgives it. The word for "faithful" is pistos and it means he never changes from his perfect character and perfect action. The word for "just" is from dikaios and it means he is right and fair in doing what he does.

#### The Cross Made This Possible

Because of the perfect work of Christ on the cross, God is able to do this for us. God forgives us when we confess and still he is consistent and compatible with his perfect righteousness and justice. Grace found a way for God to do this and not violate his perfect character. Everything in this verse depends upon who and what God is, never upon who and what man is.

Instead of the words "to forgive us" we should have "in order that he may forgive us." This is a result clause. His result is forgiveness every time we comply with the rule or confession.

So the verse actually says this--"If we confess our sins, faithful and righteous is He, in order that he may forgive us our sins, and in order that he may cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "From all unrighteousness" comes from apo adikia. The moment this occurs we are back in the bottom circle, we are back in fellowship, we are again completely filled with the Holy Spirit.

1 JOHN 1:10 "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." Again we have a third class condition, meaning maybe we will say this and maybe we won't. Here in this verse a believer is saying something that is not true. He is saying in essence, "I don't need 1 John 1:9 for I have not sinned." "Have not sinned" is a perfect, active, indicative of hamartano. This is the ridiculous person who is saying that he hasn't sinned since he was saved. The next word "we make" is a present, active, indicative of poieo which means doing or making. The word for liar is pseustes. Imagine trying to make God a liar by some statement we make. In verse six we started out with the mixed up believer being a liar and here in this verse he is still mixed up and is trying to make God a liar. If people live according to this verse, they can live their entire lives out of fellowship with God and this is a tragedy.

#### A Daily Visit

As we close this study let me remind you that we have just covered one of the most important parts of the Word of God. There ought never to be a day in your life when you do not make a mental visit to this Scripture and claim the promise given here. Confess every day, for you sin every day. And the more you visit this passage, the stronger you will become and there will come the time when you will be a mature Christian.