

CONSIDER YOUR WAYS: SELF-ASSESSMENTS FOR FAITHFUL FELLOWSHIP

(1 JOHN 1:5 – 2:2)

What is True & What Christians Should Do:

Sin interrupts Christian fellowship with God and other believers, so prayerfully consider your ways in light of Scripture and repent of evil.

1.) Jesus makes known God's moral perfection (v. 5)

- God is light (see also John 3:19). John is saying God is morally perfect and righteous. No spots of darkness. Absolute perfection, holiness, and purity. The message's source is God.
- We declare ("to herald important news"): John is telling his readers that God's message is vitally important.

APPLICATION (v. 5):

- ✓ God stands in contrast to evil, error, darkness, sin. Do you live in God's light or do you walk in the darkness?

2.) Consider your ways: Do you walk in the light? (v. 6–7)

- Irrespective of what humans may think, sin (aka "darkness") hinders Christian fellowship.
- Our "walk" is a metaphor for how we live. It conveys an idea of "behavior, conduct, and lifestyle."
- It is a lie for someone to say they have fellowship with God if they continuously keep on sinning without remorse or without a genuine concern for the way they live out their life before God.

APPLICATION (v. 6–7):

- ✓ Don't be a liar. Our words should match the way we live our life. If someone within the church lives contrary to the gospel on an ongoing basis, there is good reason to question the genuineness of his or her conversion. Examine yourselves.
- ✓ It is possible for Christians to sin and live in periods of carnality and yet still be saved. Repent and do what is true. Jesus says, such people "come to the light" (See also the Gospel of John 3:21, and 8:12).

3.) Do not deny sin; repent and confess it (v. 8–10)

- If a believer says I have no sin, that man is self-deceived, and the truth that he can indeed sin as a Christian is not in him.
- We are to confess specific sins (plural), not just evil in the abstract. First to God (Ps. 51:4), then to those wronged/impacted.
- Since God is faithful and just, if we confess our sins, He will therefore forgive our sins (past, present, and future) on the basis of what Jesus did on the cross. He has made promises in both the Old (Jeremiah 31:34, Micah 7:18–20) and New Testaments that He will forgive our sin if we confess/ask.
- When confessed, sin no longer hinders our fellowship with God. "Confess" means to agree with God that what He says about our sins is true. Admit guilt. Seek genuine forgiveness.
- John speaks of "forgiveness" in v. 9 because sin brings the Christian godly sorrow and guilt. If we sin and do not have the Holy Spirit convicting us of that sin, then we are not God's children. True believers, sooner or later, develop moral consciousness that catches up to them—creating godly guilt / sorrow (see also 2 Cor. 7:9–11).

APPLICATION (v. 8–10):

- ✓ We should prayerfully seek to identify areas of sin in our lives, confess them, and turn away from our evil and unwholesome thoughts, words, deeds, actions (v. 8). There is no such thing as Christian perfectionism. Believers still have a sin nature.
- ✓ Do not minimize the seriousness of sin.
- ✓ Do not dig up your past forgiven sins, or those of others.

4.) Jesus Christ has died for the sins of all humanity (2:1–2, John 17:21, 23, 1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Pet. 3:9, 2 Cor. 5:20–21)

APPLICATION (2:1–2):

- ✓ Obey God and do not sin. Share the Gospel and explain how Jesus makes forgiveness possible. Ask: You've heard about Jesus, what will you do? Evangelize others. 1) God's love for you. 2) Your love for God. 3) Your love for the unsaved. 3) Obedience to God. 4) Christ died for all people's sins, and He wants none to perish. (Jn. 3:16, Mt 28:18-20, Acts 3:26)

Key Points:

- “Fellowship” implies a deep sharing of things in common via association and participation.
- Christian Fellowship is far more than having a meal, playing games, or being in a room together.
- Christian Fellowship means having a relationship with each other based on our relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Walking in “darkness” is walking in sin and it breaks a believer’s fellowship with God and other Christians. Sin is rebellion against God—that is, disobedience against Him.
- When you become mature spiritually, your sense of sin matures. You should develop a moral conscience as you learn God’s Word and spend time with other Christians in good faith. The natural man is not concerned with the things of God. It is the Holy Spirit which regenerates a person’s mind (see Eph. 4:17–32).
- ‘Talk’ and ‘walk’ go together. If your life does not match your words, something is amiss. There is a gap between cheap talk and authentic walk.
- Christian fellowship with God continues on the basis of our willingness to confess our sin. Do not deny or ignore your sins, confess your guilt and build and turn from your evil ways.
- Jesus Christ received the penalty that we each deserved for sin. For all who believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, God enables repentance, forgiveness, and fellowship.
- If we say we do not sin or have never sinned (done anything wrong), then by those words we say that God is a liar since His Word tells us all people have sinned. This person has not accepted God’s Word so as to allow it to change their life.
- The entire reason John writes these things is so that you may not sin, but if you do sin, know this: Jesus Christ is your advocate with God the Father. Forgiveness is not possible without Him. He is “the” (only) atoning sacrifice. The Gospel message that Christ died for sinners is for all people, desiring none to perish.

NOTES: