

BLESSED ASSURANCE
The Question of Sin
1 John 1:5- 2:6

QUESTIONNAIRE: Please answer it honestly. It will help me to see where our people struggle the most when it comes to doubt!

There are 3 questions that I want you to answer today to help you KNOW whether or not you KNOW that you KNOW God! They are simple and straightforward, but they are essential to a clear understanding of salvation. (I owe the structure and some of the content of this message to J.D. Greear in his message: 3 Attitudes Toward Sin That Give You Assurance With God.) Book: [Stop Asking Jesus into your Heart!](#)

Now, SIN is a BIG DEAL on this earth. A sinful, murderous heart brought about the death of 49 people in Orlando, Florida this past week. What a tragedy! Sadly, murders occur every day in our world, whether they are in the streets or in some mother's womb. Lying, cheating, stealing, abuse, sexual perversion; all of these are regular occurrences in our world and in our own city. **But our attitude toward sin is another thing, especially when it is about our OWN SIN and whether or not IT is a big deal!** Today, I want to focus on the issue of sin as it relates mostly to those who consider themselves to be RELIGIOUS people. This is the group to whom the author JOHN was writing in his letter of 1 John. Therefore, the questions that I am going to ask today are geared toward those who say that they are people of FAITH. **[This may clear up some things for skeptics, agnostics, and atheists today!]** You see, you can be spiritual and still not be saved! These **questions** come out of **1 John 1:5-2:6**, and **they are meant to bring comfort about salvation to those who are simply confused and to bring clarity to those who are absolutely deceived.** Ready?

Do you live a life of willful, habitual sin?

Do you claim that you have no sin? [Do you claim that you do not struggle with sin?]

Do you lack confidence before God because of your sin?

Here is our complete passage of Scripture for today: **1 John 1:5 – 2:6 NIV**

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. 1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the

sins of the whole world. 3 We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4 Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: 6 Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

I grew up being exposed to REVIVAL MEETINGS and CITY WIDE SERVICES that were meant to spread the Gospel to people everywhere. They were very effective in many ways. They brought the Gospel to many people who had never heard the truth about Jesus and what he had done for them. I love that. But they may have also given many people a reason to make an emotional, premature decision about Jesus without genuinely committing themselves to a life of faith under the lordship of Jesus Christ. In a 2011 Barna study, it was shown that about 50% of Americans say that they have prayed "the sinner's prayer" at some point in their lives; yet more than half of those same people have no regular, committed presence in church and Christian community, and they have lifestyles and worldviews that do not differ from those outside of the Christian faith." Is this you? If it is, then there is NO WAY that you can be SATISFIED WITH or SECURE IN your Christian walk right now! You can actually use the questions these verses in 1 John bring up to see where you truly stand with Jesus today! So, let's walk through these questions carefully.

DO YOU LIVE A LIFE OF WILLFUL, HABITUAL SIN? 1 John 1:5-7 NIV

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Salvation belongs to God, and as such it will REFLECT the nature and character of God. God is light (holy, pure, righteous, just) without ANY hint of darkness in him. This means that the **direction and desire** of our hearts will be toward that which is a true reflection of the nature of God imparted to us in salvation. We are literally PARTAKERS of the DIVINE NATURE of God. This necessarily will affect our daily lives. A key part of the way in which we can see the genuineness of our faith is by its PRESENT EFFECT on our lives. In other words, you do not simply LOOK BACK on some experience in your past to see if you are saved, but you look at the way that it is affecting your heart, mind, and life TODAY! **[Even if you DON'T remember the specific details of the prayer you prayed?]** Now, some of you may say that you **prayed a prayer** at some point in your life. But, can someone "pray the prayer" and yet still be unsaved? Of course they can! The Sinner's Prayer is just WORDS if it is not accompanied by FAITH and REPENTANCE. Faith is absolute reliance upon God and his Word for our salvation. **Repentance is an admission of guilt and lostness; it is a change of mind that causes one to TURN AWAY from his sinful, self-willed lifestyle and TURN TO God in faith!**

***Repentance was the FIRST FOCUS of Christ's ministry:
Matthew 4:17 NIV**

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

***Repentance was the first message at Pentecost: Acts 2:37-38 NIV**

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

***Repentance was a central focus of Paul's ministry: Acts 20:21 NLT**

"21 I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike--the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus."

So, faith without repentance is not salvation! Repentance can be seen in a change of attitude toward God and toward sin, and a resulting change in lifestyle. When it is absent, then there is no change in attitude or behavior at all:

*A FAILURE to MOVE CLOSER to God and his Word. ["TOWARD God . . ."]

-No hunger for time with God.

-No appetite for God's Word.

-No desire for consistent fellowship with God's people! [More on this later.]

-The refusal to accept God's definitions of right and wrong from his Word.

[When you and God's Word disagree, which one do YOU say is right?]

-The practical rejection of Jesus as Lord: **Luke 6:46 NIV**

46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

*A CASUAL ATTITUDE toward sin. [FROM sin . . ."]

-A lifestyle of drunkenness and partying.

-Sexual immorality [Hooking up, Living together, Carelessly Viewing Pornography, Hatred of others, Lying, All w/o conviction or real remorse.]

-A secular, godless worldview concerning sin.

-NOTE: Christian people (first) TAKE their OWN sin SERIOUSLY! **Do you?**

This leads me to our SECOND QUESTION, which may seem a bit strange at first.
DO YOU CLAIM TO HAVE NO SIN? 1 John 1:8-10 NIV

8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

Do you claim that you do not really struggle with sin?

-My normal view of that verse: Foolishness of sinless perfection! [PRIDE!]

-My conversation with the man who said he no longer sinned! HA!

-Different view: This is a picture of people who say, "I'm a GOOD PERSON!"

- *This is because we RETREAT from the LIGHT when it exposes us!
- *Jesus said this in **John 3:19-20 NIV**

19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

This is how the Holy Spirit deals with us. He reveals our LOST CONDITION. He shows us that we are filled with SELF and SIN, and that our hearts are DARK and DANGEROUS without his transforming work of salvation. **Two aspects of sin:**

- ***1 John 1:8** deals with the DENIAL of our SIN NATURE.
 - We ALL inherited a sin nature at conception from Adam!
 - To deny this is to deny truth and to REJECT the NEED for a SAVIOR!
- ***1 John 1:10** is a DENIAL of SPECIFIC, PERSONAL ACTS of SIN.
 - It may be seen in a COMPARISON of our actions to others.
 - It may be seen in a DENIAL that sin is even a real PROBLEM. [CULTURE]
 - *This would make GOD out to be a LIAR! (VS. 10)

True Christians experience the regular CONVICTION of the Holy Spirit concerning their sinful thoughts, attitudes, and actions. It is a SIGN of the INDWELLING presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and of God's intimate presence in our lives. It is the action of God's DISCIPLINE of us as our Good Father: **Hebrews 12:5-6 NLT**

5 And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the LORD's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you. 6 For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child."

- *Do you regularly experience God's conviction over sin in your own life?
- *Do you experience God's discipline in your life? (Rebukes, Pain, removal of sense of God's peace or of some providential protection due to sin, etc.)

Growing Christians actually experience an ACUTE AWARENESS of sin in their own lives in increasing measure, as they get closer to God. The fuller awareness of God's holiness and beautiful perfection makes our sin stand out in greater contrast. [Story of the woman who hung her white sheets out to dry, and then saw them against the backdrop of a new snow later that day. They looked grey and dingy next to the snow!]

- *Simon Peter experienced this in his boat: "Depart from me, Lord . . ."
- *Isaiah experienced this when he saw God in the temple: Isaiah 6
- *This also leads to a growing LOVE for HOLINESS. (Next week!)

Now, let's look at our FINAL QUESTION about sin:

DO YOU LACK CONFIDENCE BEFORE GOD BECAUSE OF YOUR SIN?

1 John 2:1 NIV

1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an **advocate** with the Father--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the **atonement sacrifice** for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

I want to focus on TWO TERMS in this short passage. The first is the word Advocate. This is a beautiful word in Scripture. It refers to one who will stand before a judge for you to plead your case. Now, this is not a typical lawyer. This is not a guy who will simply try to convince a judge of your INNOCENCE! This would get pretty empty if he has to go to the same judge a million times for different offences that his client has committed! This is not how Jesus is our Advocate. Instead, Jesus goes before the Righteous Judge and pleads our case based on HIS OWN righteousness ("The Righteous One"), and upon his sacrificial death on our behalf! This is the other term that I want us to see. Jesus Christ is the ATONING SACRIFICE for our sins. The other term you will see is the word PROPITIATION. This means the PAYMENT for our sins. In other words, Jesus does not stand before God for his children in order to try and convince God that we didn't really mean it or that we are really great people in spite of some "misstep." He never undersells the dark facts of our sin. Instead, he simply acknowledges us before God as those that are covered by his blood payment for our sins!

*This is why we read the following words in **1 John 1:9 NIV**
9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

He does not forgive us because he is merciful and loving, but because he is FAITHFUL and JUST. He dispensed JUDGMENT on Jesus so that he could dispense MERCY on us! This gives us GREAT CONFIDENCE before God. We are on his dime!

***This is why true believers do not take sin lightly: "IF you sin . . ."**
 -We live HOLY LIVES because of our gratitude and the COST of his blood.
 -Our FELLOWSHIP with God always comes with a reminder in confession.
1 John 1:7, 9

***This is HOW "the just shall live by faith" even when they fall.**
Proverbs 24:16 NKJV
16 For a righteous [man] may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity.

***This is WHY we can still have CONFIDENCE before God even if we sin!**
 *I stand on Christ's record.
 *I am covered by HIS righteous sacrifice!
 *I am unconditionally loved by God because of Christ.
 *I have complete access to the GRACE and POWER of God in my life because of Christ's complete offer of himself for me.
 *My FELLOWSHIP with God is always possible through confession and cleansing that is available ONLY because of his shed blood!

So, DO YOU HAVE CONFIDENCE BEFORE GOD . . . even if you sin?

*Your answer shows me your present understanding of God's grace.

-Have you seen his death as full satisfaction for your sins?

-Are you relying on his righteous sacrifice for your standing with God?

*Your answer shows me your present understanding of your performance.

-You CANNOT EARN salvation. It is a gift that can only be accepted!

J.D. Greear (From Martin Luther) – “You are simultaneously more wicked then you ever imagined, but you are also more loved and accepted than you ever dreamed!”

The Gospel demands that you accept these TWO TRUTHS at once:

*You are so wicked that Jesus HAD to DIE for you.

*Jesus is so gracious and merciful that he was GLAD to die for you!

Do you understand those two stunning truths? Do you want to taste the freedom that only he can give as we step in under his love and lordship? I plead with you to answer these questions and settle this TODAY.

3 KINDS OF PEOPLE WHO WILL NEVER BE SAVED:

*Those who refuse to reject their defiant, sinful lifestyles and come to Jesus for transformation.

*Those who refuse to admit their sinfulness and need for Christ as their Savior.

*Those who will not believe and receive the promise that the Gospel will fully cover their guilt and sin.

Let God's conviction of your heart work in your favor today if you KNOW that you are one of the people listed above.

Choose today to NO LONGER BE one of those people!

Let's pray.