



Continual Cleansing?

1 John 1:5-10

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice 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 Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. ...

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:5-10 NKJV)

Continual Cleansing?

- Advocates of (radical) continual cleansing claim that Jesus (unconditionally?) cleanses our sins as we commit them (1 John 1:7; cf. v. 9).

This (radical) teaching seemingly arises from Calvinistic notions and ends in extended fellowship.

- The opposite extreme argues that fellowship with God requires *specific* confession of every sin that we commit (vv. 8-10; see Jas 5:16).

What John Actually Says

- Since the apostles are eyewitnesses of Jesus, only those who accept their message are in fellowship with God (1 John 1:1-4; Eph 2:20).
- God is light (v. 5; John 1:9-13; 3:19-21).
- We must walk in the light for the blood of Jesus to cleanse us and so have fellowship with God (1 John 1:6-7; 2:1-6; 3:1-10; cf. present tense).
- Confession of sin is necessary (1:8-10).

What John Actually Says

Confusion abounds regarding confession in 1 John. Must we confess every sin or merely our sinfulness? Specifically naming every sin is near impossible as some sins never come to our attention, and merely declaring our sinfulness is insufficient as it does not address specific sins. God commands us to confess (and repent) when we are guilty of sin (1 John 1:8-2:2; see John 15:22-24; Acts 8:22; Luke 18:13).

What John Actually Says

- The conditional ("if-then") statements apply the message ("God is light"; 1 John 1:5–10).
- John clearly indicates that the purpose of his writing is to keep his readers from sinning (2:1).
- Children of God carefully inspect their thoughts and actions to discover and eliminate sin so that they keep fellowship with the Father (3:1–3).
- Fellowship is limited to the faithful (1:3; 2:19)!

10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. 11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. ...

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

(1 John 5:10-15 NASB)