

## The Scrolls

Helping CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V26 N25

June 23, 2024

#### TRUE NORTH

"Walking in the Light" 1 John 1:5-2:6

#### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### **Jesus Christ**

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners, and rose from the dead.

"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."

Hebrews 1:3





How is forgiveness received?

You are no doubt familiar with the maxim, "Confession is good for the soul." Biblical wisdom turns that maxim on its head, "He who conceals his sins does not prosper," and then goes on to add, "but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Pr 28:13). Apparently, confession is not only good for the *soul* but also for the *body* as well. Commenting on his own experience with sin, David says, "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long . . . my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgression to the LORD'---and you forgave the guilt of my sin" (Ps 32:3, 5).

John confirms that confession is good for the soul in his first epistle — because it results in forgiveness and purification from sin (1Jn 1:9). The finished work of Jesus is the reason why confession *really* is good for the soul. One writer explains: "It is the ground upon which we can know that confession and forgiveness are realities that transform us. Without the cross the Discipline of confession would be only psychologically therapeutic. But it is so much more. It involves an objective change in our relationship with God and a subjective change in us. It is a means of healing and transforming the inner spirit" (Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 144).

Foster offers good counsel on confession as a spiritual discipline. He writes:

"What are we to do? St. Alphonsus Liguori writes, 'For a good confession three things are necessary: an examination of conscience, sorrow, and a determination to avoid sin.'

"'An examination of conscience.' This is a time, as Douglas Steere writes, 'where a soul comes under the gaze of God and where in His silent and loving Presence this soul is pierced to the quick and becomes conscious of the things that must be forgiven and put right before it can continue to love One whose care has been so constant.' We are inviting God to move upon the heart and show us

areas that need his forgiving and healing touch.

"In this experience of opening ourselves to the 'gaze of God' we must be prepared to deal with definite sins. A generalized confession may save us from humiliation and shame, but it will not ignite inner healing. The people who came to Jesus came with obvious, specific sins, and they were forgiven for each one. It is far too easy to avoid our real guilt in a general confession. In our confession we bring concrete sins. By calling them concrete, however, I do not mean only outward sins. I mean definite sins, the sins of the heart—pride, avarice, anger, fear—as well as the sins of the flesh—sloth, gluttony, adultery, murder.

"'Sorrow' is necessary to a good confession. Sorrow as it relates to confession is not primarily an emotion, though emotion may be involved. It is an abhorrence at having committed the sin, a deep regret at having offended the heart of the Father. Sorrow is an issue of the will before it is an issue of the emotions. In fact, being sorrowful in the emotions without a godly sorrow in the will destroys the confession.

"Sorrow is a way of taking the confession seriously. It is the opposite of the priest, and undoubtedly the penitent, ridiculed by Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*:

'Full sweetly heard he confession, And pleasant was his absolution.'

"'A determination to avoid sin' is the third essential for a good confession. In the Discipline of confession we ask God to give us a yearning for holy living, a hatred for unholy living. John Wesley once said; 'Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God . . . such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth.' It is the *will* to be delivered from sin that we seek from God as we prepare to make confession. We must desire to be conquered and ruled by God, or if we do not desire it, to desire to desire it. Such a desire is a gracious gift from God" (151-53).

#### **EXAMINE GOD'S WORD**



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.

2:1 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.

#### Read in another translation

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we 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 his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say 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 we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 5 but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: 6 whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. (ESV)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "him" in 1:5.
- Underline "light" and "darkness" in 1:5-7.
- Box "if" in 1:6-2:6 indicating conditional clauses.
- Circle "fellowship" in 1:6, 7.
- Circle "walk" in 1:6, 7.
- Box "yet" and "but" indicating contrast in 1:6, 7 and 2:1, 2, 4, 5.
- Circle "deceive" in 1:8.
- Circle "forgive" in 1:8.
- Circle "confess" in 1:9.
- Bracket "faithful and just" in 1:9.
- Box "so that" indicating purpose in 2:1.
- Circle "atoning sacrifice" in 2:2.
- Circle "whole world" in 2:2.
- Circle "know" in 2:3, 4, 5.
- Circle "live" in 2:6.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."

### DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Explain <i>what</i> you make of a person who claims to be <i>spiritual</i> but lives an immoral life, and <i>why</i> .
2. Explain the <i>contrast</i> introduced in verse 7.
3. "Walk in the light" — what does it mean and what results from it?
4. "If we claim to be without sin" — really, does any believer ever do this? Explain.
5. What does confession mean and what results from it?
6. What makes Jesus our only <i>fit</i> advocate?
7. Explain the <i>contrast</i> in 2:2 (cf. "not only but also").
8. Explain <i>what</i> we know and <i>how</i> we know it, according to verse 3.
9. What do we know by living like Jesus did?
10. <b>Discussion:</b> Talk about what it takes to "live in" or "abide in" God.

#### **EXPLORE RESOURCES**



#### **Commentary On The Text**

The meaning of individual parts of John's first epistle (*i.e.*, single sentences and particular paragraphs) can only be understood in light of the meaning of the whole letter—and vice versa. Put differently, the meaning of what John is saying in particular must fit the meaning of what he is saying in general. Different "takes" on the point of the letter lead readers to different "takes" on the meaning of passages in it.

The letter has been taken in three different ways. Some take it the apostle is writing to Christians so that they might enjoy intimacy and fellowship with the Father. One writes, "He wanted his spiritual children to enter into that life of intimate fellowship with the Father and Son that he had seen the Son live with His Father and into which the apostle himself had entered" (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Joy of Fellowship, 7). Others read it with the understanding that the apostle is writing to a mixed audience, all of whom profess to be Christians but some of whom are not, so that they might enjoy assurance of salvation. According to the first interpretation, the letter is about fellowship with the Father; according to the second, it is about relationship to the Father. Some take it both ways. "In the first two chapters the emphasis was on *fellowship*: a Christian who is in fellowship with God will practice righteousness and will love the brethren. But in 1 John 3-5, the emphasis is on *sonship*: because a Christian is 'born of God,' he will practice righteousness and will love the brethren" (Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, 2:503). Those who don't practice righteousness and love the brethren, it would seem, either lose their salvation or were never saved in the first place. I take it the apostle is writing to Christians, so that they might enjoy intimacy and fellowship with the Father – the first way.

Zane Hodges' succinct expression of the purpose of John's first epistle is worth quoting. "In First John the apostle writes out of a concern that certain false teachers may be given a hearing in the church or churches he is addressing. Since they essentially deny the fundamental truth of the Christian faith, namely, that Jesus is the Christ come in flesh (1 John 2:22; 4:3), their doctrine strikes right at the heart of all Christian experience. The readers, who are clearly Christians themselves (2:12-14, 21; 5:13), are therefore not in danger of losing eternal life — which cannot be lost — but are in danger of having their fellowship with God the Father and with Jesus Christ His Son seriously undermined. Thus, the stated general aim of the epistle is fellowship (1 John 1:3)" (*The Epistles of John*, 34).

Take a sheet of paper and draw a large circle on the sheet. Imagine that all who are born again are included in that circle. Then draw another smaller circle completely inside the larger one. Imagine that all who are born again and enjoy intimacy and fellowship with the Father are included in that circle. Obviously, there are some who are in the larger *relationship* circle who are not in the smaller *fellowship* one (i.e., those are born again but "walk in darkness"). John is writing so that his readers might live in the inner circle.

According to verses 5-7, God is light. The metaphor depicts truth in contrast to "darkness," which depicts error. It also depicts good in contrast to "darkness," which depicts evil. On the meaning of the metaphor one commentator writes, "To describe God as absolute 'light' presupposes that God and darkness (error, or evil) are mutually exclusive. Indeed, as the writer says here, in God there is 'no darkness [skotia] of any kind' ([oudemia], literally 'no,' is intensive; hence the addition in our translation of the phrase 'of any kind'). This amounts to the claim that God as light (truth and righteousness) reveals darkness (error and evil) for what it is (cf. 1:1-2; John 1:4). The statement 'God is light' carries with it an inevitable moral challenge: 'his followers must walk in the light'" (Stephen S. Smalley, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 51, 1, 2, 3, John, 20). In order to enjoy a close relationship with God, we must "walk in the light as he is in the light" (v. 7). Those who live in openness to God and his revelation in Christ have fellowship with him and are purified from all sin by the blood of Jesus" (v. 7). "By his use of the present tense for the verbs 'to walk' and 'to purify', the author represents both the walking and the cleansing as ongoing activities" (Colin G. Kruse, The Letters of John, PNTC, 64). Those who claim to enjoy a close relationship with him "yet walk in darkness" are saved but living a lie.

According to verses 8-9, Christians sin. Believers who claim otherwise do not deceive their spouses, their children, or their friends—only themselves! And when we stray from the light into the darkness, we are to confess our sins in order to be forgiven and purified from all unrighteousness, so we might remain in fellowship with the Father. Confession is more than therapeutic; it *really* is good for the soul. It restores our broken fellowship with God.

According to 2:1-6, God's ability to remain faithful and just and to forgive us our sins is based in the person and work of Jesus Christ. John isn't writing to tell us about the availability of forgiveness, so that we might sin. He is writing to warn us of the devastating consequences of sin on our fellowship with God. However, if we do sin, we can be certain that forgiveness is available through our Advocate, Jesus Christ, the righteous One. Because he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins as well as the sins of the whole world, we can be assured that God will hear our confession. What's more, we know that we *love* God and have *fellowship* with him if we keep his commandments like Jesus did.

#### **Word Studies/Notes**

- v. 5 *light* "The declaration, 'God is light' is a penetrating description of the being and nature of God: it means that he is absolute in his glory (the physical connotation of light), in his truth (the intellectual) and in his holiness (the moral)" (Stephen S. Smalley, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 51, 1, 2, 3, *John*, 20). "This simple yet profound message about God is crucial to all fellowship between Himself and His creatures. To begin with, God is free from every moral defect. His light is unsullied by any degree of moral impurity whatsoever, **and in him is no darkness at all**. This latter statement is so emphatic in Greek, 'darkness is no in Him none' . . . To have fellowship with such a God, a Christian cannot hide from the light. To do so is to forfeit this fellowship, as the next verse plainly states" (Zane C. Hodges, *The Epistles of John*, 57, 58).
- v. 6 *walk in the darkness* The present tense indicates continuing action i.e., "are walking." "To 'walk in the darkness' is the same as 'abiding' in darkness or 'living in darkness' (Glenn W. Barker, "1 John," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, 310). "To say **we have fellowship with Him** is a false claim, if at the same time we are walking **in darkness**. Since 'God is light' and totally free from darkness (verse 5), a person who walks **in darkness** is moving in a moral and spiritual sphere from which God is absent. He is moving in the realm of evil, while God remains in the realm of holiness. Thus, the believer who walks in sin has lost touch with a completely holy God" (Hodges, 59). Cf. Jn 3:19-21.
- v. 7 *walk in the light* "Since according to this passage God not only *is* light (verse 5), but **He is** also *in* **the light**, to **walk in the light** must mean essentially to live in God's presence, exposed to what He has revealed about Himself. This, of course, is done through openness in prayer and through openness to the Word of God in which He is revealed" (Hodges, 61).
- v. 7 *fellowship* Walking in the light doesn't result in a relationship with God; it presumes a relationship with God. Walking in the light results in *fellowship* with God. We have fellowship with one another, i.e., we have fellowship with him, and he has fellowship with us. "The words **one another** do not refer to Christians having fellowship with Christians, since that is not what the apostle is talking about" (Hodges, 61).
- v. 7 *purifies* "As the structure of John's sentence makes clear, when **we walk in the light** two things take place: (1) we experience **fellowship** with God and He with us, and (2) we are being cleansed **from all sin** by **the blood of Jesus Christ**. This simply means that as we maintain an open and honest relationship with God, the many sinful failures and habits that still cling to us do not prevent this **fellowship**, because God treats us as those who are clean by virtue of the Savior's shed blood" (Hodges, 61).
- v. 8 *deceive* "It is worth noting that to claim to have fellowship with God while walking in darkness makes a person a liar (1:6); to claim to be without sin involves lying to oneself (1:8) and makes God out to be a liar as well (1:10)" (Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, PNTC, 66).

- v. 9 *confess* "The exposure of our sin by the light confronts us with a challenge to the fellowship in which we are walking with God. If we deny what the light shows us, we have ceased to be honest and open with God and fellowship ends. [But not relationship.] But if **we confess** (Greek: *homologeō*, 'agree, admit, acknowledge') the **sins** that the light reveals, we can depend on God to **forgive** them and **to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**. If this happens, fellowship continues" (Hodges, 63-64).
- v. 9 *all unrighteousness* When we confess sins we are aware of, God cleanses us from those we are not aware of as well. "Whenever we make confession honestly acknowledging what we know to be wrong, whatever other sin there may be in our hearts or lives is totally cleansed away. Nothing is left uncleansed" (Hodges, 65). "God's forgiveness means that he no longer holds people's sins against them; he cancels their 'debt' (cf. Matt 6:9-15; 18:21-35). God's purifying them 'from all unrighteousness' (cf. 1:7, 'purifies us from every sin') means that he removes the defilement which their sins had produced. When the metaphor of defilement is unpacked, it also denotes the removal of the impediment to fellowship with God through forgiveness of sins (cf. Ps 51:1, 2)" (Kruse, 69).
- v. 1 *one who speaks* Greek *paraklētos* translated "Advocate" in many translations (cf. NKJV, NASB, NLT) denotes in general "one who appears in another's behalf, a mediator, intercessor, or helper'" (Hodges, 68).
- v. 2 *atoning sacrifice* Cf. "propitiation" (NKJV). "Clearly, the sinning believer's Advocate is perfect. God looks at Him with complete satisfaction He is completely *propitiated* or appeased with regard to any sin we commit. He is thus fully disposed to respond to our Advocate's intercession for us, since no matter what our sin may be, Christ has made satisfaction for it" (70; see also Kruse, 73, 75, 76).
- v. 3 *whole world* Every person without exception (cf. 5:19, "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one [NKJV]). "Johannine thought and terminology leave absolutely no room for any such concept as 'the world of the elect.' Christ's death, therefore, covers the totality of human sin from the beginning of creation until the end of history when eternity begins" (Hodges, 71).
- vv. 3-5 *know*"All believers know God to some extent (John 17:3). However some know Him more fully and intimately than others do (John 14:7-9, 21-23)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 1 John," 2024 ed., 34, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1john.pdf). "This verse is often taken as a way of knowing whether or not we are really *saved*. But that view files directly into the face of all Johannine theology, according to which we are saved by believing in Christ for eternal life (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:35 and *passim*; the references are numerous). The response often made is that although salvation is by faith, we cannot know where our faith is real unless we **keep His commandments**... The test suggested by 1 John 2:3 is not of the *saving* knowledge of God or of Christ, but of the *experiential* knowledge of God and His Son" (Hodges, 75-76, 77).

#### **CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT**

Confess your sins to be forgiven and to have your fellowship with God restored, knowing you abide in him by living like Jesus did.

#### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



#### **3 LIVING QUESTIONS**

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



#### **FAMILY TALK**

When my tenderhearted middle son was about eight, I was reading him the riot act for some offense that I honestly can't remember. I wouldn't let him speak, and his little chin was just quivering, but that didn't stop me from going full speed ahead for what felt like hours. I finally stormed off and gave myself a time out to cool off. Sometime later that afternoon I discovered that what he was in trouble for wasn't even his fault. He was trying to tell me this, but I was so authoritative in my discipline, so certain of my position as parent and disciplinarian, so angry, that I never stopped to ask questions or listen to reason. Later, I went to him and while giving him a big hug confessed my sin of anger to him and the Lord and asked for forgiveness. I also gave this tiny human permission to call me out in my sin. This event was a catalyst for change for me. I began to recognize my sin of anger, and with the help of a righteous God, turned over a new leaf and now proudly call myself a reformed yeller. I don't know what my relationship with my kids would look like if I had stayed on the same path, but I can tell you with confidence that I have a wonderfully honest, open and considerate friendship with my adult kids built on mutual respect, trust and fellowship in the Lord. Confession restores our relationship with the Lord and other believers. Do you model confession for your kids? How will they know unless you teach them? We're praying for you!

#### What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 John 1:5-2:6

- 1. What message does John share with the readers?
- 2. Why is John writing this letter?
- 3. How are God the Father and God the Son (Jesus) described throughout the passage?

#### What Do You Think?

What are real life examples of the three "claims" John writes about?

#### What Do You Do?

Confession is something we don't practice very often. During your prayer time this week, admit specific sins (losing your temper, disobeying parents, etc.) and ask for forgiveness.

#### **CORE COMPETENCY:** Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is fully God, perfectly man, and died for my sins.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Psalm 29:11

"The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace."

# KICPIXCOUPON Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week. Questions: kids@wearecentral.org I completed my Bible Study I memorized this week's verse I brought my Bible to church I brought a friend CHILD'S NAME GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

#### **OUR CORE COMPETENCIES**

#### **CENTRAL BELIEFS**

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17) *I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.* 

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

**Humanity** (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



#### **CENTRAL VIRTUES**

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15) *I choose to do the right things in my relation-ships with others* 

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



#### **CENTRAL PRACTICES**

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gosnel.

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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