

## 1 John Lesson 2 Articles

Christians do sin, but this does not mean they must be saved all over again. Sin in the life of the believer breaks the fellowship but does not destroy the sonship. A true Christian is always accepted even if he is not acceptable. How does God provide for the sins of the saints? Through the heavenly ministry of Christ. We are saved from the penalty of sin by His death (Rom. 5:6–9), and we are saved daily from the power of sin by His life (Rom. 5:10). The word “advocate” means “one who pleads a case” and is the same Gk. word as “Comforter” in John 14:16. The Holy Spirit represents Christ to us on earth, and the Son represents us to God in heaven. His wounds testify that He died for us, and therefore God can forgive when we confess our sins. Read carefully Rom. 8:31–34. The word “confess” means “to say the same thing.” To confess sin means to say the same thing about it that God says. Keep in mind that Christians do not have to do penance, make sacrifices, or punish themselves when they have sinned. Every sin has already been taken care of at the cross. Does this give us license to sin? Of course not! The Christian who truly understands God’s provision for a life of holiness does not want to deliberately disobey God.<sup>1</sup>

So in this first letter, John confronted us with a disconcerting reality. If we are to be comfortable with God and live in intimate fellowship with Him, we must “walk in the light, as He is in the light” (1 John 1:7). Our values, our behavior, our attitudes, our commitments must be in harmony with God’s character rather than with the natural passions of fallen humanity.

But this seems to raise a terrible barrier. If we must walk in light to have fellowship, how can we, who feel sin’s pull and all too often give in to temptations, ever be comfortable with God? Isn’t each sin a retreat to darkness? If sinlessness is the avenue to fellowship, who then can stand in the presence of God?

But John was *not* talking of sinlessness. “If we walk in the light,” he said, “the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin” (v. 7). Even those walking in the light need forgiveness, and cleansing from sins they commit. While it is possible for us in Christ not to sin, we can never claim that it is impossible to sin.

John’s primary target here seems to be those who “claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness” (v. 6). These men and women speak glowingly of their closeness to God and the fellowship they enjoy—and yet make a practice of sin! Their lifestyle is not godly; it is patterned after the ways of the false teachers described by Jude and Peter. No one who makes a practice of sin can claim fellowship with God. God’s nature is light, not darkness. Those who walk in light as He is in the light may fall, but they will quickly turn away from that old lifestyle to find forgiveness in Jesus.

**We might sum up John’s teaching this way; if the direction of your life is toward the Source of light, you will find forgiveness for your failures and inadequacies. But if the direction of your life is toward the darkness, then you may be sure you have nothing in common with God.<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 768–769). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>2</sup> Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). *The teacher’s commentary* (p. 1049). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.