

1st JOHN BIBLE STUDY

1 John 1:9-10

Lesson #3

Introduction

We've come to a point in our study where we get to some very familiar and very popular verses. Anyone who's been a member of a church for very long has surely heard preaching on 1st John 1:9. Most of the time I agree with that teaching, although I do occasionally feel like some of the sermons weigh in a little too heavily on confession and a little too lightly on repentance. But either way, the thrust of the teaching always seems to be concerning whether or not the believers are still prone to commit sins, and whether or not they're willing to confess those sins.

Now I agree that this is a valid issue, and these verses do address it, but when one considers these verses in light of their background, and the context in which they were written, there's a whole other aspect that seems to get overlooked. I don't believe this is intentional, I just think it's very easily missed if these verses are not preached systematically from the beginning, and within the full context of their background. Therefore let's reestablish that background. We have an emerging secular movement that's invaded the church, and is teaching the saints that the moral behaviors that they've been formerly taught to obey, are not really applicable to Christians. Because, Christians aren't judged on their behaviors and their morals, but on their faith in Jesus Christ. Secondly, physical acts performed by the body have absolutely no effect on the spirit, so it made no difference what they did with their flesh bodies as long as they kept their spirit's pure.

So, we can see that the issues that John was dealing with wasn't simply whether or not the church members ever committed sins, but also whether or not some of the things that they were doing actually were or weren't really sins in the first place. And therein lies the problem, if one is persuaded that his or her actions are not a sin, then he or she isn't going to confess and repent of those actions. Their response when questioned will be "we have no sin." By which they mean, not necessarily that they never commit a sin, but that the questionable things which they're doing aren't really sinful. And this was the dilemma that John was facing when he wrote this epistle. But we rarely see this aspect discussed when these verses are preached, so I want to make sure that we deal with this aspect thoroughly in this lesson. So, the title of this lesson is:

If We Confess Our Sins

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself 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 that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous 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 (NASB)

I'd like to start our discussion at verse eight:

Verse 8: *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

You see, immediately we have a statement that's contingent on something. Before we can say whether or not we have any sins, it's understood that we have to know and agree on what sins are. For instance, if I were to ask you if you have any widgets, what would you say? Well, probably you'd ask me what is a widget? You can't possibly tell me if you have one, if you don't even know what it is. And furthermore, my definition of a widget might be completely different than your definition of a widget, so we also have to agree on the definition before our answer has any meaning. And it's precisely at this point where the vast majority of debate actually takes place. So, for the purpose of our discussion, let's try to put a working definition on sin, so we can answer the question based on same common criteria.

The scriptures make very liberal (often) use of this term, well over 1000 times this word appears in its various forms. So we need a definition that's general enough to capture all of its provisions, but still clear and specific enough to avoid diverse interpretations. So, for the purpose of our discussion, I propose the following definition:

Anything and everything that directly disobeys God's orders, either in direct words or in the obvious intention of those words, either by actions or omissions, as those orders are written and reasonably understandable in the holy scriptures.

In other words, if we read it in the scriptures, and its meaning is reasonably understandable to us, then it's God's law, and it's binding upon us, regardless of our comprehension of its reasons in God's mind, or our personal opinions as to its fairness to us human beings. God's law requires our understanding of it, and our compliance to it, irregardless of our personal agreement with it, or our approval of it. And this is exactly the same as every law, of every country, and every state, and every city in the whole world. Neither divine law, nor human law, is contingent upon everyone's own personal agreement or disagreement with it, or their own private interpretation of it.

We cannot ever allow ourselves to accept definitions of what is or isn't sinful, and what is or isn't righteous, and what is or isn't loving, by our own personal feelings and opinions. I'm not saying we can't have any, of course we do, I'm saying that they aren't the determining authority; God's word is the only authority in these matters. And God forbid we adopt the secular world's definitions, as they'll always be contrary to God's, because their hearts are contrary Him, and they love sin and detest righteousness, at least as God defines them.

Now, I sure won't claim to have the exclusive definition of sin, but our definition should be sufficient and accurate enough to serve the purpose intended. So again briefly, if God said it, and we understand it, then disobeying it is sin. John says later in this epistle that sin is lawlessness, meaning that sin is to violate God's orders, His Laws, as He's declared them in His scriptures. Now, with this, we can proceed to answer the question posed in verse eight regarding whether or not we have any sin. (Implying, any ongoing practices or behaviors that violate any of God's known instructions)

We can readily see that verse 8 is a critical lead-in to verse 9. Unless we recognize our sin for what it is, and then agree to confess it to be sin, and are desirous to repent of it, then verse nine is useless. We must be fully in accord with verse eight and all it encompasses before we can even look at verse nine. So, we've spent this time to make sure we're ready to hear it.

Verses 9-10:

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous 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.

Believe it or not, I've actually heard sermons that inferred, if not stated outright, that this verse means that forgiveness is afforded by confession of the sin alone, and has no connection whatsoever with repentance, because, it doesn't say if we confess and repent, it just says that if we confess. It's difficult to answer this kind of question, not because of the difficulty of the answer, but because of the gross level of ignorance of the asker. If anyone has read the verses from five to this point, and doesn't comprehend that the whole context is regarding the "walk" of the professing believer. That the actions are the demonstration of the authenticity of their profession of faith and fellowship, (vv 5 & 6) and a failure to demonstrate the walk is prima facie evidence of self deception. If one has completely missed all of that, then there's virtually nothing left to say. They don't have even the slightest rudimentary understanding or comprehension of what they're reading, they're simply bantering over words.

In the context of this paragraph, this declaration is telling us that if we are willing to acknowledge that what we are doing is a sin, and not deny it, or try to justify it so we can continue in its practice, then there is forgiveness available through the grace and accomplishments of Jesus Christ. But certainly not apart from repentance from that sin, as the whole context of verses 5 and 6 have already made perfectly clear.

Furthermore, what this verse declares, and John acknowledges, is that even when we confess our sins, and seek diligently for repentance, we still repeatedly fall short and fail, over and over again. And it's in this context that we are continually coming back before the Lord and admitting that even when we know better, and desperately desire to refrain from sin, we still lose the battle all too often and the flesh tempts us to disobey the commandments of God. BUT, we never get to the point where we passively accept this as being okay and cease to **confess and resist** to the best of our capability. Because it is in the confession and desire for repentance that forgiveness lies. Even when the desire for obedience

exceeds the capabilities, and the fact is, the desire must exceed the capabilities, or we're in serious spiritual trouble. God forbid that any Christian ever attains a mindset that they are as obedient and righteous as they *need* to be. I can easily identify with the mindset that worries that maybe we just might be as obedient as we can be, (until our new undefiled bodies that is) but never with the idea that it's good enough. The Christian life is one of striving every day to become more conformed to the stature of the fullness of Jesus Christ (Eph 4:13), while knowing full well that the attainment of this has not been put into our grasp until He returns. (Phi 1:6; 3:21)

What we've just discussed is the traditional concept that's taught concerning verse nine. And, like we said earlier, it makes an assumption that we know and agree on what things are actually sins. But I just don't see any such agreement within the evangelical churches of this era in which we live. The definition of sin is being seriously morphed by the opinions and feelings of secular society. And those opinions are finding their way into the churches at alarming rates. Mostly because we've thrown open our doors to unbelievers whom we've lovingly renamed carnal Christians. These unregenerate members bring their secular opinions into the churches with them, instead of being transformed in their thinking by the renewing of their minds (Rom 12:1-2) Unregenerate minds are never going to be transformed into Christlikeness, instead they seek to make acceptable working compromises in the name of loving tolerance.

In an effort to save the world through establishing a friendship with it, the church has allowed itself to be so severely compromised in its beliefs, and practices, and teachings, that its gospel has lost all the mandatory tenets of truth that are essential to salvation. To a large extent the contemporary gospel isn't even salvatory. I've heard alter calls given after a sermon on anger management, or marriage relationship, or even credit card debit. Honest to God truth!

And regarding sin, that word has been completely removed from some churches curriculums, and replaced with only words of love, and universal tolerance, and personal self esteem. Even if they did know what sin was, they would be unwilling to point it out for fear of offending the guilty parties. *If we confess our sins* says John, then forgiveness is available, but when we claim that what we're doing isn't a sin, or maybe it is a sin but we mustn't be critical, then the path to forgiveness has been disrupted. And hindering the repentance of another, by encouraging them to sin, is a serious offense, for which we'll be held accountable. (Mat 18:6; Mk 9:42; Lk 17:2)

The Gnostics were proposing a philosophy that said that immoral practices, as described in the holy scriptures weren't really sinful, because they didn't affect the spirit. But remember our definition of what sin is? Isn't sin anything and everything that God has declared in His holy scriptures? Didn't we agree that He is the only authority? So, Has God forbidden fornication? Has God forbidden adultery? Has God forbidden homosexual behaviors? Has God forbidden the sacrifice and murder of babies? If He has, then they are sins, everyone of them, regardless of the spin tactics that modern philosophers, and scholars, and false teachers try to put on them. Denying that they're sins (v. 10) is to cut us off from forgiveness, because then we won't confess or repent. And this was the tactics of that time and also of today. So, while I wish I didn't have to, nevertheless lets look at some of the contemporary applications of this same tactic:

A fighter or wrestler is taught a defense tactic that prevents them from being hit by the blows of his opponent. Instead of trying to overpower his opponent's every blow, he simply deflects those blows a little bit and lets the opponent miss him with the attack. In the realm of philosophy, or public debate, the art of deflection is a popular tactic. When faced with an overpowering argument, the one on the defense attempts to deflect the argument off onto another subject, or even back against its arguer. If he can successfully do this then he has averted having to answer the real questions.

One of the still hotly contested debates of this time is the issue of abortion, and the church isn't immune to the issue, though it really ought to be. The supporters are masters of the art of deflection on this issue. They argue as if it were an issue of a woman's right to control her own body, when in fact the issue isn't about that at all, it's about whether one has the right to kill another person in the exercise of controlling their own body. If we allow the deflection off the real point, then we find ourselves arguing simply whether a person does or doesn't have certain personal rights over their own bodies, which we already probably agree that they do. But, does a serial rapist and murderer have the right over the use of his body to abuse and murder women with it? The same women who argue that they have a right to kill the babies in their wombs in the free exercise of their own bodies? Really, what's the difference? The size and weight, is that the only

difference? You see how deflection is used to divert the whole discussion off the real issue of the intentional premeditated killing of a person, and onto another whole topic of vague and nonspecific personal rights?

Next, we have maybe the hottest current issue under debate, and for this one the proponents have considerable support from the news media and the entire entertainment industry. In fact, I've seen the entertainment industry successfully normalize, in the mind's of society at large, over just a few years time, the practice of something that had been previously forbidden as being immoral, and rightly condemned for the entire history of our nation. There's several arguments, but one of them goes like this. If God didn't want me to be a homosexual then why did He make me one? You see, according to this argument, we're supposed to just accept it as fact that any aberrant desires or propensities of our nature make it acceptable, and it's God's fault if we entertain those propensities. If one is born desiring same sex partners then it can't be a sin to act on those desires. This is an absurd argument, because the serial killer and cannibal will swear that he also was born with these propensities, so why is he arrested and put in jail for simply acting on his God given feelings? Why is it okay for one and not for the other? What does the homosexual tell the serial killer when he gives him back his very own argument? Can a practicing homosexual condemn a practicing serial killer, when both are simply acting on their own inclinations and propensities? Does simply having the desires justify the acting on those desires? Obviously not!

Now, I've used these familiar examples to show how we let the secular world, and all its clever musings and philosophical manipulations cloud the issues of right and wrong, good and evil, sin and righteousness. Without the scriptures as our dictionary of terms, we're open to every kind of deception. We know than man is born in a fallen state of depravity. (Rom 3:10-18, 23) The scriptures make that painfully clear, as well as our own experience. But sin isn't defined by our own personal propensities and inclinations. And national laws aren't enacted on our personal desires or preference or inclinations. If I'm naturally inclined to do something that's illegal, I'll be prosecuted for doing it, my personal proclivity or inclination is not an acceptable defense, even in a human court of law, so how much less in that high court of God. Irrespective of our personal inclinations, we are all responsible to control those tendencies, so as to stay within the laws of human society, and the laws of God as well.

The confession of our sins is both personal and corporate. It applies to each and every believer individually, and it applies to our churches as well. What the church teaches will probably be the guide for what the members believe. The churches were obviously falling for this Gnostic teaching to some degree, because John and others wrote to the churches making these warnings to abstain from sin. If we seek an example we need look no farther than the church in Corinth. Where Paul had to deal repeatedly with issues of sinful behaviors that had found their way into the church.

Secular society will continue its pressure to influence the moral teachings and behaviors of the churches. We'll be called all sorts of names, and threatened with legal actions if we try to remain steadfast to the Biblical definitions of sin. (Mat 5:11) But the scriptures tell us to *confess our sins*, and you can't confess a sin if you're unwilling to even call it a sin. If and when the churches lose the courage and conviction to teach the Biblical definitions of sin, then they have forfeited their right to be called a church, and have become just another social club. There are two ways to deny our sinfulness. One is to simply say we aren't doing them, but the other, and probably most common, is to argue that they aren't really sins.

If the churches start echoing the same ideas as secular society, as so many are already doing, then there's no path to forgiveness through confession and repentance. If a church can be persuaded, or tricked, or coerced, or enticed into abandoning the Biblical worldview, and begin to adopt the secular worldview, that says "we have no sin," by which they mean that their fornication, their adultery, their homosexuality, and their abortions aren't really sins at all, just viable personal preferences that each must decide for themselves; then the sovereign authority of God to define sin has been replaced with man's own authority to define sin, at which point all is lost for that group. It might still use the name of a church, but, like the church in Sardis, it is dead. (Rev 3:1)

I'm familiar enough with the scriptures, and especially those that deal with prophetic latter times issues, not to be surprised at the number of so called churches that have abandoned the authority of holy scriptures and adopted the secular worldview concerning what constitutes sin. In his letters of encouragement to his beloved disciple Timothy, Paul warned him that as time went by the churches would abandon sound doctrine in favor of teachings that made them feel good and

kept them entertained. (2Tim 4:1-5) Well, we've had nearly two-thousand years since that was written, and its certainly proven to be accurate. In fact, it's very difficult to even find a church, and I live in a pretty big city, that isn't to some degree or another just like what Paul described. Either they're already there or they're clearly on their way.

John's admonishment to confess our sins will probably only be effective on a personal level, to about the same degree that they're effective on the corporate level. When the church leadership takes a soft position on sin, then the members will probably follow suit. When the leadership is willing to compromise with the world to try to maintain some degree of friendship, then the members will follow that lead. We know that the secular world will never accept the biblical definitions of sin and depravity. They will never allow some invisible, archaic, outdated, God to tell them what's right and what's wrong. They have rights, and nobody, or no gods, are going to dictate to them what they can and can't do. They believe that they are the purpose of the universe, and all meaning and purpose is defined by humanity, not some fictitious diety.

Therefore, when they argue that abortion is a woman's right of personal choice, and homosexuality and same sex marriage is an issue of human rights, they argue from a point of view that perceives that humanity is the ultimate authority in these matters. I just saw a news clip about the issue of same sex marriage being hotly debated in one of the states, I think it's Maryland, and the entire argument, at least as it was depicted on television, was based on equality and personal rights, and how not allowing these people to pursue their own preferences was some kind of personal discrimination against them. To them, the opposition was based solely on personal bias, and contempt. But for the Christian, there simply isn't any way to debate the merits, or personal rights, of issues that are clearly defined by God as sins, and forbidden by His commandments. We must never allow ourselves to be drawn into debating issues of God's laws from a standpoint of the individual's personal right to accept or reject them, or as if they were some how improperly discriminatory to some.

The entire Old Testament is replete with prophets sent by God to warn Israel to repent of its sins and live in compliance with the commandments of God. You won't find a single one of those prophets who went into Israel and opened a discussion with the disobedient sinners on the merits of their behaviors, or their personal rights to choose for themselves. Their message was crystal clear: Thus Says The Lord - Repent of your sins or perish under His burning wrath.

There is no debate here. The issue isn't on the merits of the behaviors, it's on whether or not we believe that there is a sovereign God in heaven, who He has given irrevocable commandments to us as to how we may and may not behave. This is the issue, and all these conflicts that our country is struggling with, will ultimately be decided by our answer to that question.

These are not personal rights issues, they are not individual preference issues, they are not discrimination issues, they are **belief in God** issues, and that is the only real question behind all of them. To debate these matters from a personal rights standpoint, or a loving tolerance standpoint, is a grandiose waste of time, because that's not what these issues are really all about, and although most of us know that, we still repeatedly allow ourselves to be drawn into these meaningless and unwinnable debates. You will not be acquitted from a speeding ticket by arguing that the state is discriminating against your own personal right to decide what speed is right for you. Or that you were born with a need for speed, so you aren't responsible for acting on that need. Such arguments as this are absurd and we all recognize that.

It pains me severely to see so many Christian brothers and sisters sit in television debates with homosexuals and argue over whether or not those individuals were born with these tendencies. I have no doubt that many are indeed born with those tendencies, but this is a **deflection** of the issue, which issue is, has God, or has He not, forbidden their practice? Some are born with one set of inclinations, some are born with others, we know this, but when we pass human laws of every kind, from speed limits, to assault, to murder, these laws make no provision as to the specific tendencies of the people. A hot tempered man is equally expected to refrain from committing assaults as is a sweet little old lady. Any differences of their personal natures, or inclinations afford no exclusions from the law.

In fact, we don't need assault laws to protect us from the sweet little old ladies, we make them to protect us from the young hoodlums running around with machine guns and terrorizing our neighborhoods. It's precisely because we **do** recognize that there **are** some who have these tendencies, that we make the laws in the first place. And to argue whether or not they were born with these tendencies is a meaningless issue, either way we simply don't accept their behaviors.

We expect them to control themselves, and obey the laws, regardless of their natural tendencies. As harsh as it might sound, we expect every citizen to abide by the laws, whether their parents loved them, or whether they abused them, whether they were born with them, or whether they acquired them from bad surroundings, every person is held responsible to control their own behaviors and keep them within the mutually agreed limits of the law of the land. If we aren't shocked by this, then why is it shocking when God demands that we do the very same thing, that we exercise self control and restraint over our natural tendencies that violate His commandments. Look, the very fact that there are laws, both human and divine, is because we acknowledge that people do have innate tendencies to do things that are unacceptable. If it weren't so, then there would be no laws, man's or God's.

One last point and we can move on from this issue. I can anticipate the argument that in this discussion we're comparing the actions of assault and physical harm of others, with those of homosexuality and same sex marriage, which is argued as being of no harm to other people. I will freely acknowledge that it's not my intent to make a comparison of value or severity, but one of precedent. And we only make this comparison because, to the best of my knowledge, it's only the homosexual community that tries to use this absurd defense, that they were born with certain tendencies that exempts them from their responsibility of keeping the laws. And our argument is meant to show the absurdity of such a position.

But also, for Christians, who share the same country, and the same economy as all of the citizens, any wrath brought about on our country by its deliberate disobedience to God, falls on all of us alike. When God judged Israel for their national sins, He judged the whole country, and all suffered the same catastrophic losses. You can't damage this country without damaging every person who lives in it. If our corruptions, our violence, our fornications, our pornography, our adulteries, our abortions, and all of our blatant and "in you face" disobedience to the commandments of God, bring His wrath of judgement upon our country, then there are no unharmed parties. If the ship goes down, everybody aboard is a victim.

When the churches begin to argue the merits of the behaviors, instead of the sovereignty of God to command what He wills, then the battle is already lost, plain and simple. When the churches lose the will to confess that what they are tolerating is defined by God as blatant sin, then there's no defense left, and much worse, there's no solution available either. Make no mistake, the verses that we're reading, and the entirety of the Bible, makes no provision for forgiveness of sin where there is no confession by the sinners of that sin, and the desire for repentance from it. But this erroneous concept describes how 1st John 1:9 is sometimes preached, or at least how it's very often perceived by the listeners.

The popular idea that tolerating these issues of today, and allowing them in our churches, are somehow an act of love and compassion, is no different than ignoring any other crimes and violations of the law in the name of love and tolerance. If you don't feel that ignoring burglary, armed robbery, assault, or rape is an act of loving tolerance, then why do you feel that ignoring fornication, pornography, homosexuality, and same sex marriage are acts of love and tolerance? Admittedly the severity of these might be debated, but what makes them all a crime is that they are in violation of the commandments of God. And when we begin to take it on ourselves, and think we have the right, to edit and selectively enforce God's commandments, we find ourselves on a slippery slope that has no end, and we'll inevitably experience God's judgement.

Of course we understand that the unbelievers won't believe this, so it's for precisely that reason that the churches must stand firmly together, without wavering on the absolute authority of scriptures, and the Biblical worldview, or we're going to perish together with those unbelievers. We must never lose the faith and commitment to confess our sins, when God says they're sins, and keep open the path to forgiveness. The unbelievers won't argue our case, they're the problem, so if the churches lose the vision and commitment to obey the commandments, and identify sin, then who else is left on the earth to argue God's side of the issues?

What has happened to the shining lampstand set on a hill? The churches light is often as dark as the world's. And more often than not, its all done in the name of love. But Jesus says that if we **love** Him we will **keep** His commands, not ignore them, or overlook them, or tolerate them. (Jn 14:15, 23, 24; 15:10; 1Jn 5:3) According to Jesus, **love** means **obedience** to His instructions, and intentional disobedience means we don't even really know Him at all. (v.6)

For a church to teach its members that tolerating acts defined in the Bible as sins, is in fact really loving and forgiving, is to ignore Jesus's frightening warning that whomever teaches any of His beloved young believers to accept and practice sin would be better off having a huge stone tied to their neck and be thrown into the ocean. In other words, it would be better for you to die of drowning, than what you will get for teaching young believers to accept and practice sin. It is no small thing indeed, in the sight of Jesus, who died on their behalf, to teach any of His believes that it's okay to practice or tolerate sin. (Mat 18:6; Mk 9:42; Lk 17:2) If you really think that doing this (tolerating sin) is loving, then you better ask yourself why Jesus sees it so very, very differently, and issues one of His strongest recorded warnings against it.

Now right here, I want to draw a distinction between forgiving, and overlooking. We must never mistake the *forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness* that John's teaching, with simply overlooking or tolerating. There is a huge difference. While the final effect may seem imperceptible, the path that takes us there is entirely different.

The destination called forgiveness lies only at the end of the path of confession and repentance. No other road goes there. That's why it's called a narrow and difficult path, and an agonizing struggle, and why so very few ever find it. (Mat 7:13-14; Lk 13:24) This teaching of loving tolerance of sin, is that very same broad road that beguiles the many by its apparent kindly sentimentality, but leads all of its followers to destruction, because in its goal to attain heaven without the agonizing struggle, it tries to circumvent obedience to God through the keeping His commandments. (Mat 7:21-23)

I'm trying to anticipate all the arguments that might arise, and at this point I can see the possibility that the question remains as to exactly what is the appropriate response Christians should show regarding these present day issues, and what should we do about them. Are we supposed to go out and physically stop these people who are disobeying the commandments of God? Well, what did God tell those prophets of old to do, to go out and arrest, or imprison, or beat up, or kill, those Israelites who were sinning against God's commandments? Obviously none of these. Judgement belongs to Christ.

They were instructed to **inform** and **warn** the people that they were violating the commandments of God, and He, (God) would eventually hold them accountable; and furthermore, if they didn't stop doing those things immediately, then they were in imminent jeopardy of experiencing His wrath of judgement on their nation. The obligation of the Christian church is to proclaim clearly and without wavering or waffling, that these issues that we're discussing today are sinful in the eyes of God, and to flagrantly disobey them, and even deny that they actually are sins, is to make God a liar, and will definitely result in eventual, and probably imminent judgement upon our beloved nation, if we don't confess them as sins, and stop doing them right now. If we continue to claim that *we have no sin*, when we know full well that God has said that they are sins, then we will surely perish in those sins. But:

If we confess our sins, (and repent thereof) He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let the **churches** first be warned, and then through them, let the nation be warned, that sin does not go unpunished; But, a fountain of cleansing has been provided for all who seek it. Both to individuals, and even to whole nations. Our nation can say it doesn't believe, but it can't say it wasn't warned. The future prosperity and freedoms of this country, or the erosion and eventual loss of them, will prove to have hinged upon the decisions that it made, and the behaviors that it approved and practiced.

To be of any use whatsoever, the church's message to our country must be consistent and clear: *7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.* Gal 6:7-8 (NASB)

Conclusion:

There's too much at stake for the churches to allow the secular worldview to influence its thinking. Every church that thinks that it's loving to tolerate the things that God forbids, should consider well the verses we quoted earlier about the large rock around the neck. God hates sin, He absolutely forbids it, in any amount, and to any degree; but because of His great love for us, He has provided the means of total forgiveness, through a faith that produces confession of our sins, not denial of them, and is evidenced by a "walk" that is in the light, just as He Himself is in the light. (Verses 6-7)

Churches of America, I exhort and admonish you to either stop tolerating sin in the name of love, or stop calling yourselves Christian churches, because the situation has gotten too dire, and the time has gotten too short, to keep pretending. If we truly **love** Him we will **keep** His commandments. All of His commandments, whether we perceive them to be large or small. If God chose to include them into His everlasting word of scriptures, then they are binding until He says otherwise.

We are not free to debate them on their merits, or apply them only in certain situations, or dismiss them because we think they're outdated culturally, or decide they're discriminatory against certain particular individuals. Concerning the authority and the duration of the holy scriptures, Peter says:

All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower drops off, 25 but the word of the Lord endures forever. 1 Peter 1:24-25 (HCSB)

And the Apostle Paul says:

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17 (HCSB)

No Christian ever has any place sitting in a debate, especially with a secular group of unbelievers, and try to argue the commandments of God from a secular, humanistic point of view. We never have to explain why God commands those things that He does. And even if we wanted to, He doesn't tell us that. He is God, there is no other, He doesn't even consider trying to justify or explain why He does what He does. He simply declares who He is. (Isa 46:8-10)

The unbelieving world will never repent, and it will never confess its sins, instead it will justify its sins and accuse God of unfairness. But the church must not follow suit by giving in to the secular arguments of the world. By accepting its arguments and logic as valid. To accept the validity of the worldly arguments, is to indict God of unrighteousness. If the worldview is true, then God's view is not, so He must be lying to us, as John said in verse 10. You cannot accept the worldview of sin, without simultaneously accusing God of lying. Whether intentional or not, that's the inescapable conclusion if we say that the things God has called sin, are in fact, not really sinful. If we ever think that the issue of obedience to God is a subject that's open to debate, and subject to our own ratification and approval, then that very thinking itself is already a total loss for any Christian church. If that's how your church believes, then you're useless. In so much as being a Christian church, you have only the name, but according to Jesus, you are dead. (Rev 3:1)

You cannot be a true Christian, and at the same time disagree with God on what is and isn't sin. Verse 10 says that if we say that we have no sin, by either lying that we're doing it, or by denying that it **is** sin, then we make God a liar, AND His word isn't even in us. That means, that if we disagree with God as to what sin is, then we aren't Christians at all, because His word doesn't reside in us. All of you churches that disagree with God over the things that are sins, you are not indwelt by the Spirit of God, and that's why you disagree with Him. If you agree with the world, it's because you are still of the world, and not of God. God's word and God's Spirit are one and the same, you cannot have the one and still disagree with the other.

If His Word is truly resident within us, then *we will confess our sins*, and seek repentance, both individually and corporately. This is His message to us, and it must be our message to the world, and whosoever hears and believes and repents shall be saved, and cleansed from all sin and unrighteousness; but, all who ignore it, and continue to deny that they are sinning against God, do so at their own sure and certain peril. We can only warn and encourage, but He will be the ultimate judge when the time finally arrives.

To Him be glory and honor, love and obedience, praise and worship, for now and forevermore.
Amen.

Narrow Gate Baptist Church, Miami
Robert Andrews, Pastor
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