

How do I confess my sins?

By

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“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

To say the same thing

Scripture states that if we confess our sins, God will forgive us our sins. Having said that, what is confession and how do we confess our sins? In the Greek text of 1 John 1:9 the word ‘confess’ is a translation of the Greek verb ‘homologeoo’, which literally means ‘to say the same (thing).’ It means to be in agreement, to share a common view or to be of a common mind about a matter. What God calls sin, we call sin. 1 John 1:9 doesn’t ask for compensatory action. All God asks is confession of the sin, which means agreement with Him. Confession of our sins is always our reaction to the Spirit’s inducement, where we accept God’s view.

God’s response

If I confess, God forgives me and cleanses me. That's God's promise, because He commits Himself unreservedly to the work of His Son at Calvary. Confession opens us up to the forgiveness which is already there in the blood of Jesus. God is "faithful and just" and He never changes His mind when He sees the blood. Healthy confession will always leave us focused on Jesus and His finished work.

Don't be self-defensive

Note the context of 1 John 1:9:

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

1 John 1:9 is preceded by verse 8 which says: "If we say we have no sin...", and is followed by verse 10 that says: "If we say we have not sinned..." Contextually "have no sin" and "have not sinned" refer to the same thing, to the sins that have to be confessed. It has nothing to do with

sin as a power that would still live in us as the old man. The old man died at the cross, so he is not in view in this passage.

When I say “I have no sin, I have not sinned”, in view of what has to be confessed, that’s my own opinion. I am trying to defend myself. However, confession means to agree with God’s opinion. He says something is sin, so I say it is sin. Then immediately God responds that “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The ground of confession

The ground of our confession is the blood of Jesus, shed at Calvary: “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” (1 John 1:7). Bring that ground in confession to the Lord, and stand in virtue of that blood, in all its cleansing and overcoming power, and it will raise us above all the power of the enemy.

The assurance of forgiveness

“As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12). The east and the west never come together, so far does God remove our confessed sins from us. We may remember them occasionally, so what? God has removed them, so we also pay no attention to them anymore.

“Lord, I confess with my whole heart, that in the light of your word, I have sinned. Now I confess my sins, which are [fill in]. I thank You that You now have forgiven them and remember them no more. Amen.” This is the assurance of my forgiveness.

Then it may be necessary to get right with others relative to these confessed sins, but from the glad perspective that God already has forgiven me.

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