

Test of Assurance: Sin Test

I John 1:6-2:1a

Introduction

Holiness of God is the litmus test of our living. Apart from His holiness, we cannot see the Lord (Heb 12:14). Because God is holy, just, and righteous—and His law is holy—any acts, thoughts, or attitudes that we do that breaks His law is sin. These acts cause us to be out of fellowship with God. Man throughout the ages since creation has denied or downplayed sin.

I. Covering-up of Sin

- Adam and Eve (**Genesis 3**)
 - Cover-up
 - Blame
- Walk in darkness
 - They do not practice the truth
 - Truth is not in them
 - His word is not in them

Note: Notice that God's holiness is ignored and they are in darkness. Contrast this with verse 5. Last week, we studied that His light is truth.
- If we claim (**vv 6, 8, 10**)
 - Self-examination (look at what we say and do)

Note: John is being all-inclusive here and challenges us to examine our hearts. He is challenging the false claims and stating the result of their error.

Note for below: The steps are progressively worse, each more deceived and more willful than previous.

- Sin? What's that? (**v6**)
 - Fellowship with God
 - claimed to know the light
 - Walk in darkness
 - action, lifestyle that contradicts His word (habitual...practicing lawlessness)
 - Practice of habitual sins

Note: These people are not denying sin (claiming to be Christians) but their life is not characterized by holiness—darkness is light.
Example: "Oh well, nobody is perfect."
 - Liars—Obviously not practicing the truth (facts are evident from their life)
 - Truth is not practiced
- Sin? I don't do that anymore. (**v8**)
 - Have no sin (without sin)
 - used to sin but now completely free from sin

Example: I have not sinned since becoming a Christian.
 - Deceived
 - self-deception (**Matthew 7:21-23**)
 - will not come to God for cleansing or confession

Note: worse than the previous one because the deception denies that such sin exists—no need for confession or repentance.
 - Truth is not in them
- Sin? I've never sinned. (**v10**)
 - We have not sinned
 - Sin does not exist

Note: This is common with psychology when they deny sin—becoming more common in churches today.
Example: Pharisees
 - Accuse God as a liar
 - Blasphemy—deny what God says about us
 - Blasphemy—deny that God says we need a Saviour
 - His word is not in them

Transition: So how do we identify ourselves as Christians? John helps us to understand how we can be assured that we are Christians!

II. Confession of Sin

Note: A Christian will follow the pattern of confession, coming to the Lord for forgiveness, admitting their sins. A Christian will sometimes fall into sin but they will repent and live a life of holiness.

- David
 - He did cover-up his sins (**II Samuel 11**)
 - **Psalm 32:3-4**
 - He confessed his sins (**Psalm 51; 32:5**)
- Walk in the light
 - Live life according to truth and holiness
 - Fellowship with God

Note: Our daily walk is marked with increasing righteousness and fellowship with God and believers
- Sin? I'm being cleansed from it. (**v7**)
 - Blood of Jesus cleaned us from all sin
 - **I Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 1:7**—imputed righteousness and being made right with God
 - All sins (past, present, and future) are cleansed at the cross through faith

Note 1: Sin no longer has any mastery over us (Romans 6:14) and we are no longer slaves to sin.

Note 2: This is not a command by John for us to confess—this is wholly Christ's work in us that cleanses us. This is greater than us. This is the process where God makes us holy, through the blood of Christ.
- Sin? I'm confessing it. (**v9**)
 - He is faithful and just

Note: Again, it is based on the character of God to forgive us. He is forgiving us through the work of Christ because of His perfect work. He died in our place that we justly deserve and imputed to us righteousness.

 - If we confess our sins
 - Contrast with the person who claims to have no sin or never sinned
 - We confess because we are forgiven (**verse 7**)
- Sin? I am killing it. (**v2:1a**)
 - We may not sin
 - Hatred of sin—hatred of things against God
 - **Romans 6:14**
 - **Romans 8:13**

Conclusion

What is a Christian? A Christian does not deny that s/he sins but comes to the cross of Christ and asks for forgiveness and receives it. Apostle Paul never denied the reality of sin in believers. He struggled with sin as he states in Romans 7—doing the things that he did not want to do and not doing the things that he wanted to do. His struggles made him wretched; however, he'd cling to the finished work of Christ and find relief for his soul.