

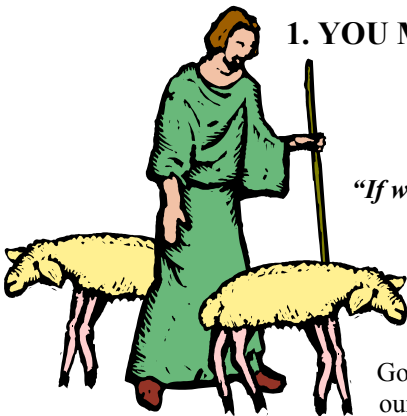
King's Way Church
Message for Jan. 7, 2007
Written by Roger Miller

ASSURANCES: THE TRUTH ABOUT FORGIVENESS
1 John 1:1-10

Today we begin a new series on the foundational principles of a faith relationship, and we will find these principles in 1 John. It's called *Assurances: What God Wants You to Know*. Today, we begin with chapter one: The Truth About Forgiveness.

John said (v. 9) ***"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong."***

The main focus of the Christian life is **not** about getting your sins forgiven so that you can go to heaven. That's part of it, but not all of it. God has more in mind for us. And yet, some people think that way about the Christian life – "What's the minimum I have to do and what's the maximum I can get away with?" And though most people would never say it that way, if we're honest, we catch ourselves thinking that way from time to time. Today, as we explore 1 John 1, I want to challenge you to think the opposite way: **How can I maximize my relationship with God, and how can I minimize my sinful behavior?**



1. YOU MUST COME TO GRIPS WITH YOUR SIN

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."
(1 John 1:8)

"If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." (1 John 1:10)

We often try to deny the existence of our sin. Of course, few would say, "I'm not a sinner. I've never sinned." – Generally speaking. But when we begin to talk about *specific* sins, we start making excuses. That attitude prevents us from experiencing God's forgiveness. This is the obstacle to walking the light – our unwillingness to face our sinfulness.

In one verse John is talking about sin, as in our sinful *nature*. In the other verse he is talking about sin, as in sinful *behavior*. We must come to grips with both. The attitude – ***I'll pay the fine but I'll admit no wrong-doing*** – keeps us outside a dynamic relationship with God. If you want to walk in the light, take a long hard look at yourself.

2. YOU CAN RELY ON GOD TO CLEANSE YOU

"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong." (1 John 1:9)

Who deserves forgiveness? Certainly not you or I – but here's the good news! Forgiveness is never given on the basis of who deserves it. It's given on the basis of God's faithfulness. You can't *earn* God's forgiveness, you can only *receive* it.

Christians/believers/followers/disciples who grasp this fundamental biblical truth begin to experience the transforming power of God's presence. Once we get past trying to earn that which he is willing only to give, we *experience* freedom.



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Many Christians doubt that they're forgiven because they're not sure they did a good enough job of repenting. I can assure you that you didn't. You don't deserve God's forgiveness, but **you can have it**, because **he** is faithful and just. He said, "I will forgive you." (Deuteronomy 32:4), (Romans 3:26-27) This is what God wants for us. His whole purpose in fixing the sin problem was not so that we could beat the system, but so that we could live in friendship with him. God will forgive you as many times as you need to be forgiven – because his ultimate goal is that you become so at home in the light of his love, that sin loses its appeal for you. The truth about forgiveness is that God forgives you totally, completely, without reservation. His goal is that you learn to walk in the light – to become like him in the process.

3. FORGIVENESS BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER



“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.” (1 John 1:7)

John says that walking in the light goes hand-in-hand with fellowship and forgiveness. When we experience God's forgiveness, it affects the way we look at others. When we realize that our relationship with God is based on mercy, it helps us to treat others in a more merciful manner. Forgiveness creates a bond that unites believers – because being forgiven helps us understand that it's all about mercy, it's all about grace, and without God's help we would be doomed to the darkness. When believers who are walking in the light get together, there's an immediate connection. Hence, forgiveness from God brings people together.

CONCLUSION

Once you've become accustomed to living in his light, it's no longer a question of "How much sin can I get away with?" It becomes a question of "How much sin can I get rid of?" That's because nothing in the world compares with the brilliance of walking in the light of God's love.

*“Our vision is to make a change in our community by being a **life-giving** church that is **true** to the Bible and **relevant** today by helping You find **Your way!**”*

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