

Foundations: Bible Truths For Christian Growth

## Chapter 3: Confession of Sin

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Unless otherwise noted, all Bible quotations are taken from the *New American Standard Bible* : 1995 Update. LaHabra, CA : The Lockman Foundation, 1995.



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## Foundations: Bible Truths for Christian Growth

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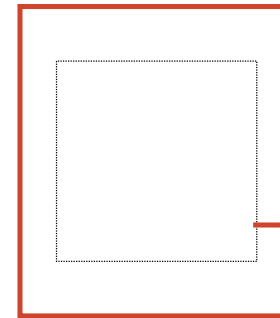
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*Chapter 2 emphasized your relationship with God. Remember, once you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you are a child of God—your relationship with Him cannot be broken.*

*This book will emphasize your fellowship\* with God. Even though you cannot lose your salvation, sin can remove you from fellowship with God. Look again at the difference between your fellowship and relationship with God:*



### **Your Relationship with God:**

- permanent
- unbreakable
- determines your eternal destiny

### **Your Fellowship with God:**

- dependent on obedience
- breakable
- determines your daily joy

*\*(Fellowship is continuous, unhindered communication between two people.)*

## Committing Sin

Read **1 John 2:1a**. What is God’s desire regarding you and sin?

*(“a” means the first half of a verse and “b” means the second half)*

According to the second part of this verse and **1 John 2:2**, God makes a provision—a plan B—for when you do sin. What is it? \_\_\_\_\_

*(An “advocate” is someone who comes “along side” to help or defend)*

you. A “propitiation” is a satisfaction. Jesus satisfied God’s wrath on your sins by dying for you.)

What does **1 John 1:8** say about a person—Christian or non-Christian—who claims to be without sin?

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Do not make light of sin—although Scripture teaches that you will still struggle with sin, it also indicates that you will be sinning less and less. Read **2 Corinthians 5:17**. What does the Bible call someone who is saved (“in Christ”)?

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Describe the last part of this verse in your own words.

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Someone who genuinely has been saved is a different person. In **1 Corinthians 6:9–11**, Paul was writing to Christians in the city of Corinth. What specific sins had they been involved with *before* they were saved?

(Note: The key word is “were.”)

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What does the Bible say of them *after* their salvation?

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As a Christian you will still struggle with sin. However, if you continue in the same sin as though you were never saved the Bible calls into question whether you were ever legitimately saved.

(See **1 John 3:4–10**. Note: The Greek words here are present tense verbs, which indicate repeated action: “practices,” “does,” “sins,” etc. These words address continuous habitual sinning, and not a normal struggle with sin that is common to all Christians.)

## Consequences of Sin

The Bible teaches that you will struggle with sin until your death. How to win battles with temptation will be covered in a later chapter. When you lose the battle with temptation and sin, you are still saved. However, there are some dire consequences of sin.

The first consequence of sin is that you offend God. What did David say about his sin in **Psalms 51:4a**?

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What does **1 John 1:5** teach about God and sin?

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Why is God offended by sin? Because sin is not just breaking a rule; it is breaking God’s rule. According to **1 John 3:4**, whose law do we ignore when we sin?

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What is the “law” referred to in that verse?

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A second serious consequence of sin is revealed in **Psalms 66:18**. What is it?

(the word “regard” means to cherish or hold, the opposite of confession)

As was stated earlier, a Christian’s sin breaks his fellowship with God. You don’t need to be saved again, but you need to restore your fellowship with Him. A child who disobeys his parent is still part of

the family, but communication is hindered until the child confesses his disobedience.

Yet another consequence of sin is discipline from God.

### Discipline for Sin

**Hebrews 12:5–11** is the classic passage on discipline for sin. Other versions of the Bible use the word “chasten” or “correct”.

Read verses 5–7. What human relationship parallels our relationship with God? \_\_\_\_\_

According to verse 6, what emotion motivates God’s discipline? \_\_\_\_\_

Explain the above answer. How can that be? \_\_\_\_\_

Read verses 7–8. What is true of someone who continues in sin but is never disciplined for it? \_\_\_\_\_

Verse 8 makes sense. You may discipline your own child for disobedience, but you don’t discipline a stranger’s child for doing the same thing. Discipline proves that you are God’s child and is a very serious test of genuine salvation.

Read verses 9–11. God does not discipline us for His pleasure, but for our good. Verses 10–11 give two goals for God’s chastening or disciplining of his

children. What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Conviction of Sin

The word “conviction” means *proof of sin*. Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of someone who has sinned. The Spirit *convince you of your sin*. According to **Ephesians 4:30**, how does your sin affect the Holy Spirit? \_\_\_\_\_

What does that mean, and why should it motivate you to avoid sin? \_\_\_\_\_

You can be sure of this: when you sin and grieve the Holy Spirit, He will grieve you back. He makes you uncomfortable about what you have done. One of the clearest instances of such conviction in the Bible comes from King David in **Psalms 32**. In the first two verses he speaks of the happiness (“blessed”) of someone who has had his sins forgiven. Why does he state that forgiveness bring happiness? Because he knows by experience that sin brings misery to a believer’s heart until it is confessed and forgiven.

How did David describe the Holy Spirit’s conviction of sin in **Psalms 32:3–4**? \_\_\_\_\_

David literally felt sick because of his sin. Thankfully, he responded to conviction by confessing his sin in **Psalms 32:5**.

### “No stone unturned...”

David obviously took time for introspection, searching his heart for un-confessed sin. Yet, he also realized the possibility that he had sinned in ways that were a mystery even to him. Therefore, he asked for help as he confessed his sin. Notice his prayer in Psalm 139: 23–24: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”*

This is a model prayer for Christians: *“Lord, You know if I’ve sinned. Please search my heart and make me aware of sin so that I may confess it.”*

It is essential that you understand the difference between *conviction* and *condemnation*. Satan wants Christians to feel guilty so that they will be useless for the Lord. What is Satan called in **Revelation 12:10**? \_\_\_\_\_

Satan accuses you before God, but Christ is your Advocate there (**1 John 2:1**). However, Satan also accuses you to yourself. He wants you to doubt God’s forgiveness. He delights in reminding you of sin and making you feel guilty.

Perhaps you have experienced a feeling of guilt when you have sinned. If so, you are experiencing God’s conviction, and it will continue until you “confess and forsake” your sin (Proverbs 28:13). However, if that feeling of condemnation lingers even after you have confessed and forsaken your sin, it is no longer a work of God’s Spirit. What are the differences between *conviction* and *condemnation*?

<b>Conviction</b>	<b>Condemnation</b>
Conviction is a work of God.	Condemnation is a work of Satan.
Conviction urges you to return to God and be forgiven for your sin: <i>“You sinned again, but Christ paid for that sin. Confess it and return to fellowship with Him.”</i>	Condemnation urges you to give up your walk with God: <i>You’re a failure. You call yourself a Christian? You tried and failed. Just quit. God couldn’t forgive you again.”</i>
Conviction ends the moment you confess your sin to God. It will never be brought up again.	Condemnation continues even after you’ve confessed your sin to God. Satan delights in reminding you of past sins.

Conviction of sin is only a means toward an end. God’s ultimate desire is that you confess your sin to Him.

### Confession of Sin

What promise does God give to Christians in **1 John 1:9**? \_\_\_\_\_

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The word “confess” means *to admit, to acknowledge guilt*. Many people believe that confession is something done before a priest. However, Biblical confession is a matter between the sinner and God alone. Look at David’s definition of confession in **Psalms 32:5**. What does he say? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the opposite of confession from this verse?

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To whom did David “acknowledge” his sin? \_\_\_\_\_

### No Middle Man!

The word “confession” may cause you to think of going to a church to confess your sins to a priest. Yet, Scripture instructs you to confess your sins directly to God, not to a man. Why?

- Because you have sinned against God and not man (Psalm 51:4).
- Because only God can forgive your sins (Mark 2:7).
- Because you don’t need a “go-between.” In the words of 1 Timothy 2:5, there is “*one Mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*”

Another verse which deals with confession of sin is **Proverbs 28:13**. What does it promise to someone who covers sin? \_\_\_\_\_

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Compare the previous answer to David’s experience in **Psalm 32:3–4**. \_\_\_\_\_

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Back to **Proverbs 28:13**, what two things does someone need to do in order to “find compassion”?

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You know what “confesses” means. What does “forsake” mean? Why is that necessary?

\_\_\_\_\_

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Compare the end of **Proverbs 28:13** with **Psalm 32:5**. What is God’s promise to the person who confesses sin to Him? \_\_\_\_\_

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God has said that your sin will remove you from His fellowship until it is confessed. With that in mind, sin should be confessed *immediately* and *specifically*.

### No Blankets Allowed!

Many Christians are content to offer blanket confessions, asking the Lord to forgive them “if they have sinned.” Yet, Scripture encourages us to confess our “**sins**” (1 John 1:9), not just our **sin**. Here is a good rule to apply: *Be as specific when you confess your sin as you were when you committed the sin.* Deal with them individually as soon as you become aware of them.

What does God promise about forgiven sin in **Hebrews 10:17**? \_\_\_\_\_

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What does God say about forgiven sin in **Micah 7:18–19**? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Read **Psalm 103:8–14**. How do these verses describe God? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What does God say about forgiven sin in **Psalm 103:12**?

\_\_\_\_\_

How is God described in **Psalm 86:5**? \_\_\_\_\_

The last several verses teach that God is *eager* to forgive you when you sin. Yet, many Christians refuse to confess their sin, and therefore, they have no fellowship with God. Confess your sin as soon as you become aware of it. Don't let un-confessed sins accumulate. Rather, make it a life pattern to keep short sin accounts with God.

*Nothing between my soul and the Savior,  
So that His blessed face may be seen;  
Nothing preventing the least of His favor:  
Keep the way clear! Let nothing between.*

**Charles A. Tindley**

Let's review the facts from Scripture:

1. Although you are a Christian, you still have a sin nature—you were born with a desire to sin, and that desire continues in you until your death.
2. Sin won't remove you from God's family (your relationship), but it will remove you from fellowship with Him.
3. When you break fellowship with God, you must confess that sin to God immediately and specifically. God will then forgive you, and your fellowship will be restored.

## Scripture Memory

### Psalm 66:18

If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;

### Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper,  
But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

### 1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## Check Your Progress

What are the three most significant lessons that you have learned in this Bible study? Why are they important?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions to measure your understanding of confession:

1. What is God's desire concerning you and sin? (p. 42)

2. What provision has God made for when you sin?  
(p. 42) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What are some of the consequences of sin for the  
Christian? (pp. 44–45) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why does God discipline Christians? (p. 45) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the difference between God’s conviction  
and Satan’s condemnation? (p. 47) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why do you confess your sins to God and not men?  
(p. 49)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Finish this phrase from page 50: “*Sin should be  
confessed \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.*”

8. Does God hold confessed and forgiven sins against  
you? (pp. 50–51)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What specific sins is God convicting *you* about?  
Take time now to confess and forsake them.  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Check off the following verses only when you can  
say them from memory:

- Psalm 66:18                       1 John 1:9  
 Proverbs 28:13

Do you believe that you know this material well  
enough to teach it to someone else? \_\_\_\_\_ If not,  
review it until you do!