

1 John 1:10 Commentary

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FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - Charles Swindoll

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

STUDY GUIDE

1 JOHN 1

What is this? On the photograph of the Observation Worksheet for this chapter you will find handwritten 5W/H questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?) on each verse to help you either personally study or lead a discussion on this chapter. The questions are generally very simple and are stated in such a way as to stimulate you to observe the text to discern the answer. As a reminder, given the truth that your ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit, begin your time with God with prayer such as Psalm 119:12+ "Blessed are You, O LORD; Teach me Your statutes." (you can vary it with similar prayers - Ps 119:18, 26, 33, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171, etc) The questions are generally highlighted in yellow and the answers in green. Some questions have no answers and are left to your observations and the illuminating/teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. Some qualifying thoughts - (1) Use "As is" - these are handwritten and will include mistakes I made, etc. (2) They may not be the best question for a given verse and my guess is that on some verses you will think of a far superior 5W/H question and/or many other questions.

Dr Howard Hendricks once gave an assignment to his seminary students to list as many observations as they could from Acts 1:8. He said "So far they've come up with more than 600 different ones! Imagine what fun you could have with 600 observations on this passage. Would you like to see Scripture with eyes like that?" (P. 63 [Living by the Book](#) - borrow) With practice you can! And needless to say, you will likely make many more observations and related questions than I recorded on the pages below and in fact I pray that the Spirit would indeed lead you to discover a veritable treasure chest of observations and questions! In Jesus' Name.

Amen

Why am I doing this? **Mortimer Adler** among others helped me develop a questioning mindset as I read, seeking to read actively rather than passively. Over the years I have discovered that as I have practiced reading with a 5W/H questioning mindset, it has yielded more accurate interpretation and the good fruit of meditation. In other words, consciously interacting with the inspired Holy Word of God and the illuminating Holy Spirit has honed my ability to meditate on the Scripture, and my prayer is that this tool will have the same impact in your spiritual life. The benefits of meditation are literally priceless in regard to their value in this life and in the life to come (cf discipline yourself for godliness in 1Ti 4:8+.) For some of the benefits - see Joshua 1:8+ and Psalm 1:2-3+. It will take diligence and mental effort to develop an "inductive" ([especially an "observational"](#)), interrogative mindset as you read God's Word, but it bears repeating that the benefits in this life and the rewards in the next will make it more than worth the effort you invest! Dear Christian reader let me encourage you to strongly consider learning the skills of [inductive Bible study](#) and spending the rest of your life practicing them on the Scriptures and living them out in your daily walk with Christ.

Although Mortimer Adler's advice is from a secular perspective, his words are worth pondering...

Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading. (Adler's classic book [How to Read a Book is free online](#))

[John Piper](#) adds that "Insight or understanding is the product of intensive, headache-producing meditation on two or three verses and how they fit together. This kind of reflection and rumination is provoked by asking questions of the text. And you cannot do it if you hurry. Therefore, we must resist the deceptive urge to carve notches in our bibliographic gun. Take two hours to ask ten questions of Galatians 2:20+ and you will gain one hundred times the insight you would have attained by reading thirty pages of the New Testament or any other book. Slow down. Query. Ponder. Chew.... (John Dewey rightly said) "People only truly think when they are confronted with a problem. Without some kind of dilemma to stimulate thought, behavior becomes habitual rather than thoughtful."

"Asking questions is the key to understanding."
--Jonathan Edwards

That said, below are the [5W/H questions](#) for each verse in this chapter (**click page to enlarge**). This is not neatly typed but is handwritten and was used for leading a class discussion on this chapter, so you are welcome to use it in this "as is" condition...

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [ean eipomen](#) ([1PAAS](#)) [hoti ouch hamartekamen.](#) ([1RAI](#)) [pseusten poioumen](#) ([1PPAI](#)) [auton kai o logos autou ouk estin](#) ([3PAI](#)) [en hemin.](#)

Amplified: If we say (claim) we have not sinned, we contradict His Word and make Him out to be false and a liar, and His Word is not in us [the divine message of the Gospel is not in our hearts]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV: If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. ([ESVBible.org](#))

KJV: If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us

Lenski: If we say that we have not been sinning, a liar are we making him, and his Word is not in us.

NLT: If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: For if we take up the attitude "we have not sinned", we flatly deny God's diagnosis of our condition and cut ourselves off from what he has to say to us. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

WBC: If we claim that we have not sinned we are making him out to be a liar, and his word has no place in us. (Word Biblical Commentary)

Wuest: If we say that we have not sinned and are not now in such a state that we could sin, a liar we are making Him, and His Word is not in us.

Young's Literal: if we may say -- 'we have not sinned,' a liar we make Him, and His word is not in us.

- **we say:** 1Jn 1:8 Ps 130:3
- **If we say that we have not sinned**
- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

THE THIRD CLAIM

Here are the **three claims** all of which reflect a false teaching: (1) Christians can claim fellowship with God and live like pagans. (2) Christians no longer have a sin nature. (3) Christians do not sin.

The reader will note that this page has a large number of quotes from various commentators, the purpose of which is to emphasize that this passage is widely accepted as a warning that anyone who chooses to deny their sins is in grave spiritual danger. **Matthew Henry** holds nothing back in his comment on this passage writing that "Every willful sinner ought to be told that he is a dead man."

If we say that we have not (ou - absolutely not) **sinned** ([hamartano](#) - perfect tense - at no time in past to present!), **we make Him a liar and His word is not in us** - **If** ([ean](#)) is a preposition which identifies a third class conditional clause which means "(If)... *and it may be true or may not be true.* " **We say** ([epo](#)) is the first person plural which indicates that John is including himself in this suppositional statement. Some would take this as evidence that what follows does not apply to the distinction of believers versus unbelievers. The **we** can be viewed as an editorial "we" which is very compatible with the context.

SUMMARY OF JOHN'S "IF" STATEMENTS		
	NEGATIVE (False)	POSITIVE (True)
1	1Jn 1:6+ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness	1Jn 1:7+ but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light
2	1Jn 1:8+ If we say that we have no sin	1Jn 1:9+ If we confess our sins
3	1Jn 1:10+ If we say that we have not sinned	1Jn 2:1+ And if anyone sins
There are other "if" statements but these constitute the first and major group.		

J Sidlow Baxter ([Explore the Book page 310ff](#)) sums up John first chapter noting that verse 8 presents us one of several "tests" which expose a false profession...

They are... tests of honesty and reality. They search us. They penetrate like a white flame. They expose hypocrisy... they are:

1Jn 1:6 = False fellowship.

1Jn 1:8 = False sanctity.

1Jn 1:10 = False righteousness.

Not (ou) is the stronger negative (compared to the other Greek negative "me"). What these individuals are saying is that they have **absolutely** not sinned! For those who argue that this cannot refer to unbelievers because of John's use of the pronoun **we**", one would have a difficult time postulating that the apostle John would ever make such an incredible claim as to have absolutely never sinned!

Have not sinned (264)([hamartano](#)) literally means to miss the mark and thus to act contrary to the will and law of God. These individuals are making the claim that they have never veered from the truth, that they have never turned aside from the straight course charted by the Word of Truth. They are making the incredible claim that they have never missed the mark of God's perfect standard!

Notice that John uses the **perfect tense** which describes a past completed action (no commission of sin in the past) with the same state persisting to the present. In other words, the perfect tense pictures these individuals in a sense looking back over their past life and up to the present and saying "We do not have sin" (past or present)!

In Ecclesiastes **Solomon** (whose sin resulted in the division of the 12 tribes of Israel) directly counters the argument of these individuals declaring that "Indeed, there is **not** a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who **never** sins." (Eccl 7:20)

David writes that...

The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men,
To see if there are **any** who understand,
Who seek after God.
They have **all** turned aside; together they have become corrupt;
There is **no one** who does good, **not even one**.
(Psalm 14:2-3)

Paul adds that "**all** (Greek means "all" without exception) have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23)."

David Smith in **The Expositor's Greek Testament** writes that in fact "We all **"have... sinned,"** i.e., committed acts of sin manifesting the strength and activity of the sinful principle in our souls. This, however, is no reason for despair. There is a remedy—forgiveness and cleansing in the blood of Jesus; and there is a way of obtaining it—confession. ([The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Like the **truth**, the **word** can be viewed objectively or subjectively, an external message or an inward force effective and active in men. There is, of course, no reference to the personal Logos, though the word implies a more personal relationship than truth. It suggests the speaker. Cf. Jn. 8:37, He. 4:12; Jas 1:21; 1Jn. 2:14.

Spurgeon adds that "now John is very careful when he strikes a blow to hit completely. He has already smitten those who say they have no sin, and now he smites those who say they did not at one time have any.

Vine comments that "the third kind of false protestation; the first (1Jn 1:6) is a denial of the distinction between spiritual light and darkness, the second (1Jn 1:8) is a denial of the sinfulness of our nature, the third is a denial of sins committed—themselves the effect of a sinful state.

F B Meyer correctly observes that "Though they have fallen below their own standard, they do not like to admit it, and cling tenaciously to their position of having got beyond the range of sinning. Much better to admit it, and obtain forgiveness through the one Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous (Our Daily Homily)

William Harris comments that those who deny actual acts of sin in the past or present "had apparently developed a version of perfectionism by which they were able to deny that, after professing to be Christians, they could be convicted of sin. ([1 John 1:5-22: Exegetical Commentary](#))

Steven Cole has a modern day example of "making God a liar" - Robert Schuller redefines sin to mean something other than what Scripture declares. He says (p. 65) that to define sin as rebellion against God is "*shallow and insulting to the human being.*" He redefines sin as a lack of trust, which "*is another way of saying that we are all born with a negative self-image....*" He says (p. 67), "*By nature, we are fearful, not bad. Original sin is not a mean streak; it is a nontrusting inclination*" So he redefines being born again (p. 68): "*To be born again means that we must be changed from a negative to a positive self-image—from inferiority to self-esteem, from fear to love, from doubt to trust.*" This, in turn, changes us from shame to self-esteem, so that we can now pray (p. 69, italics his), "*Our Father in heaven, honorable is our name. So, the foundation is laid for us to feel good about ourselves*" (To which Cole adds the pithy comment) "John would say, "That man is walking in the darkness, deceiving himself and anyone who believes him. Worse, he is calling God a liar and God's word is not in him!" ([How to Have Fellowship With God 1 John 1:5-10](#))

There is even a perfume called "My Sin."

It's a fragrance "so alluring, so charming, so exciting,"

Haddon Robinson has a devotional entitled **My Sin** which is relevant to the false claim in 1Jn 1:10 - The woman explained the rules to the Tempter. She and her husband could eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, except for the special one in the middle. Just touching it, she said, would bring death. I can imagine Satan throwing back his head and with mocking laughter saying, "You will not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). He then suggested that God was holding back something good from her (Ge 3:5). For thousands of years the Enemy has repeated that strategy. He doesn't care if you believe in the authority of the Bible as a whole, as long as he can get you to disbelieve that there is one sin standing between you and God. "You will not surely die," we are told. That is the theme of so many modern novels. The hero and heroine live in disobedience to God but suffer no consequences. In TV shows and movies the characters rebel against the moral laws of God but live happily ever after. There is even a perfume called "My Sin." It's a fragrance "so alluring, so charming, so exciting," the ads tell us, "we could only call it 'My Sin.'" You would never guess that sin is a stench in the nostrils of God. In the temptation you face today, will you choose to believe Satan's lie, or will you obey God's warning? A bite of sin leaves a bitter aftertaste!

Jackman mentions some subtle ways of saying we have not sin and it begins when "We no longer call sin 'sin'. Adultery becomes 'having an affair'. Theft is 'helping myself to the perks'. Selfishness is 'standing up for my rights'. The last thing we human beings will

admit is that we sin... We must not be surprised when the chickens hatched by atheistic philosophies come home to roost, in terms of multiplying lawlessness and a society which will prove increasingly difficult to govern. But we must resist that drift with all our energy, in our own lives, in our churches and in our community... As Nietzsche proclaimed nearly a hundred years ago, 'If God is dead, everything is permitted.' But God's righteous character remains absolute in his world, and deviation from that character, as revealed in God's law, remains sin. That law is not an arbitrary set of rules designed to restrict and inhibit human life, but the expression of God's will for human relationships in accordance with his own nature of light and love. That is why adultery, theft, lying, murder and all the other sins remain sin, whatever people may call them. The other sins include those commonly tolerated among Christians too—the favourite sins of greed, jealousy, envy, malice, bitterness and a critical or unforgiving spirit. They are all equally attacks on the character of God to whom we are all finally responsible. Before him, we all stand guilty. If we deny that these things are sin, we are actually calling God a liar. That is meant to shock us. We deny his Word. We say his revelation is not true. We embrace the darkness. If one has never seen oneself as a guilty sinner before a holy God and desperately in need of His forgiveness, then one cannot yet be a Christian. There can be no fellowship with the God Who is light. (See [The Message of John's Letters](#))

Wayne Barber - There are a lot of people who think that now that they are believers they don't have to deal with sin any more. As a matter of fact, many want to blame other people or other things. I heard Vance Havner tell the story of a lady who walked into a psychiatrist's office with a strip of bacon on one ear and a strip of bacon on the other ear and a fried egg on her head. She looked at the doctor and said, "Doctor, I am here to talk to you about my husband. He has a real problem." That is exactly the way most people are. If there is a problem, it is somebody else's fault. We never seem to look within and understand that we never, ever outgrow the fact that we are going to have to deal with sin in our life. (1 John 1)

George Findlay writes

The other form of impenitence stigmatized by the Apostle, is the most extreme and shameless: **'If we say that we have not sinned'**; and its consequence the most shocking **'We make Him a liar'**! One may deny sin in general and fence a good deal upon questions of principle and ethical theory, who yet when the word of God comes to him as a personal message and his memory and conscience are challenged by it, will admit practically that he has sinned and is in the sight of God a condemned man. David had, doubtless, argued with himself and deceived his own heart not a little (**Ed**: for some 9-12 months) in regard to his great transgression; but the prophet's home-thrust, "Thou art the man," (2Sa 12:7-note) broke down his guard;" and David said unto Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." (2Sa 12:13-note) To contradict a general truth is one thing; to confront the personal fact is another.

But when a sinner, with his transgressions staring him in the face and revealed in the accusing light of God's word, declares that he "has not sinned," what can be done for him, or said to him? The Apostle has only one resource with such a man:

"God says that you have sinned, that you have broken the law of your being and incurred the penalty of exile from His presence, and brought on yourself moral ruin and misery. You say that you have done nothing of the kind. If you are right, God is wrong; if you are true, then God is false. You make Him a liar!"

That is John's final protest. Every one who refuses to bow down at the sight of the majesty of God in Christ and to make confession before that white, soul-searching splendor of holiness and love, before the final disclosure of human guilt and the Divine righteousness made in the spilt blood of Jesus, is doing this. He gives the lie to his Maker and Judge. Impenitence in men who have really known the Gospel, is the most callous insensibility, the most daring insolence, we can conceive. ([1 John Commentary](#))

John Phillips writes that...

All that deceit and wickedness is proved when a person says that he or she has no sin. Such people prove themselves to be wicked by calling God a liar. "His Word is not in them," John says. Such people refuse to believe the Bible and deny the Holy Spirit's thoroughgoing exposure of the corruption and crookedness and criminality of unregenerate human behavior. The first great work of the Holy Spirit in a human heart, after all, is to convict us of "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8-11)—of the nature of sin, the need for righteousness, and the nearness of judgment.

The person who says he or she has no sin is evidently a person in whose heart the Holy Spirit has not done even His initial work.

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." 1 Jn 1:10

*Confession is the first step
toward defeating sin.*

It is often true that the hardest part of dealing with a problem is admitting that you have one. Beginning with Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:11–13), people have denied responsibility for their sins, and our generation is no exception. To acknowledge that one is a sinner, guilty of breaking God's holy law, is not popular. People call sin by a myriad of other names, futilely hoping to define it out of existence. They do so, motivated by their innate awareness that there is a moral law and that there are consequences for violating it (Rom. 1:32).

But God's people have always recognized the necessity of confession. After committing the terrible sins of adultery and murder, David acknowledged to Nathan the prophet, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:13). Later he cried out to God, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight" (Ps. 51:3–4). Faced with a vision of the awesome majesty and holiness of God, Isaiah declared, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5). Daniel was a man of unparalleled integrity, yet part of his prayer life involved confessing his sin (Dan. 9:20). Peter, the acknowledged leader of the apostles, said to Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8). The apostle Paul, the godliest man who ever lived (except for Jesus Christ), wrote this about himself: "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all" (1 Tim. 1:15).

The examples of those godly men illustrate a fundamental biblical truth: constant confession of sin characterizes true Christians (1 John 1:9). Those who claim to be believers but refuse to confess their sins deceive themselves (1 John 1:8) and make God a liar (1 John 1:10).

Suggestions for Prayer: Confess and forsake your sins today, and experience the blessedness of God's forgiveness (Prov. 28:13).

For Further Study: Read and meditate on Nehemiah's masterful prayer of confession in Nehemiah 1.

WE MAKE HIM A LIAR: pseusten poioumen (1PPAI) auton :

- **we say:** 1Jn 1:8 Ps 130:3
- **we make:** 1Jn 5:10 Job 24:25
- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

DENIAL OF SIN: FIRST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE: GOD MADE A LIAR!

We make Him a liar- In simple terms, we make God a **liar** when we deny in thought, word or deed that what God states about Himself (including His abject hatred of sin) and about our innate tendency to commit sins, something every human being has done, is doing and will do!

*Sin is a clenched fist
and a blow in the face of God.*

-- Joseph Parker

Compare a similar use of **pseustes** in chapter 5...

1 Jn 5:10 The one who believes (present tense) in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not (absolute negation) believe (present tense) God has made Him a **liar**, (pseustes) because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

Comment: Notice that John says that making God a liar is associated with not believing in Jesus which is clearly a description of a non-believer. In other words the unbeliever is the one who makes God a liar! In 1John 5:10 he makes God a liar by not believing in the "Word of life", in Whom alone is eternal life! Here in 1John 1:8 he makes God a liar by not believing His Word about his sinful state!

J B Phillips paraphrase hits the proverbial "nail on the head" (and hopefully "the sinner in his heart") "For if we take up the attitude

"we have not sinned", we flatly deny God's diagnosis of our condition and cut ourselves off from what He has to say to us."

Calvin comments that compared to the false claims in verse 8, in verse 10 - John goes still further, saying that those who claim purity for themselves blaspheme God. We see that he everywhere represents the whole human race as guilty of sin. Whoever tries to escape this charge, then, carries on war with God and accuses Him of falsehood, as though He condemned people who did not deserve it. ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

John Piper notes that

1 Jn 1:10 repeats verse 8 with a stronger warning: "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." The claim to sinlessness is not only self-deception, but blasphemy. It amounts to calling God a liar. This means that God's assessment of us is not positive. He calls us evil. If we deny our evil, we call him a liar. John uses strong words so we will be strong people. Let these simple, straightforward, weighty truths sink into your mind and you will have a great ballast to keep your boat from capsizing in the winds of contemporary fads and fashions and trends. In Summary:

1Jn 1:5: Foundation—God is light and in him is no darkness at all. His truth is bright and hopeful for all who come to him.

1Jn 1:6–7: Application—Therefore, let us walk in the light of God so that we can enjoy his fellowship and experience the cleansing of Christ's blood.

1Jn 1:8–10: Clarification—Nevertheless, do not presume to claim sinlessness as you walk in the light, but confess your sins to God. ([1 John 1](#))

Before you read further, ask yourself what is the lie in context and why is it so dangerous? The lie by men is that **"we have not sinned"**. As the Scriptures above document, the truth from God is that **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And so if "I say that I have not sinned, then I make God a liar and have no need for a Savior." As **Brooke** says *"the whole plan of God's dealings with men is based on the assumption that all have sinned."* And if I don't think I need a Savior, I will not seek one and I will end up eternally separated from God, in Gehenna (Hell), the Lake of Fire. Why? Because I believed a lie. Making God a liar is horrible, but the real horror is that the one who habitually does this, will never receive Christ as their Savior. And that is tragic beyond what words can express!

Liar ([5583](#)) (**pseustes** from **pseudomai** = to lie) is one who speaks falsehood, untruth, and so attempts to deceive. **Thayer** adds that **pseustes** describes "one who breaks faith, a false or faithless man." **Liar** is clearly a **key word** in the writings of John, for of the ten NT occurrences of **pseustes**, two are found in his Gospel (Jn 8:44, 55) and 5 in his first epistle (1Jn 1:10, 2:4, 22, 4:20, 5:10). In his introduction to Titus Paul reminds us that **"God... cannot lie."** (Titus 1:2)

As **John MacArthur** clearly states those who make the ridiculous assertion that they have never sinned make God a liar in two ways "First, they explicitly deny His teaching that all have sinned (see above), and second, they implicitly deny the need for a Savior (cf. Isa. 53:10, 11; Zech. 9:9; Mt. 1:21; Lk 2:11; 19:10; Acts 5:31; 13:38, 39; Ro 6:23; 1Ti 1:15; Heb 5:9). After all, why would they need a Substitute to take their punishment for something they claim to have never committed? ([Macarthur J. 1-3 John Moody](#))

Peter Barnes writes that "God sees us all as sinners. In 1775 Augustus Toplady (the author of 'Rock of Ages'), published an article in which he attempted to assess England's guilt as a nation in terms of a national debt. He came to the conclusion that England would never be able to pay her debt, and then calculated that if as individuals we sinned every second of our lives, we would each run up 2,522,880,000 sins by the age of eighty, if we lived that long! Toplady's approach has been roundly criticized but it is far closer to reality than Shirley MacLaine's rhapsodies. If we do not see ourselves as those who are utterly corrupt, if we think we are basically all right, then we are deceiving ourselves and God's truth is not in us. We would be, in reality, standing before the throne of God and calling Him a liar.

*The person who cannot see that he is in Adam (i.e. fallen and sinful)
has no reason to seek to be found in Christ (i.e. renewed and righteous).*

Only when we see our dreadful state before God will we ask how our sins can be taken away. ([Knowing Where We Stand](#))

John Gill sums up their making God a liar for He "declares that the wicked are estranged from the womb, and go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies; that his own people are transgressors from the womb; that all have sinned and come short of his glory; and that there is none that does good, no, not one, but all are under sin, under the power and guilt of it, and become filthy by it, and so obnoxious to the wrath of God ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

The Life Application Commentary writes that John is writing to counter false teachings of those who "denied the reality of sin. John wrote that **those who continue in sin do not belong to God**. Those who say they have no sin only fool themselves and

refuse to accept the truth.

Jamieson observes an interesting gradation "1John 1:6, **we lie**; 1John 1:8, **we deceive ourselves**; worst of all, **we make Him a liar**, by denying His word that all men are sinners (compare 1John 5:10). ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

Comment: It is worth noting that to claim to have fellowship with God while walking in darkness makes a person a liar (1Jn 1:6); to claim to be without sin involves lying to oneself (1Jn 1:8) and makes God out to be a liar as well (1Jn 1:10).

As **Orr** quips that when we deny that we sin "our course in deceit is complete; we deny the whole testimony of God's word, and the need for His redemptive activity." (New International Bible Commentary)

Strecker commenting on denial of sin notes that "Such a denial would not only be self-deception (1Jn 1:8) but would also make a liar of God (cf. 1Jn 5:10), that is, say that God's word is untrue. In other words, those who hesitate to acknowledge their sins are rejecting God's offer of forgiveness, for this is contained in the "**word**" of God that was already characterized in 1Jn 1:1 as "**word of life**" and therefore life-giving and is concretized in the Christ-event (1Jn 1:7). (The Johannine letters : a commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John. Series: Hermeneia; Fortress Press)

Brown puts it this way...

It is one thing knowingly to tell an untruth or lie; it is worse to deceive oneself to the point where there is no truth; it is still worse to make God a liar...

The second clause of each (verse - 1Jn 1:6, 8, 10) concerns the lack of truth ("we do not act in truth"; "the truth is not in us"; "His word is not in us"). The dynamic attitude is apparent in the fact that the first derives from the second—

**divine truth, like divine life, is a reality
that inheres in us and must be active.**

"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and truth will set you free" (Jn 8:31–32). Thus understood, the charge of lying becomes more than a charge of telling an untruth. **A lie indicates what one is: a child of darkness rather than a child of light—one whose father is the devil, a liar.** (Brown, Raymond E., The Epistles of John: translated, with introduction, notes, and commentary, Yale University Press)

Makes ([poieo](#)) is in the **present tense** which indicates these sin denying individuals continually "*characterize God as being "a liar"*" (cf. the words of Jesus in John 8:44.) As Hiebert says "*This impugns God's character and the whole program of redemption.*"

Plummer adds that "this use of the verb **make**' in the sense of '*assert that one is*' is frequent in the Gospel: 'He made Himself the Son of God'; 'Every one that makes himself a king' (Jn 19:7, 12; comp. Jn 5:18, 8:53, 10:33)." ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

R C H Lenski minces no words stating that in saying we have not committed sin "We are doing more than just lying (1Jn 1:6), more than deceiving our own selves by our lying (1Jn 1:8). These two statements are incomplete. The worst that we are doing by our false claim is really blasphemous: we are **making God a liar**! Some interpreters do not seem to feel the terrific impact of this word. If you and I philosophize or theologize our sins away and think that they do not need the blood of Jesus, God's Son, we are making God himself a liar! No less. Let us face this fact! Let it frighten us away from such claims! (BORROW [The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John](#))

Hiebert comments on "**make Him a liar**" "Such a person brazenly stamps God's testimony that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23) as a deliberate lie. (Online [1 John 1:5-2-6 Exposition](#))

Barker notes that "Although the assertions made in v. 8 and v. 10 are more alike than unlike, the latter statement is far more blatant and defiant. It makes a mockery of the gospel. It states that the reason God acted in grace and mercy toward us for the sake of our sins is false, that God first deceived us about ourselves and then becomes himself the Deceiver. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament](#))

Trapp writes that "We make him a liar for the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, Ro 11:32."

If we claim that we have never sinned and, therefore, do not need to accept the forgiveness provided by God through Christ's death, we are making God appear to be a liar, for His Word clearly states that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23). The Gospel is based on the sinfulness of all mankind (cf. Ro 3:9–18, 23; 5:1; 11:32).

Vine - To profess not to have sinned is to deny the facts of human nature and the need of a Redeemer, and to impugn both the

character of God and the whole scheme of His redemptive work.

Hoke - When we reject God's word, we reject Him. And finally, the result of denying sin is eventual judgment and condemnation. You see, when we deny sin we reject Jesus. Jesus came to save us from our sins. He is the great physician. If you never admit that there is something wrong with you, you will never go to the one who has the cure. If you are not sick, why do you need a physician? If you have no sin, why do you need a savior? You don't need forgiveness if you've never done anything wrong. The problem is, when we deny the sickness, we die from it. When we deny our sin, we will eventually be judged for it. ([1 John 1:8-2:2 What Do You Do With Sin?](#))

THOUGHT - How does this truth apply to believers? Do we ever make God a liar? One way we do this is by blaming others for our shortcomings (sins), claiming that we have not sinned (in a sense "we make God a liar"). If you are married, I'm sure you have never taken this tact in an argument! John is saying that our dishonesty stands in stark contrast to the kind of honesty God calls us to exercise.

Wayne Barber notes that in 1Jn 1:10 we have

the worst scenario you can possibly have. (Now these individuals say), "I have never sinned at any point in time in my life, ever. I am not a sinner. All men are created good!" Have you heard this these days? The tense there means that he has never at any time whatsoever sinned. The word "**not**" is used there... "I have**not** in any way, shape or form ever sinned before in my life." Well, if they have **not** sinned, then they have **no** need for Christ. Is that not correct?

As a matter of fact, he goes on to say that we make Him a liar. What did Jesus say? "I came to die for your sin." You make Him a liar. If you haven't sinned, then you don't need Him. This is the attitude of the lost in our world today. Now listen to what I am about to say. People of the world today believe that our problems are not caused because of sin. They are caused by wrong environment. If you put a child in a wrong environment that is what his problem is. It's bad government. Some people are saying Evangelical Christianity is the root of the problem because they preach against sin and they make everybody feel guilty. That is what is wrong with our society. They say the original Adam was a type for all men. Every man is born good.

I was on a flight recently with this guy. When he found out what I did for a living, he wouldn't let me talk anymore. I asked him what he did and he said, "Well, I am a counselor of juvenile delinquents in the court system... or I have been. I have just changed jobs and I am doing something else." I said, "Oh, is that right? What approach do you take with these kids who are in so much trouble with drugs and everything else?" He said, "Oh, first of all you've got to realize there are no bad kids. All kids are good." Right! Do you know what he is doing? Do you know what he is quoting? That is Freudian psychology. Freud said there is no objective basis for wrong. You cannot track it back to sin. You can put it someplace else but there is never one solitary reason. That is what he said. So many have come out against that.

"So we believe it is the problem of environment," he said. "Get a kid out of that bad environment and you've got a kid who will change." I said, "How long were you doing that?" He said, "Seven years." I said, "How many people did you see change?" "Well," he said, "that is relative." I said, "Wait a minute, I asked you a question. How many kids did you see change?" "Well, many of them got jobs." I said, "Did you see their character change? Did you see their life in any way morally change?" "Well, no, but I mean, come on man, what are you asking us to do?" You see, that is society, folks. Let's move to another neighborhood where it is a little bit nicer and we can be better people. Are you kidding? Flesh is flesh I don't care where you are.

When I was over in Romania all those years, I thought they were the most precious people. I said, "I'll never be the Christian these people are." My friends would try to tell me, "Wayne, you don't understand. Their flesh is just as wicked as your flesh." We got over there in one situation and found out the liberals were arguing against the conservatives. The people at church were having all kinds of problems. They would come for an hour to pray, yes. But it was because they came out of the Greek Orthodox Church which said if you don't come to pray, God will kill you. They don't come because of a love motive. A lot of them came because of the work ethic. They didn't understand the security of the believer. They don't understand grace. That is what our ministry was for so many years over there. What did He teach us? Flesh is flesh wherever you are.

My friends were telling me they have seen people who came out of Romania being critical of Americans going to malls and getting all this materialism. Six months later they were the same way. Why? Because every one of us are descended from one man, Adam and because of Adam, we have our flesh to deal with and sin to reckon with. Thank God for the first Adam, which was not the one in Genesis. It was Jesus. Out of Him we have been born again and we are now spiritual beings with a brand new heart. But we still have that ole body

which is plagued with the lust of our flesh. They will eat our lunch if we give them half a change. We will deal with sin. For a person to say I have never sinned is the height of ignorance.

John said, "If you say this, you make Him a liar and His Word is not in us." The "word" there in John's vocabulary refers to the preexistent word, Jesus Christ, and also to all the truth that He gave to you and me. None of that is in him at all, cannot be. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." We do deal with sin. It is more intense now probably than it was when we first started because the more you know of light, the more it exposes the darkness and the more repentant your heart becomes. That is why Paul says, "I am the chief of all sinners." You see, sin is a very real problem in our life.

Do you know what I am like in my flesh? I am a manipulator. Are you that way? If it is in my flesh, I can manipulate it to make it work for my benefit every time. I am good at it. I have been practicing many years of my life. When I got saved I had been in the ministry for eight years. It helps to have a saved minister! I was in the den on my knees and said, "God, will you show me the filth that is in my life?" I cried for two hours until my nose bled when I saw the filth of me, just me. I have no clue why God would ever let me pastor. It amazes me. Sin is real and don't you ever forget it. Do you have a problem in your life? You might want to track it back there first. Not that you have confessed it, because I think the confession we've heard is a watered down version of what God says. Have you broken from it? And repented of it? That is confession because you have taken upon yourself the same estimate of it God has. (1 John 1:8-10 - The Believer and Sin - Part 1)

AND HIS WORD IS NOT IN US: kai o logos autou ouk estin (3PAI) en hemin:

- **His word:** 1Jn 1:8 2:4 4:4 Col 3:16 2Jn 1:2
- [1 John 1 Resources](#)

DENIAL OF SIN: SECOND SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE: GOD'S WORD NOT WITHIN!

Scripture is always the best commentary on Scripture (See topic: **Compare Scripture with Scripture**). In John 8, we observe Jesus addressing a group of Jews who have just professed to believe in Him (compare Jn 8:30, 31 with Jesus' subsequent description of them = Jn 8:43, 44, 45, 47) but whose subsequent actions (Jn 8:59!) prove that they were not genuine believers. Note what Jesus says to this group and how it parallels John's description...

I know that you are Abraham's descendants (**Ed**: The Jews were indeed the physical seed of Abraham, but not all were the spiritual offspring as Jesus explains); yet you seek to kill Me, because **My word (logos) has no place in you.** (Jn 8:37).

Comment: Clearly these professors of faith are not possessors of genuine faith. They are not believers. Jesus explains that the evidence that they are not believers is that they are seeking to kill Him! And then He describes why they are not believers - **His Word is not in them!** Compare "His Word is not in us" in 1Jn 1:10!

The Amplified Version "interprets" the phrase "His Word is not in us" this way...

His Word is not in us [the divine message of the Gospel is not in our hearts].

His word - As discussed more below, John's statement suggests the dual aspect of the term **'logos'** both as the message (Gospel) and the person (Jesus, cp 1Jn 1:1, 8; Jn 14:6). Clearly "His Word" parallels "the truth" in 1Jn 1:8, even as John equates these two words in Jn 17:17. Notice also that in this same chapter (1Jn 1:1) John used **"Word"** (logos) as a reference to the "living Word" Jesus Christ (cp Jn 1:1). This is discussed more below, but suffice it to say that while some commentaries say "Word" cannot represent a personification of Jesus, they would be hard pressed to support that presumption based on John's use of logos in 1Jn 1:1 (not to mention Jn 1:1, Jn 1:14, Jn 14:6).

Is not - Notice that John uses the **present tense** and the absolute negative (**ou**) which one could paraphrase as "His Word is continually, absolutely not in us!" This is a strong statement and hardly seems to be a description of a believer as suggested by some commentaries. Compare John 8:37 alluded to above, where "has no place" is **present tense** and **"no"** is absolute negation.

The **ESV Study Bible** apparently sees "Word" here as equivalent to the Gospel and concludes that "A person may have heard and assented to the Gospel message, but until it brings him to acknowledge his sin, it has not taken root."

John Stott writes their denial of sin reveals "clearly that His word has no place in our lives. This is because his word frequently declares that sin is universal (e.g. 1Ki 8:46; Ps. 14:3; Eccl. 7:20; Isa. 53:6; 64:6), and the word of the Gospel, which is a **Gospel of salvation**, clearly assumes the sinfulness of man. (BORROW [The Epistles of John : an introduction and commentary](#))

Albert Barnes says **His Word is not in us** is tantamount to "His truth; that is, we have no true religion. The whole system of Christianity is based on the fact that man is a fallen being, and needs a Saviour; and unless a man admits that, of course he cannot be a Christian.

I H Marshall agrees adding that "Paul's statement that "all have sinned" (Ro 3:23) is no isolated remark; it sums up the teaching of Scripture on the universality of sin. Not only so; the scriptural revelation of God emphasizes his character as a God who forgives sin, and this description would be pointless if men had no sins to be forgiven. Those who deny their sin thus fall into the serious sin of making God out to be a liar. By no stretch of the imagination can they be said to have his word in them. The message of God, mediated through Christian tradition, has not affected their belief or their conduct... John is speaking of hearing and accepting the Christian message. (Marshall, I. H. The Epistles of John. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Eerdmans Publishing)

Ian Mackervoy in the Easy English commentary states the matter plainly "Those who say that they **have not sinned** cut themselves off from God. They have not believed the word of God. They do not know the Lord Jesus. They have not believed the truth of the Gospel. They cannot have the new life that the Lord Jesus gives. He gives this life to those who trust in him. ([1 John: How can I be Sure?](#))

William Harris agrees concludes that "Once again, the author makes it plain that the situation of the opponents who are claiming this is serious: they do not really have God's word (the message about eternal life revealed by Jesus Christ, cf. 1Jn 1:1) residing in them, although they claim that they do. ([1 John 1:5-22: Exegetical Commentary](#))

Smalley writes that "The **"word"** (logos) of God may refer to the personal Logos (as in John 1:1-14). Equally, it could refer to the message of the gospel, the proclamation about the Word (see 1Jn 1:1; cf. also 1Jn 2:14; Jn 17:6; Acts 4:31). The meaning in this latter case would be that those, like the heretics, who claim that they have not sinned cut themselves off from all that God has said to man in Christ, and from all that he continues to say through the Christian preaching of the apostles. (**Word Biblical Commentary : 1,2,3 John**)

John MacArthur concludes chapter one noting that "All three categories of false claimants to fellowship with God (1Jn 1:6, 8, 10) fail John's second doctrinal test by denying sin's certainty. Thus they prove that **His word** [truth] **is not in** them. Anyone, even a professed believer seeking to cover up his or her sin, is in the depths of spiritual darkness and deception, and blasphemes God. Conversely, when those truly in the fellowship fall into sin, they do not deny sin's presence or their propensity toward it (Ro 7:14-25; 1Ti 1:12-15; cf. Ps 32:5; 51:1, 3; Pr 28:13). Instead, they openly and honestly confess their sins before the Lord and repent of them... Jesus' parable of the Pharisee (Lk 18:13, 14, cp Pr 26:12, 1Cor 6:9, 10, Gal 5:19-21, Eph 5:5) and the publican (tax collector) makes clear that one cannot be justified apart from an honest confession of his or her sinfulness ([Macarthur J. 1-3 John Moody](#))

Hiebert adds that "God's **Word** as "the truth in the concrete form of the Scriptures, the inspired utterances of God's mind," (and) has found no place in (these individual's) inner life and being. (They have) rejected the most elemental application of God's **Word** on (their) own heart and conscience. ([1 John 1:5-2-6 Exposition](#))

Lenski comments that "To have God's **Word "in us"** is to have received it in the heart, to hold it in faith, to be governed by it and by all it says to us sinners. It is not in us when we close our hearts to it and believe, hold, follow something else. This is **making God a liar**. There is a formal acceptance of the Word, but this alone does not place his Word "in us," the truth "in us" (1Jn 1:8).

Gill comments that "**Word**" is "either Christ the **Word** of God, or rather the **word** of God which declares these things (Ed: cp "The Gospel"); no regard is had unto it; it "**is not with us**"... it is not used and attended to as the rule and standard of truth, but is cast away and despised; at least it has no place in the hearts of such, nor does it work effectually; for, was this the case, they would have other notions of themselves than (to falsely believe) that (they are) sinless creatures. ([1 John 1:10 Commentary](#))

McDermott writes that "to assert one's sinlessness is evidence of one's failure to grasp and internalize the truth of the Gospel message (Believers Church Bible Commentary)

I like the meditations from **365 Days with Spurgeon** which relate to the First John chapter one...

Three things about the Christian life which the Christian needs to remember at all times:—the **fact of sin** (1John 1:8, 10), the **forgiveness of sin** (1John 1:7, 9; 2:1-2) and the **fight with sin** (1John 2:1). The first should protect us from pride, the second from despair and the third from license. Forget any one of these and

you are at risk. (From 365 Days with Spurgeon related to sermon [The Sinner's Advocate](#))

We can claim that we have fellowship with God (1John 1:6), that we have no sin and have not sinned (1John 1:8, 10), that we know God (1John 2:4), that we are in the light (1John 2:9) and that we love God (1John 4:20) **without a single word of it being true**. Jacob claimed to be Esau (Genesis 27:19, 24), but that could never turn him into Esau. He fooled Isaac, but we can never fool God. (From 365 Days with Spurgeon related to sermon [Sincerity and Duplicity](#))

Word (3056)(**logos** from **légō** = to speak with words; English = logic, logical) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words. Although **Lógos** is most often translated **word** which Webster defines as "something that is said, a statement, an utterance", the Greek understanding of **lógos** is somewhat more complex. In the Greek mind and as used by secular and philosophical Greek writers, **lógos** did not mean merely the name of an object but was an expression of the thought behind that object's name.

Guzik sees **His Word** as a personification writing that "The idea that **His word is not in us** is related to the idea that Jesus is the Word of life (1John 1:1); if we refuse to see sin in us, we show that Jesus is not in us. (**Ed:** Compare John 1:1, 1:14) **Comment:** As discussed above, when this Word is continually, absolutely not in a person, one can hardly say that person is a genuine follower of Christ! What is interesting is that Guzik earlier had

Vine feels that "**His Word** (logos) is the truth in the concrete form of the Scriptures, the inspired utterances of God's mind. [Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Lenski has some insightful thoughts on **His Word** noting that "This **Word** is called **the truth** in 1Jn 1:6 and 1Jn 1:8 (cp John 17:17) and "the light" in 1Jn 1:7. This truth and this light are the contents of **His Word**, and they come to us in **His Word**. We do not reduce this Word to a reference to the Gospel, to only the Old Testament, or to those parts of the New Testament that John's readers had. The whole Word of God declares that we are sinners. It says so in a large number of places. From beginning to end it deals with us as with sinners. Its history, its law, its Gospel present sinners, sinners: lost sinners, ransomed sinners, saved sinners, damned sinners, glorified sinners.

Westcott writes that **His word** relates to the truth (1Jn 1:8) noting first that it is "the word of God, 1Jn 2:7, 14. Compare John 8:55; 10:35; 17:6, 14, 17. The phrase is used specially for the **Gospel message**, which is the crown of all revelation: Luke 5:1; 8:11, 21; 11:28; and habitually in the Acts: 4:31; 6:2, 7; 8:14; 11:1; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 44, 46, etc. The '**word**' here differs from the '**truth**' in 1Jn 1:8 as the process differs from the result. The '**truth**' is the sum considered objectively of that which the '**word**' expresses. The **word** as a living power makes the **truth** real little by little to him who receives it (John 8:31, 32). And further, the '**word**' is personal: it calls up the thought of the speaker: it is 'the word of God.' The truth on the other hand is abstract, though it is embodied in a Person. The word, like the truth, can be regarded both as the moving principle which stirs the man and as the sphere in which the man moves. The 'word abides in him' (John 5:38, comp. 8:37), and conversely he 'abides in the word' (John 8:31). ([1 John 1 Commentary](#))

Marvin Vincent without explaining why says that His Word does not refer to "the personal Word, as John 1:1, but the divine message of the Gospel. See Lk 5:1; 8:11; Acts 4:31; 6:2, 7, etc. Compare "the truth is not in us" (1Jn 1:8). The truth is the substance of the Word. The Word carries the truth. The Word both moves the man (John 8:31, 32) and abides in him (John 5:38; 8:37). The man also abides in the word (John 8:31).([Vincent - Word Studies](#))

Hiebert makes the point that "Unlike the two previous false claims, for the third John offered no remedy. For such willful rebellion against God and His Word there is no remedy. Unless that rebellion is consciously terminated, no possibility of acceptance and fellowship with God is possible."

Jim Bomkamp lists the following marks of a genuine believer from John's first chapter "(1). Walks in the light - 1Jn 1:6 (2). Has fellowship with other Christians who walk in the light - 1Jn 1:7 (3). Believes he has a sin nature - 1Jn 1:8 (4). Occasionally sins - 1Jn 1:10 (**Ed:** I would add a fifth - instead of sin deniers, genuine believers are sin confessors!) (See [34 Marks of a True Christian in 1 John](#)).

Lehman Strauss applies this section on denying sin to believers writing "While every born-again one stands pardoned through Christ's blood, it is good for us to remember, and not deny, our former iniquities. David remembered his transgressions (Psalm 51:3). So did Paul (Galatians 1:13; 1 Timothy 1:15). We may rejoice daily in our unalterable position in Christ, but to remember that we were sinners, and that those sins we committed in the past we can commit again, will keep us mindful that we are debtors to God's grace and that our dependence is upon Him. It will stimulate us to a deeper devotion to our Lord. It will promote watchfulness, exercise a spirit of repentance and faith, and cultivate holiness.

Barker sounds a serious note in his comments writing that "The author's statement "his word has no place in our lives" means that the Word proclaimed, the tradition received, or the witness from the OT Scriptures has no place in those who deny their sin. The

most elemental presence of the Word of God in the heart and conscience has been denied. Consequently the possibility of hearing a redemptive Word is denied. The ability to live by the Word is removed (see note on 10). The possibility of receiving the forgiveness offered by God is lost. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

Kistemaker agrees - If we should go so far as to say that we have not sinned, in spite of all the evidence, then the Word of God has no place in our lives. And that means that we are unbelievers who have rejected the gospel of salvation. ([Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. NT Commentary Set. Baker Book](#))

Westcott sees "The **word**, like the **truth**, can be regarded both as the moving principle which stirs the man and as the sphere in which the man moves. The word abides in him (John 5:38, comp. Jn 8:37), and conversely he 'abides in the word' John 8:31)."

[Steven Cole](#) adds his thoughts on holiness writing that "Every time I see the bumper sticker, '**Christians are forgiven, not perfect**;' I want to add another line, "But, they're striving for holiness." As it stands, the bumper sticker seems to say, "God accepts me, faults and all, so you need to accept me, too!" Okay, but please give me some assurance that you're working on things! As the author of Hebrews states (Heb 12:14ESV), we are to "*strive for ... the holiness without which no one will see the Lord*" Holiness is not an optional accessory that you may add to your Christian life at some point, if you so choose. Holiness is essential. If you are not striving to grow in holiness in the sight of God, you need to examine whether you know Christ as Savior at all. Every blood-bought child of God desires to please the Lord Jesus who gave Himself on the cross to save us from our sins.

J Ligon Duncan gives us an illustration and an explanation of "have not sinned" - In the first couple of years that I was a professor at Reformed Seminary, a young couple came to me. They were in one of my classes, and after class they came to me and made an appointment, and they met me in my office. And they were deeply burdened by something. They were both godly and committed Christians from everything that I could tell about them, and they both wanted to serve the Lord on the mission field. They had both been to a Bible college, and in the course of our conversation it was clear to me that they were struggling greatly with their assurance. In fact, both of them were so struggling with their assurance that they were not sure at all that they were believers. They longed to serve the Lord Jesus Christ on the field of missions, but their assurance was profoundly challenged. In the course of our conversation, they explained that a man who taught at their Bible college, who was actually a Presbyterian minister, had stood up in the pulpit and announced in chapel that he had not sinned in three years. And he was exhorting all the young people to follow in his way and become perfect in Christ. I must confess that I muttered to myself as they said that, that he had said that he had not sinned in three years, "Yep, well you just did." But, you see, the affect of that teaching on them was this: they figured, "Well, if he loves Jesus, maybe we're not Christians because we are continuing to struggle with sin." I want to stress this was not a couple that was living in a very shallow, superficial way the Christian life; they were committed; they wanted to serve the Lord on the mission field, and they were deeply unsettled. Why? Because this person had claimed to be perfect! You know what John says about that? You make God out to be a liar when you make that claim, because God's word from beginning to end says that sin is a present experience even for the believer.

In fact, the Bible tells us four important truths about ourselves that we must always bear in mind. Let me just share them with you quickly.

(1) One, believers are still sinners. Don't believe me? Go look at Paul in Romans 7:14-25. When he says, "Lord, I do the things that I don't want to do, and I don't do the things that I do want to do. What a wretched man that I am!" (Ro 7:24-note) That's a mature apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ saying that I still struggle with sin. Believers are still sinners.

(2) Believers, secondly, must by the Spirit strive against sin. "*The Christian life is*," J.C. Ryle says, "*a holy violence, a conflict, a warfare, a fight, a soldier's life, a wrestling against sin.*" That's the characteristic of the true Christian life: it's a fight against sin. (Gal 5:16-note, Gal 5:17-note, cp 1Ti 6:12)

(3) Thirdly, believers are no longer under the domination or the dominion or the mastery of sin. Jesus has liberated us from the bondage of sin (Ro 6:6-note, Ro 6:11-note, Ro 6:12-note, Ro 6:14-note). There was a once upon a time when we were under darkness and night, and we could do no right. But now in the mercy of God, we have been brought into saving relationship with Jesus Christ, and we are no longer bent in our wills towards sin. Our desires have been changed (**ED: Have your desires changed?**) so that our desire is for the glory of Christ, for the love of Christ, for the honor of Christ, to live for Christ, though we do not do it perfectly. Our desires have been changed, and we are no longer under the dominion of sin.

(4) And fourth and finally, the Christian life is characterized by growth and holiness, but not perfection. As Augustine said to Pelagius, "*No, the church is not the place for perfect Christians; it's a hospital where sick sinners get well.*" Yes, there's growth; yes, there's sanctification, but there's never perfection (**Ed:** Not in this life, but there is in the life to come!). We grow in holiness (Heb 12:14KJV+) , and holiness is serious business,

but sin will always dog us here. In this world, we fight against sin, but sin will not have the last word. And at the last day, God will liberate us from sin (1Cor 15:55, 56, 57+). John wants us to understand that reality about the Christian life over against all false teaching which either says, “Sin doesn’t matter,” and, “so who cares?” on the one hand; and that teaching which says, “In the Christian life, there’s no need to war against sin anymore. You already have received the victory over sin; you don’t need to war against it any more.” John says both of those are wrong. Both of those are errors, and they cause a defection in Christian experience. And he’ll tell us how we definitively deal with that in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 2, which we’ll get to next week. Let’s go to the Lord in prayer. ([1 John 1:8-10 - Dealing With Sin](#))

John MacArthur - A SENSITIVITY TO SIN (Borrow [Strength for today](#))

*True believers are
sensitive to their sin and confess it.*

Throughout Scripture, light is used as a metaphor for truth—both intellectual and moral truth (cf. Ps. 119:105, 130; Prov. 6:23). When the apostle John writes, “God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5), he is stating that the Lord is absolutely sinless since light and darkness cannot coexist.

Some claim to have fellowship with God (v. 6), to have no sin (v. 8), and even to have never sinned (v. 10). But they are living in darkness; it is characteristic of unbelievers to be oblivious to the sins in their lives. But that is not true of genuine believers. They have a right sense of sin: they “walk in the light as He Himself is in the light” (v. 7), and they “confess [their] sins” (v.9). True believers know that if they want to commune with God, they need to confess their sins and turn to Christ as their “Advocate” before God (2:1).

The apostle Paul was very sensitive to the sinful realities of his life (Rom. 7:14–25). What about you? Are you aware of the spiritual battle raging within you? Do you realize you must live a holy life to have fellowship with God? Are you willing to confess and forsake any sin in your life? Do you realize you can choose not to sin? Are you weary of doing battle with the sin in your life (cf. Rom. 7:24)? If these things are true of you, rejoice in the assurance of your salvation.

Suggestions for Prayer: Confess any known sin to God right now, then forsake it.

For Further Study: Read Romans 7:14–25. Make a list of all the ways Paul was sensitive to his sin. ✧ How many of those can you relate to? ✧ How should you respond?

[An Insult To God](#)

He who does not believe God has made Him a liar. —1 John 5:10

Today's Scripture : 1 John 1:1-10

A woman who was extremely upset phoned me several years ago. She said she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Apparently she had strayed far from the Lord, but now had returned to Him and truly wanted to do His will. The memories of her days of spiritual wandering, however, kept haunting her. She somehow couldn’t accept the fact that God had forgiven her sins, and she had no peace or joy. But worse than that, by her attitude she was saying to God, “I don’t believe You. You don’t mean what You say!”

I said to her, “Suppose that one of your dearest friends was careless and broke a piece of your best china. Feeling very sorry, she sincerely apologized for not being more careful. You assured her that you would not hold it against her. Now, what would you think if every time you saw that person, she recalled how foolish she had been and again asked for forgiveness? After a while you would probably become exasperated and say, ‘Listen, put the matter out of your mind. I have sincerely forgiven you, and I don’t want you to mention it again!’”

God is also true to His Word, for He promises to cleanse us when we acknowledge our failures. So confess your sins to the Lord. Then believe that you’re forgiven. By: Richard DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

In the deep, silent depths, far away from the shore
Where they never may rise to trouble me more—
God has buried my sins where no mortal may see;
He has cast all of them in the depths of the sea.
—Anon.

Having given your sins to God, don't try to take them back.