

# 1 JOHN: DEFEATING MISLEADING SPIRITUAL ERROR TRULY TO COMMUNE WITH GOD

## Part III: Correcting A False Spiritual Fellowship As A Believer

(1 John 1:8-2:2)

### I. Introduction

- A. In our last lesson, we found a believer loses fellowship with God if he sins in violating Scripture, and that can raise unsettling concerns about his status with God: some hold that once saved, we are without sin so that we cannot sin where others think sin causes us to lose our salvation! Similarly, dire and varied views on these subjects were known by John's readers who faced a variety of errors on sin and sanctification in beliefs like Gnosticism, Docetism, the error of Cerinthus or Judaeian apostasy, etc. (see our 1st lesson).
- B. Well, 1 John 1:8-2:2 reveals the true state of the believer who sins, and how it is to be corrected:

### II. Correcting A False Spiritual Fellowship As A Believer, 1 John 1:8-2:2.

- A. After mentioning that "walking in the light" of God's written revelation of Scripture and/or the words of God's Son, Jesus Christ produces wonderful fellowship with God (last lesson and 1 John 1:7a), the Apostle John wrote that the "blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John 1:7a KJV.
- B. The issue of sin and the believer leads to questions regarding those who have sinned since salvation, and what it takes to get them back into fellowship with God, and John addresses these concerns in 1:8-2:2:
  - 1. John reveals that even those believers who fellowship with God still have a **nature** to sin, cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, fn. to 1 John 1:8a; indeed, if we deny this, God's truth is not in us, 1 John 1:8b:
    - a. The "we" in verse 8 directs us both to the "we" of verses 1-4 that refer to the apostles who witnessed Christ's incarnation as well as to the believers to whom John wrote, 1 John 1:4.
    - b. Accordingly, if **any** of us **believers** -- be we the Apostles of Christ or readers of John's Epistle -- claim that we have no sin **nature**, we deceive ourselves, and God's truth is not in us, 1 John 1:8!
    - c. It is thus errant to suggest a believer is experientially free from his old sin nature at faith in Christ!
  - 2. That thought leads to the natural conclusion that we can sin as believers, and thus step outside of God's fellowship by thus walking in the darkness of disobedience to God's Word. John anticipates a concern as to how such a situation can be rectified for the believer, and gives us the answer in 1 John 1:9:
    - a. If with our sin nature we choose to disobey Scripture and walk in darkness outside of Scripture's directives, our path to restored fellowship with God comes by confessing that sin, or agreeing with God that we sinned: (a) the word translated "confess" is **homologeō** in the Greek N.T., and means "admit, acknowledge" in agreement with what God says about the sin as being sin, U. B. S. Grk. N.T., 1966 ed., p. 814; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N.T., p. 571. (b) Thus, God forgives us our sin performed after salvation when we admit to God is sin as He defines it.
    - b. In the process, God is **both reliable** (always) as well as **just** (fully) not only to forgive us the sin we name, but to cleanse us from all the unrighteousness we have that is associated with the sin that we in blindness due to the spiritual darkness we have either can not or do not see! (1 John 1:9b)
  - 3. Lest we claim we have never sinned as a believer, John corrects us: we make God out to be a liar, and His Word is not even in us when we make such a claim, 1 John 1:10.
  - 4. A believer may then conclude that since acts of sin have been performed by every believer after salvation it is useless to try not to sin; John anticipates this response, and reveals he has written his words to encourage believers **not** to sin, 1 John 2:1a. Nevertheless, **if** we **do** sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous Who is able and willing to give us forgiveness based upon His unlimited atonement provisions in the cross when we sin and confess it as sin, 1 John 2:2.

***Lesson:*** *If a believer learns he is out of communion with God for disobeying Scripture, he has not lost his salvation so that he must receive Christ again, for every believer still has a sin nature and every believer has sinned in violating Scripture after salvation. What God wants such a believer to do is to rely on His Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, and, based on God's forgiving capacity through Christ's great atonement, confess that sin to God for full cleansing and restored fellowship with Him!*

***Application:*** *Though God wants us to obey His Word, when we DO violate it and thus sin, He wants us to confess that violation for restored fellowship with Him followed by a return to heeding His Word.*