

=BIBLE PROMISES=

Lesson 3

Bible Promises About God's Forgiveness

AIM: to teach my pupils the wonderful promise of God's forgiveness whenever they confess their sin.

POINT OF CONTACT: Discuss this thought with the pupils: All of us are members of a few different groups of people. We are members of a family; some are members of schools; we are members of Sunday school classes and Sunday evening Bible classes. How is it at your house or in your school or in your Sunday school classroom whenever you have done something wrong? Are family ties automatically broken whenever you have misbehaved? Does misbehavior cause every family member to lose his name and identity? Whenever you have disobeyed concerning the completion of some assignment which your teacher gave you, were you cut off from the class? In Sunday school did your teacher slam the door in your face the moment you might have misbehaved and deny you access to the classroom? On the other hand, whenever you have had a behavior problem, did the spirit of your relationship with the teacher remain congenial, happy, in a pleasant mood? No, the air became tense and relationships became strained, didn't they?

INTRODUCTION: We have studied two wonderful promises in our series of Bible promises. We have learned that Jesus has set up certain patterns for the continued life of the world and the universe and that He is watching over His creation to keep it going in the ways which He has set up. (Repeat Genesis 8:22 with the class.) We have also learned that man sinned and turned his back upon his Creator, but that Jesus loved people enough to make a way for them to be brought back to Him. (Repeat with your pupils John 5:24.) When a person gets saved, he learns that he has embarked on a completely new life. He finds himself to be the possessor of a new nature. He also finds that he has retained the old nature. The new Christian finds that a conflict has started in his life and that he must deal with it or be frustrated in his newfound faith. The promise contained in this week's lesson is vital to every Christian and his way of life. The promise is I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is another promise which contains a condition which must be met by the promisee before the Promisor can fulfill his obligation.

I. THE "WE" OF I JOHN 1:9. To whom does this verse apply?

1. This verse applies only to saved people—Christians.
 - 1) They have all had the same experience as the man described in Luke 18:13. This man saw his sinful condition, admitted his condition, and prayed for God's mercy.
 - 2) They have received Jesus as Saviour. Saved people have understood the truth of their awful fate of an eternity in Hell because of the original sinful condition of their hearts. They have learned that Jesus, the only Way to God, shed His blood on the cross because He wanted them to be saved. (Romans 3:10; 3:23; 5:12; 6:23; 5:8; 10:9-13.)
 - 3) They are the recipients of this promise. (The words of this book apply to present-day Christians as much as to those in the day of the Apostle John.) In I John 2:1, they are addressed as "my little children." When people are saved, they are classified as having been born into the family of God; they are born again, John 3:1-8.
2. The verse encompasses all who want to enjoy God's fellowship, I John 1:1-7.
 - 1) Every saved person becomes a member of God's family, Romans 8:15, 16. Every saved person therefore becomes a brother or a sister with Christ, Matthew 12:49, 50.)
 - 2) Not every saved person is always in fellowship with Jesus. Fellowship means companionship, enjoying association in common interests, activities, feelings or experiences. The saved person who chooses not to make a habit of obeying God's Word, the saved person who lives his life in the darkness of the world's ways of behavior, is not in fellowship with God.
 - 3) Every saved person can enjoy God's fellowship. This can be done by conducting his life according to the light of God's leadership and counsel. God's leadership and counsel are made clear in His Word and through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
3. Every saved person possesses two natures--the old man and the new man, Ephesians 4:24; 6:11.
 - 1) The two natures are at war with each other. The new man is also at war with the Devil.

- 2) Sometimes the old nature gets the “upper hand,” Romans 7:23-25. Close fellowship with God is broken for the duration of these times.

II. THE “CONFESS” OF I JOHN 1:9.

1. To confess is to admit to faults or sins. We are to tell God what sins we have committed.
2. We are to tell one another our faults whenever this confession will be helpful, James 5:15, 16.
3. Our confession is really of no avail unless we are willing to forsake the sin which we confess. II Chronicles 7:14 includes “turn from their wicked ways.”

III. THE “HE” OF I JOHN 1:9. Who must keep the promise which is stated here?

1. God the Father. He sent the Word of life from Heaven to earth, John 1:1, 14. He sent His Light into the world, John 1:9. Jesus is the eternal life which was with the Father before He came to earth, I John 1:1, 2.
2. He accepted Jesus’ blood as being the perfect agent needed to wash away sin, I John 1:7. When the Father saw Jesus’ blood on the mercy seat, He was satisfied.
3. He listens to our Advocate, I John 2:1. An advocate is one who pleads for another—a lawyer. Jesus, our Advocate, is more than a hired lawyer on whom we would call for the purposes of pleading our case. He identifies Himself with us—He comes and “stands alongside” us as He pleads mercy and cleansing for us—Jesus is our righteous Advocate. He has no ulterior motive in helping us. An earthly lawyer who would plead a case for us in court is expecting his fee—the better the case goes for us, the higher the fee. An earthly lawyer might be looking for prestige from a case which he would try to win for us—this would help him to handle more cases, to make more money, to gain a higher position in society. Jesus’ only motive is love; He wants to do all to help us.
4. He is our “cleaner” who washes us clean. His cleansing agent will never wear out nor lose its effectiveness. His blood keeps on cleansing from all sin.
5. God is faithful and just. These are firm characteristics which will never change. They are as permanent as God’s love and mercy. God never changes, Malachi 3:6.

IV. THE “SINS” OF I JOHN 1:9.

1. This does not apply to the original sin which a person inherits. That sin was forgiven and completely covered at the time that the sinner prayed, saying that he knew he was a sinner, and trusted Jesus for salvation from the punishment for that sin. This verse applies to the saved person.
2. These are sins which are committed in our daily walk of life. Not one person can honestly say that he is free from committing sin, I John 1:10.
3. These sins can mar our fellowship with God. To continue committing sins is to walk in darkness. To walk in darkness is to have no fellowship with God, I John 1:5, 6.

V. THE FORGIVENESS AND CLEANSING OF I JOHN 1:9.

1. God’s forgiveness is absolute forgiveness. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, Psalm 103:17, 18. He promises healing and restoration as a result of the Christian’s confession.
2. The forgiveness may also include some rebuking and chastening from the Lord, Hebrews 12:5-11. Rebuking and chastening may have preceded the Christian’s confession, II Chronicles 7:14. The Christian could avoid some of this chastening and rebuking by drawing close to the Lord day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment. The Gospel song, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” includes these lines:

“Oh what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!”
3. The cleansing of the Lord is by the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing us from all sin. It never loses its power or its effectiveness. The shed blood of Jesus satisfies the holiness and righteousness of God the Father.

CONCLUSION: Do we want to be close to God—to talk with Him and to have His directions made plain to us? James 4:8 says, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” Being a member of the household of God does not necessarily mean that we are having a close walk with the Lord. Drawing close to Him and walking in His light means that we are thus able to have fellowship with Him. What happens when we sin? Do we lose our salvation? Are we cast out of God’s family? No, we lose the joy of our salvation. The fellowship is restored sweetly again when we confess the sin that has caused us to stray from the Lord out of the pure light into the shadows or even into darkness. The reason that the instruction about how to maintain fellowship with God was given is “that our joy may be full.” This joy is a main ingredient of the Christian life—both now and hereafter. Its whole sum is JOY! (I John 1:4.)

MEMORY VERSE: I John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”