

FREEDOM!!!!

1 John 1:8-10

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”

Focus on verse 9.

“If we CONFESS our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

IF WE CONFESS...that is giving us the responsibility. IF shows that we can choose to, or not to, confess.

CONFESS (from the dictionary.com)

1. To acknowledge or avow (a fault, crime, misdeed, or weakness) by way of revelation.
2. To own or admit as true.
3. To declare or acknowledge.

Confessing serves 2 purposes. The first is to show God that we realize our action was a mistake, and we take responsibility. The second is to identify what the sin actually is.

When in prayer, at least personally, for me. I will ask God for His Forgiveness. But I don't specify forgiveness for what! I glance over it, I say things like “God, I know I've sinned. I'm sorry for what I did wrong, and I pray You can forgive me. Help me to have the strength not to do it again.”

But that's like asking your math teacher to help you not fail your next test. When she asks you “what do you need help with?” You cant just say “Math”, you must specify and identify the troubling equations and concepts. In the same way, we cant just tell God, “sin”. We need to acknowledge and declare, own and admit the thoughts, actions, and temptations that cause us to fall. Only then, when we have not only admitted those weaknesses to God, but also to ourselves, will that particular struggle begin to see resolution. Will we begin to see freedom from that sin.

Just claiming to be Christian does not free us from our sin. We must take that deliberate step to CONFESS our sin to God, in complete honesty and total vulnerability. Only when we are aware of our sin, and confess it to God, admitting to Him and to ourselves that it is present in our lives, will He forgive us and then purify us from our sins. Only when we own our sins can we be free enough to give them away.

Lets look at Romans 8:1-2

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you^[a] free from the law of sin and death.

That's a huge promise to us from God. There is no more condemnation for those who live with Christ Jesus. Through Jesus, the Holy Spirit has set us free from sin and death. But that doesn't mean we can just expect forgiveness without any action on our part.

Action doesn't always mean doing something. Sometimes, it can mean "no longer doing something." When it comes to the sin in our lives, the best action isn't to do the sin better, or hide it more effectively, or even just to do it less. The best action is to Stop. "I'll have sex less often." Or "I'll only bully that kid 3 days a week, not 5." Or even, "I won't get drunk EVERY time I go out, only on special occasions." Are not appropriate responses. But how can you stop something if you don't even know you are doing it? Or maybe the better way to put it is, why would you stop doing something that you haven't acknowledged is wrong? That is the importance of identifying your sins, making them apparent to you so you know what you need to ask forgiveness for.

Its not always that easy, either. Some sins are clear and obvious, while others aren't. I'm guilty of gossip. I'm guilty of lust. I'm guilty of judging myself as better and superior than others, even when it comes to my faith. The problem is, those are more internal. The negative effects from those aren't clear, and most of the time no one else will really even notice you do those things. I've gotten away with them for years. If I don't admit to myself that each of those things is a problem for me, I won't understand that I need forgiveness for them, and I will never ask for it.

That is a tough thing to overcome. Especially if I try to do it alone.

James 5:16

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."

As Christians, and as a group of believers gathering together, we are partaking in community. In fellowship. This is a very godly principle. Church, in whatever form it may be, is the place we are supposed to come to feel most open. most vulnerable, and most willing to be honest about our shortcomings. It is here, in your group of Christian brothers and sisters that you are meant to CONFESS your sins to each other. To offer your support and encouragement, advice and PRAYER to help each other heal. It is here that you are supposed to receive support and encouragement, advice and PRAYER to be helped to heal. By confessing your sins, not just to yourself and God, but also to each other, you are inviting someone to hold you accountable. Accountable to yourself, to your actions and to your weak will. It is just about impossible to overcome a sin that has

dragged you down for months or years. It is a constant struggle, an addiction of sorts. By confessing sins to each other, we are seeking the counsel of others. We are asking for someone to stand beside us and call us out on the sins we fall into time and time again. No longer will you be able to hide behind the idea that no one else, other than God, is even aware that you are struggling with these matters. And that is a powerful thing in itself. Having a friend who is willing to ask you how much you struggle, and fail, and truthfully digress as much as progress through out your days.

But most importantly, it is a powerful thing to have a righteous person pray for you. God honors the prayers of the righteous. To reach out and show your mistakes to the righteous people around you is one of the most self-helping acts you can make. The righteous around you will remember you in their prayers, and God will hear your confession from not just you anymore, but also from those you have trusted to hold you accountable. God will know you truly seek redemption for the sins you have struggled with for so long, and He will help you to be healed from the damage they have caused you. As I have said, these sins do not have to be something big and obvious. Oftentimes, the easier to hide sins are the hardest to escape. But nothing can hide from God, and with prayer from righteous people on your side, you will be healed. It wont happen right away, and it will probably take longer and include more pain than you would understand. But you will receive healing.

Now I know this sounds like I am telling you, you are at fault for every sin. And if you don't stop sinning, that is your weakness and flaw. Here's the thing. We all sin. We are all weak and flawed. And none of us can rid our own lives of sin without help.

YOUTUBE VIDEO- Iodine - BluefishTV.com
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-O0pxpTEG5g&NR=1>

1 John 2:1-2

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus Christ not only took the sins of the world onto His shoulders when He died on the cross at the time, but He took all future sins onto His shoulders at the same time. That is why there is no condemnation for those who live with Christ Jesus. But if we abuse the sacrifice that He made for us, and sin with reckless abandonment, or claim that we do not sin and so do not need to change our ways, then we are trivializing the death of Christ on

the cross and directly calling God a liar. If we reach that point, we are no longer living with Christ Jesus.

For a practical application, what I hope you get out of tonight, isn't that you are a bad person who sins too much. God forgives your sins, there is no condemnation for those living with Christ Jesus. What I want you to get out of tonight, is that when you ask God for forgiveness, don't sugar coat it. Be real, and honest, and blunt. Admit your sins to God, and admit your sins to yourself, and admit your sins to righteous people. Own what you do so you can give it back to God and He can finally free you from it.