

# LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS

A Study of John's Three Letters.

## Our study begins in: 1 John 1:5-2:2

One of the primary benefits that John discovered from walking with Jesus was fellowship with Him. In this section of the letter, John chose to address the one thing that hinders our fellowship with Christ and others – sin. Therefore, as we navigate through this section together we must realize that John's heart was to pastor his audience beyond the separation caused by sin and so return to fellowship with Jesus Christ.

The most direct route back to fellowship with God is through continual repentance which manifests itself in confession. John wrote that if we confess our sins God will cleanse us from unrighteousness.

Several things happen in our relationship with God when we practice the discipline of confession in our lives. First, we get to experience the faithfulness and justice of God. He promises to restore our hearts every time we lay them before Him. We also get to experience the forgiveness and purification from our Savior, Jesus Christ.

So what does it mean to confess our sins? Well, it starts with being honest about the sin in our life. We have to spill out the mess in our hearts in order for Christ to clean it up.

John warned us to avoid arrogantly thinking that we are without sin. To think this way is dangerous, because the gospels teach that the grace of God is extended to sinners; not those who think they are righteous enough to receive it (see Matthew 9:11-13).

Therefore, in our quest to confess our sins before God may we never become overly confident like the Pharisee in Luke 18:9-12. Instead, let's remain honest about the specific sin in our life in order to continually renew the relationships we share with God and others.

Finally, we are reminded that Christ's blood was shed on the cross as punishment for our sin. Through this, we received forgiveness. John desired that the forgiveness of our sin would set us free from the cycle of sin in our lives.

### Discussion Questions

How often do you confess your sins to God?

Do you have anyone in your life that you trust enough to confess sin to?

Confession starts with honesty. Are you honest with yourself about the sin in your life?

Another aspect of confession is getting specific. Are you specific about the sins in your life?

Read the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector from Luke 18:9-14. Which character best represents your life over the past 6 months? Explain.

How does it feel to know that Christ paid for your sins?

### Next Steps

Start practicing the discipline of confession and find freedom today. Don't wait any longer.

Get somebody in your life that you can be honest with about sin. If you don't have that "somebody" in your life yet, ask God to supply somebody to you. Be open to God answering your prayer.