

How often do you need to confess your sins to God?

Confession—experiencing the results.

What should you do if you still feel guilty after you have confessed your sins?

Read Psalms 32:5; 103:12; Isaiah 43:25; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17

What do these passages say about guilt and forgiveness?

How would your life be affected by applying these truths?

In light of what we have looked at concerning guilt and forgiveness, how could you complete this statement? “When I have confessed all my sins, I

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4 GROWING IN GOD’S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Take some time before you go to bed tonight to apply the things you have learned about God’s love and forgiveness. Make a “sin/forgiveness” list.

Try to spend 15 minutes or so each day alone with God in Bible reading and prayer. Here are some suggestions:

1. Read the story of the young man who ran away from his father and wasted his inheritance. The story was told by Jesus and is found in Luke 15:11-32. *What does the story illustrate about our relationship with God, our forgiveness and our fellowship with Him?*
2. Read Galatians 5:16-23. Notice the differences that will take place as you allow God to work in your life. As you become aware of an area of your life that displeases God, deal with it according to 1 John 1:9 and enjoy your fellowship with God.
3. Read Psalm 32. *What was David’s experience with confession in this psalm? How did he feel before he confessed his sin? How did he feel after dealing with his sin?*

Understanding God’s great love and forgiveness allows Christians to enjoy a growing fellowship with Him.

Q *But why are many Christians not experiencing the power God has made available to live the Christian life?*

A Discover the answer through the next study entitled Your New Life in the Spirit.

Your New Life In God's Love



Remember: Your relationship with God is secure because, through Christ, you are forgiven and accepted by God.

In addition to providing this secure **relationship**, God also desires for you to walk closely with Him and communicate with Him throughout each day. This is called **fellowship**.

When we choose to sin, our **relationship** (our position as God’s children) is not affected, but our **fellowship** is interrupted.

Father-child example: Your relationship with your earthly father is permanent. No matter what you do, you will always be his child. But, suppose you rebelled against your father and angrily left home in spite of his efforts to reconcile your grievances.

Would you still be your father’s child?

What would happen to your fellowship?

Consider these differences between your **relationship** and **fellowship** with God:

Relationship With God

Began when you received Christ (John 1:12)
Is everlasting (1 Peter 1:3,4)
Maintained by God (John 10:27-29)
Never changes (Hebrews 13:8)

Fellowship With God

Began when you received Christ (Colossians 2:6)
Can be hindered (Psalm 32:3-5)
Maintained in part by us (1 John 1:9)
Changes when we sin (Psalm 66:18)

How can we consistently experience fellowship with God?

1 THE NEED FOR GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Sin is a barrier for both Christians and non-Christians. Sin keeps us all from experiencing God's love. But many people are confused about what sin is and what it is not.

What is sin? It's more than cheating, lying, immoral behavior, etc. These actions are only the results of an attitude of sin. A simple definition of sin is: doing what we want instead of what God wants—both in actions and attitudes.

What are the results of sin?

For non-Christians, sin prohibits a **relationship** with God.

Read Romans 3:23.

What about unbelievers who try to live good, moral lives? Are they separated from God? Why or why not?

For Christians, sin inhibits **fellowship** with God.

Read 1 John 1:6-8.

SUMMARY: All of us sin. Therefore, you and I both need to experience God's forgiveness for our attitudes and actions.

2 THE BASIS FOR GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Christ's death is the basis for forgiveness to bring us into a proper **relationship** with God. **Read 1 Peter 3:18.**

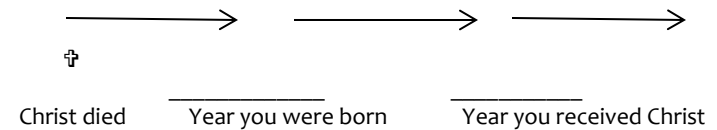
Christ's death is also the basis for forgiveness in our daily **fellowship** with God. **Read Colossians 2:13,14.**

In the day when this was written, "list of sins" meant an itemized bond nailed to the prison cell door. It listed every crime for which the prisoner had been convicted. When the sentence was served or restitution paid, the authorities removed the list and wrote "paid in full." The prisoner used this as proof that he could never be tried for those crimes again. The believer who trusts Christ's payment for sin can never be tried again. You have a full pardon from God.

What has God done with your sin? Read Psalm 103:12, 13

How many of your sins did Christ die for?

When Christ died on the cross for you, how many of your sins were in the future?



What difference will it make in your daily life to know you are totally forgiven?

3 YOU CAN EXPERIENCE GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS EVERY DAY

Even though you are totally forgiven, you still need to deal with your sins on a day-to-day basis in order to experience continuing fellowship with God.

Put yourself in the father-child illustration. *What would you do to restore fellowship with your father?*

Let's look at how to restore your fellowship with God. **Read 1 John 1:9.**

Confession—agreeing with God about sin.

When God brings to your attention the fact that something you have done is sin, confess it. This confession involves at least three factors:

1. Agree with God that you have sinned (specific sin(s)).
2. Agree that God has already forgiven you (Col. 2:13-14).
3. Agree with God's view of your sin(s). Trust God to change your attitudes and actions toward Him and away from your sin.

By turning back to God and away from your sin, you will experience His love and forgiveness provided by Christ's death on the cross. Instead of guilt, condemnation and punishment, your fellowship with God will be restored.

Confession—putting it into practice.

1. Ask God to reveal sin in your life.
2. List these on a piece of paper. Be completely honest as this is just between you and God.
3. After completing the list, write over it the promise of 1 John 1:9.
4. Thank God for the forgiveness He has provided for you through what Christ did on the cross.
5. Tear up the list and throw it away.