

What does 1 John 1:9 mean?

A. First thing: we **will read the entire letter** out loud. It's short, and there is nothing like hearing it.

Insights from group after hearing the entire letter of 1 John read:

Love your brother, not the world.

The false teachers, "they", had done a lot of damage:

- Fear
- Attacking the person of Christ
- Saying "We don't sin"
- Hating believers
- Idolatry

The big thing is distinguishing between BELIEVERS and UNBELIEVERS.

The big subjects of the letter are ETERNAL LIFE and LOVE

The conflict, the anxiety: "Who can we trust?" What is the real truth about the Gospel?

The Lockman Foundation intro to 1 John in the NASB:

Two purposes:

1. Expose false teaching
2. Provide assurance to believers

In one sentence:

John is most concerned that children in Christ not lose their assurance of salvation and eternal life on account of false teaching, and gives the remedy of concentrating on loving the brethren.

B. **What questions do YOU have** about 1 John 1:9? Why should we study it? What are the issues in play? What are the different possible meanings for this verse?

The group posed the following questions:

1. Who are "**we**" in the letter? Who are "**they**" in the letter? "**you**" in the letter?
2. How are **conditional sentences** used in the letter?
3. Who is John addressing in chapter 1?
4. If Jesus Christ **died** for our sins, why would we have to confess them to be **forgiven**? How does 1 John 1:9 square with Romans 8:1?

5. Isn't there a contradiction between chapter 1 and chapter 3 concerning **sin**?
6. Is 1 John 1:9 simply saying that believers confess their sins?
7. Is 1 John 1:9 talking about the first time a person realizes that he is a sinner?
8. How does 1 John 1:9 relate to leadership and fellowship?
9. How are **light and darkness** used in the letter?
10. Can you lose **fellowship**?
11. What is **fellowship**? How is it related to **sin** (if at all)?

Bottom Up Questions

1. What is the Greek word for “**confess**” in 1 John 1:9? What are its meanings? Where else is it used in the New Testament?
2. Who is “**we**” in 1 John 1:9? What are the choices? What is a good approach to figuring that out?
3. What is **verbal aspect**? How does verbal aspect guide our interpretation of the verbs in 1 John 1 – in particular, the present tense verbs?
4. There are 5 “if” “thens” - **conditional sentences** – in a row in verses 6 – 10. Do you see any patterns?
5. What type of conditional sentences do we have in 1 John 1:5-10?
6. What are the different ways to interpret the conditional sentence (if, then) in the Greek New Testament? How does our choice affect the interpretation of 1 John 1:9?
7. Do the rest of the conditional sentences work if you insert the phrase “this means that” . How about “we can infer that”? Now how about if we make each conditional cause - > effect? Or “the result is that”?
8. Can anything or anyone make God a liar? In the same way, is it not true that God is faithful and righteous period, and there is nothing that must happen first in order to make God faithful and righteous?
9. How about if we insert the words “we demonstrate that” for each conditional?

Which approach – top down or bottom up – is probably going to reveal more about the meaning of 1 John 1:9? Why?

Top Down Questions

1. What does this letter have to say about **our Lord Jesus Christ**? How does it related to the person, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Where does the book take us? Where does it **start**, and where does it **end**?
3. Who is the **author** of 1 John? What else did he write in the New Testament?
4. How does 1 John relate to the **Gospel of John**? Give a striking example of a passage in the Gospel of John that a passage in 1 John “plays off”.
5. What is the **purpose** of the **Gospel of John**? What **verse** tells us? How can this help us understand how to determine the purpose of 1 John?
6. Who was the **original audience** for 1 John?
7. Who are the **key characters** in 1 John?
8. Does 1 John have the **typical features** of a **NT letter**?
9. Six kinds of writing are (a) telling a story, (b) explaining something, (c) cause and effect, (d) how-to do something, (e) presenting an argument, and (f) comparing and contrasting two things. In your judgment, **which of these best fits** how 1 John is written?
10. What words or points are **repeated** in the letter?
11. What are the **major topics** of 1 John? What things are emphasized? What topics show up in several sections of the letter?
12. Where does the **temperature get raised** in 1 John? What things are said with particularly strong emphasis?
13. Is there evidence of a **conflict** that the letter addresses? What is the evidence, and what does the evidence tell us about the nature of the conflict?
14. **Why** did John write 1 John? What clues do we get from the letter itself?
15. What is 1 John about? If you had to pick **one subject**, what would it be?
16. What are one or more **key verses** in the letter?
17. What is **chapter 1** of 1 John about?
18. What is the structure of 1 John?
19. Describe what you observe concerning **repetition** in 1 John?
20. How does 1 John 1:9 fit into the passage from **1:5 to 2:2**?
21. How is the imagery of **light and darkness** used in the Gospel of John? Elsewhere in the New Testament?
22. What does the rest of the New Testament have to say about **the blood of Christ**?
23. What does the rest of the New Testament have to say about **forgiveness of sins**? What is the basis for forgiveness in the rest of the New Testament?
24. Identify all the passages in **Paul’s letters** where he talks about **confessing our sins**. Then find all the **Gospel** passages where **Jesus** tells people to confess their sins. What does this tell us about interpreting 1 John 1:9?
25. Based on the evidence, is 1 John dealing primarily with **regeneration or sanctification**?

Assignments to prepare for our discussion tonight:

1. Read the letter of First John.
2. Summarize the letter in a paragraph of no more than 3-5 sentences.
3. State the main message of the letter in ONE sentence.
4. Read the letter of First John again, and this time pick one of the following exercises to do as you read:
 - Note each time you find two opposites and write the opposites down.
 - Note each time John writes a statement to the effect that he is writing BECAUSE...
 - Note each time he mentions sin or sins. Write down the verse and what is said about sins or sin.
 - Note each time the subject of truth verse lying (liars, deceivers) comes up.

OR

- Pick one of the Top-Down questions and answer it.