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I John 1:5-10

5. “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

6. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

7. but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

9. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”

This is a very beautiful passage of Scripture that all Christians need to rely on for their continued salvation in Christ Jesus. As Christians we need to confess our sin as the Holy Spirit within our bodies makes known our shortcomings and lack of faith, always mindful of what John goes on to write next in chapter 2, verse 1: “My little children, I am writing to you that you may not sin.”

The expectancy of the inspired apostle is that God's grace is sufficient that we will grow to overcome sin in our lives.

Sadly, this Scripture has been misused and misapplied in so many ways. Quite often verse 9, which reads, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," is pulled out of context and used to legitimize a so-called sinner's prayer for salvation. Here the lost person is instructed to confess his sinfulness, often reciting after the teacher or preacher. I was recently given the following written tract, which gives the following prayer for salvation: "Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner and that I need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the Cross and rose again for me. I want to turn from my sins, so I now invite You to come into my life. I want to trust and follow You as my Savior and Lord. In Your Name, Amen."

In the New Testament Scriptures I have never found such a prayer stated. Nor are there any examples of anyone reciting such a prayer to be saved. Neither do we find any command to pray such a prayer in any of the conversion accounts in the New Testament, and most particularly when men asked specifically, "What must I do to be saved?"

The back of the tract with the man-made sinner's prayer cites I John 1:9 as the "step of faith" in which a lost person confesses and repents of his sins to gain

salvation. To which I say, “Hogwash!” I John 1:9 was written to Christians, and Christians only.

The disciples Jesus made when He walked the earth knew very well that “God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him.” (John 9:31) God requires obedience--not lip service: always has, always will.