

# The Gospel Unashamed

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."

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## Hyper-Grace

--By Terry Carter

There is a teaching that has gained popularity in the religious world in recent years. It is called, "hyper-grace".

In a nutshell, this is the teaching that all sin has been forgiven for the Christian, whether it is past, present, or future sin. Since even future sins have been forgiven already, a Christian does not need to confess their sin to be forgiven.

There are some who have used this teaching to turn grace into a license to sin.

"For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. **They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality** and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." **Jude 4 NIV**

However, others who teach this admit that we still need to work at being sanctified people. Often, they are not very specific about what would happen if you fail to do this.

Would they still be saved since their sins are already forgiven? Would they lose their salvation? I'm not clear on their position here.

However, these questions need to be addressed clearly if you are going to take the position that our future sins are already forgiven.

When I type "forgiveness of future sins" into Google, the first search result is a link to an article on [www.billygraham.org](http://www.billygraham.org).

In response to a question, the first line of the answer says, "*One of the Bible's greatest truths is that Christ died to take away all our sins-not just part of them, but all of them: past, present, and future.*"

I am not surprised that this teaching is common in the denominational world. However, I am surprised at just how common it is getting to be in our brotherhood.

Those in our brotherhood that I have come across have not come to all the same conclusions as others. However, their starting premise is identical.

If the conclusions we reach are not the same, we must explain carefully why our conclusions are correct and those of others is not.

I think there are many problems with the idea that our future sins are already forgiven. Let me explore just a few of them here.

**First**, I know of no Scripture that even hints at the idea that our future sins are forgiven.

I'm not even sure that it makes sense logically to talk about sins being forgiven before they are even committed. Often an appeal is made to the doctrine of justification rather than citing a particular verse to

support such a position. There is no verse that makes such a claim.

It is a conclusion that they infer from verses that speak about our justification. For example, some have appealed to **Romans 8:1** - "**Therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." (**NKJV**)

They point out that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ. They conclude from this that our future sins must already be forgiven.

The text itself says nothing of the sort. In fact, that statement is qualified by the second half of the verse. In order for there to be no condemnation, two requirements must be met.

**First**, we must be in Christ Jesus.

**Second**, we must not be walking according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

What happens if we are walking according to the flesh? Are our sins already forgiven or do we stand condemned? Is repentance and confession required in order to avoid condemnation or are they optional?

Incidentally, walking according to the flesh or the Spirit is not about any one particular thing we might, or might not do. It is about our general way of living, our general direction in life.

Another verse that is appealed to, is

**I John 1:7** - "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**" (NKJV)

Here the word "all" is emphasized. They infer that this means past, present, and future sins. But again, the text says nothing of the sort. The verse says nothing at all about the timing of the forgiveness in relation to the commission of the sin that is forgiven. What the verse does speak to is the ongoing cleansing of sin that is available to a Christian who is walking in the light as He is in the light.

As in the previous verse, this is a requirement that must be met for this ongoing cleansing to be available. The previous verse states that if we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

**"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."** I John 1:6 (NKJV)

Once again, walking in the light or darkness is not about any one thing we might or might not do. It is about our general way of living. If we are living as we ought to live, we enjoy continual, ongoing cleansing of sin. The very fact that a Christian needs such cleansing indicates that they do sin and that sin needs to be forgiven, or cleansed. No cleansing would be necessary if forgiveness had already been granted prior to the sin being committed.

To deny that you have sin that needs to be forgiven is to deceive yourself and make God a liar. This is why there is a need for confession of our sins for the ongoing, continual cleansing that we require.

**"8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,** and the truth is not in us. **9 If we confess our sins,** He is faithful and just 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." I John 1:8-10 (NKJV)

Why would we care whether He is faithful to forgive our sins and cleanse us if we have already been forgiven and cleansed before we ever commit the sin? The truth is that even Christians need forgiveness and cleansing on an ongoing, continual basis. To suggest otherwise is to be deceived and to make God a liar.

**Second,** there are several verses which indicate that Christians need forgiveness after, or when, they sin. That would not be possible if their sins had already been forgiven before they were committed. We have already looked at **I John 1:9** and we will say more about it later. Let's look at a few others.

"And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. **And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.**" James 5:15 (NKJV)

How could it be true that "he will be forgiven" if he has already been forgiven? Clearly this is addressing a Christian who has sinned and needs forgiveness.

A few verses later, we also see that it is possible for a Christian who has sinned to need to be covered. One among them who has wandered from the truth needs to be turned from the error of his ways. When this happens, a soul is saved from death and a multitude of sins are covered. How is this possible if his sins were forgiven before he ever committed them?

**"19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth,** and someone turns him back, **20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."** James 5:19-20 (NKJV)

Why would Paul need to pray that it not be charged against those who forsook him at his first defense if they had already been forgiven before they

forsook him? The clear implication is that they were in need of forgiveness for this offense. Paul is asking for their forgiveness.

**"At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them."** II Timothy 4:16 (NKJV)

**Third,** it seems to me that many who hold this position have adopted it as an overreaction to another false teaching. That is, they are opposed to the idea that when a Christian sins, they are no longer in a saved state. To return to a saved state, they must confess that sin and then they will be saved again until the next sin. This is obviously a false concept of what it means to be a Christian. But it is not necessary to posit that our future sins are forgiven in order to oppose such a false idea.

We have already seen that the context of **I John 1:9** is about our general way of living. The verse is not talking about a need to confess each and every sin in order to move back from an unsaved state to a saved state. Nothing of the sort is implied in these verses. The idea is that we remain in Christ. That is, we remain in a covenant relationship with God through Christ.

To illustrate this, consider the covenant relationship of marriage. It is not true that every time you do something wrong, you are no longer married until you make amends. However, if you never admit that you do what is wrong, the marriage will eventually be broken. In fact, it may remain broken until you are willing to admit your missteps and repent of them.

Similarly, it is simply not true that each individual sin puts a Christian into an unsaved state until they confess that specific sin and repent. However, failure to admit that you are a sinner will eventually break the covenant relationship with God. That covenant relationship will remain broken until we confess that we have sinned and need forgiveness. When we do that and repent of our sins, we

are once again “walking in the light”. Forgiveness and cleansing are then available once again on an ongoing and continual basis.

It is important to see that the connection between confession and forgiveness is not something unique to the New Testament. This was also the case in the Old Testament. I've listed just a few of many passages from the Old Testament that illustrate this.

**“He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV)**

“I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, **“I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.** Selah” **Psalms 32:5 (NKJV)**

**“2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,** And my sin is always before me.” **Psalms 51:2-3 (NKJV)**

“12 “Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: ‘Return, backsliding Israel,’ says the LORD; ‘I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,’ says the LORD; ‘I will not remain angry forever. 13 **Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the LORD your God,** And have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,’ says the LORD. 14 **“Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD; “for I am married to you.** I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” **Jeremiah 3:12-14 (NKJV)**

**“I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense.** Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.” **Hosea 5:15 (NKJV)**

The Hosea passage is especially important as it demonstrates that

even people who were in a covenant relationship with God would not receive forgiveness until they acknowledged their sin. The same can be said of the Jeremiah passage.

An important part of offering sacrifice for sins was confessing your sins over the sacrifice. Aaron was to confess the sins of Israel over the scapegoat each year before releasing it into the wilderness so that he might bear the iniquities unto a land not inhabited.

**“21 “Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. 22 “The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.” Leviticus 16:21-22 (NKJV)**

This was for those who were in a covenant relationship with God. Jesus is our scapegoat. He bears our iniquities when we confess our sins to Him.

There is no need to invent new theories that go beyond what the Scriptures actually say. Further, we must not adopt theories that contradict what the Scriptures do say.

The bottom line is that in Christ we have forgiveness. However, we must remain in Christ to enjoy that blessing. That is how a covenant relationship works. Confession of sin and repentance is part of what is required to remain in Christ.

There is no need for hyper-grace. God’s grace was sufficient for Paul and it is sufficient for us.

**“And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” II Corinthians 12:9 (NKJV)**