

Counterfeits and Reflections

Ray Stedman

I. Introduction.

A. Text: I John 2:3-6.

B. The pressing question is maintaining an intimate and compelling fellowship with the Son of God.

II. There are two ties we have with Christ.

A. Relationship through faith that makes a person one with Christ.

B. Fellowship that is the outworking of Christ's wisdom, love and life through you.

1. Fellowship is the secret of power.

2. The secret of fellowship is walking in the light.

3. We all live in vertical and horizontal relationships—we must have a correct relationship with God first.

III. Three kinds of conditions that cut off fellowship.

A. Ignoring light—never stopping to look at what the light of God expressed in His Word reveals.

B. Believing the possibility of sin has been removed falsely—not needing light, which is self-delusion.

C. Rationalizing the sin that light reveals. (John 1:10-2:2)

IV. Rationalizing sin.

A. This is the most common failure in the Christian experience.

B. Excuses.

1. In this case, a man says that he can sin and only views it as weakness instead of sin. We find nicer labels for sin so that we do not have to treat it as it is.

2. We excuse our sins because of the pressure of circumstances that we face.

C. These excuses are not only an invasion of reality, but also a direct accusation of God.

1. We are the liars.

2. God has provided a way for escape in sin. (I Corinthians 10:13)

3. The truth is that we do not like the circumstances in which God has placed us.

D. No Christian needs to sin, but still there is the possibility so we have an advocate with Jesus when we do sin.

1. If we catch ourselves sinning, we have a perfect defense before God.
2. If we stop justifying ourselves, God will justify us through the blood of Jesus Christ.
3. Peace returns to the person who trusts Christ in all of this.
4. Jesus took the guilt of the whole world upon Him through His work—sin can never separate an individual from God because of this work.
5. People are not forgiven because they do not accept His reconciliation, which is the same reason that Christians do not live in the fullness of the Christian life. (II Corinthians 5)

Application questions:

1. What excuses are raised for those who sin?

2. How is God's justification the great solution for sin that happens in the life of the believer?

3. What sins are bogging you down in your Christian life? Spend some time reflecting upon God's justifying work on the cross and pray to God in confession over these.
