

# AN HONEST HEART BEFORE GOD

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1 JOHN 1:6-9 • TV-326A

A television broadcast sermon delivered  
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by  
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## **1 John 1:6-9**

*“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”*

I have for you today, one of those messages that I hope will be thought provoking. I believe it is a message that needs to be preached to this generation. I am preaching it because it is not being preached today. If you would like to follow along in your Bible, you may turn with me to **First John Chapter 1**. Here is the subject: **“AN HONEST HEART BEFORE GOD.”**

My friends, you know and I know, unfortunately (and we may hate to admit it), but there is so much sham, showmanship, hypocrisy and things that are counterfeit in religion today. These are severe words, but it is true! There is more sham, hypocrisy, showmanship, and counterfeit in religion than in any other area.

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It is amazing that in the place where there ought to be total honesty before God and before men, that there is very little. Where there should be no pretense at all, where there should be no hypocrisy at all, and put-on, there is a great deal.

I ask this question: why is it that in matters of religion and in spiritual matters, that men and women try to give the impression to other people that they are what they are not? I do not understand that. Why in religion and in spiritual matters do men and women insist on leaving the impression that they are what they are not, that they have what they know they do not have, and they feel what they do not feel and that they know what they do not know?

Why is this? I have given a lot of thought to the matter, and I believe that I can give you several reasons for the religious charade that is going on today. I think I can give you several reasons for the pretense, showmanship, and hypocrisy that are found today in the average religious circle.

Here is the first reason for the sham, pretense, and hypocrisy that we have in religion. Men and women do not really know the living God. They really do not know the Holy, Living God. God brought this charge against Israel. He said, in **Psalm 50**; *“Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as Thyself.”* He charged them with several things that they were doing. Then He said, *“I will tell you why you are doing this; because you thought I was altogether such a one as yourself.”*

Then, our Lord Jesus Christ, speaking to the religious Pharisees who lived in the day that He ministered in the flesh, said: *“You err, (you stumble and err for two reasons); you don’t know the Scriptures and you don’t know God.”* That is why you are acting like you are acting.

Paul said this, in **Romans 10**; *“They are ignorant.”* He said, *“This generation is going about to establish their own righteousness before God because they are ignorant of the Righteousness of God.”* They are totally ignorant of the Holiness of God. That is why they go about to establish their own righteousness.

You know that this is true and I know it is true. *“Men look on the outward appearance. God looks on the heart.”* God is not a man, God does not act, and think like a man. He said, *“Your thoughts are not my thoughts and your ways are not my ways.”* Man is confined to observe things, as they appear to be. God sees them as they actually are.

Men dress up their bodies in religious garb. Men disguise their true feelings. Men and women sugarcoat their words and say things that they are not thinking, and things they do not feel. The Scripture says, our true feelings, our true attitudes, and our true motives are naked. They are not dressed up and they are not covered. *“They are naked before the eyes of God with whom we have to do.”*

God is the One with whom we have to do, not those around us. We may impress people around us but *“God is not mocked.”* God is not deceived. God is not fooled. God is not a man. He said in **Hebrews 4:13**, *“There is no creature that is not manifest in God’s sight but all things are naked, without covering; they are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”*

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My friends, John wrote in **First John 1:5**; *“God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.”* So, if we come to God we are coming to the bright, revealing, searching light of truth. The Lord knows fully a man’s attitude. He knows a man’s motive. He knows the nature and He knows the objective.

We may say something, but God knows why we say it. We may do something totally counterfeit or an imitation of the real thing and fool the person before whom we do it. God knows the objective. God knows the motive behind every word, every thought, and every deed. He knows those things. He sees behind the sins.

That is what amazes me. Why would we be hypocritical and counterfeit in dealing in matters of religion and spiritual matters when God knows our thoughts even before we think them? For example, in **John 2:23**, when our Lord Jesus did many miracles in Jerusalem, it says; *“Many believed on Him when they saw the miracles which He did.”*

Jesus did not commit Himself unto them. He didn’t reveal Himself to them. The reason was because He knew them; He knew what was in a man. He didn’t need anyone to tell Him why these people were doing this, why they professed to believe. He knew why they professed to believe.

He knew it was artificial. He knew it was counterfeit. He knew it was phony; therefore, He didn’t commit Himself to them. That is the reason for much of the sham, the showmanship, the outward foolishness, the counterfeit and charade that is going on today in the name of God, in the name of religion.

I will tell you another reason, for this hypocrisy where folks are claiming to be what they are not, claiming to feel what they don’t feel, and to be what they aren’t and to understand what they don’t understand, they are even claiming things that God says to them.

God speaks through His Word. There is no man living on this earth today who has heard the voice of God. Don’t tell me that! He knows it is not so, and I know it is not so. I think that most of you know it is not so.

I hear preachers talking about going home at night and God speaking to them and giving them definite directions on something that they were suppose to do the next day. They just like to pick up the telephone and talk to God. What language did God speak? What kind of voice did God have? What appearance did He have when you saw Him in your vision? Was He just like the pictures?

Another reason for the hypocrisy and pretence in religion is man’s love of approval. I think that this is a lot of the reason for the sham and all of this claiming of what men and women do not have. They love the praise of men. They love the applause. They love the approval. They just can’t stand rejection. They have a fear of rejection and a love of approval.

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That is what the Lord said, *“You love the praise of men rather than the praise of God.”* In **John 5:44** the Master said, *“How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?”* How can you really believe the Word, enter into the Word, understand the Word, and walk with the living God as Enoch did when you receive honor one of another? You are seeking the honor of one another.

That is why you deal in numbers and statistics. You are trying to impress one another. That is why you build gaudy houses, drive gaudy automobiles, and dress in the fashion that you do. You put on all of this entertainment and you are trying to impress someone.

We are not impressing God (I know that); we are trying to impress one another. You seek not the honor that comes from God. You seek not the praise that comes from God. You seek not the approval that comes from God. You are seeking the *“honor and praise of men.”* We just love approval.

Our Lord in **Matthew 6** condemned the religionist. He talked here about fasting, and said when you do fast, *“You wash your face that you appear not unto men to fast.”* He said, *“When you do your alms, do them in secret.”* He said, *“Don’t be like the hypocrite who does his good works out on the street corner and lets everybody know about them.”*

They advertise them. Why do they do that? He said, *“They do it that they may have glory of men.”* He said, *“They fast and pray to be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you; when men see them, they have their reward. But, when you pray enter your closet and shut the door. Pray unto your Heavenly Father in secret, and the Father which seeth in secret shall reward you openly.”*

*“Don’t do your alms to be seen of men.”* Don’t brag publicly about how you fast, how you pray, how you give alms, how you do works, and how you give your money. I hear about these people who want their names read every time they give a dollar or two dollars. They want their picture in the paper, their name in the bulletin and their name over television and the radio. They want the praise of men. That is not spiritual giving.

Why do they do it? They do it for the glory of men. *“They do it to be seen of men.”* Our Lord said, *“They have their reward.”* When men see them, and when men glorify them, and when men praise them, that is all the reward that they will ever have.

*“You do your alms in secret. Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth.”* That is how secretly alms are to be done. This is pretense, showmanship, sham, and hypocrisy. All of this is in the name of God. We don’t find this in the Scriptures. We find men and women walking with God quietly, secretly and personally.

I will tell you another reason for the hypocrisy and pretence in religion. Men know little or nothing of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The average person believes that he is forgiven of sin, saved from sin, and is an heir of eternal life because of his good deeds. He thinks he is forgiven by his good works and religious life, instead of by the grace of God through the merits, righteousness, and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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The average person does not have any idea of why Jesus Christ the Lord came into this world, took on Himself the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. They do not know why He suffered on that tree, why He was buried and rose again, and why He ascended to the right hand of God.

The average person knows that He did say, “Well, I believe on Jesus.” My friends listen to this; do you know what His mission was into this world? Do you know why He came? In **Luke 19:10**, it says; “*The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost.*” That is why He came.

He didn’t come just to set an example. He didn’t come to reform the Roman Empire. He came “*To seek and to save the lost sheep.*” In **Matthew 9:13** our Lord said, “*I am come, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*” In **First Timothy 1:15**, Paul says, “*This is a faithful saying and is worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners.*” That is why He came into the world, “*To save sinners of whom I am chief.*”

In **Romans 5:8**, the Scripture says; “*But God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” Don’t pretend not to be a sinner. This will disqualify you from the mercy of God. The thing that qualifies us for the grace of God is the thing that most people are trying their best to deny, their sins.

**Romans 5:6** says, “*In due time, Christ died for the ungodly.*” For whom did He die? Did He die for good people, church people, religious people, and do-gooders? There are all kinds of pious, whoop-de-doo, holier than thou group of folks. Oh no, “*He died for the ungodly.*” He didn’t come to call the self-righteous, but sinners to repentance.

In **Matthew 1:21**, when the angel announced His birth, he said, “*Call His name Jesus.*” Why? Why the name Jesus, Joshua, or God my Saviour? The reason is because “*He will save His people from their sins.*” That is why you call His name Jesus.

Follow our Master as He goes about in this world calling out His sheep; follow Him, walk behind Him. When He went down into Samaria who did He save? Samaria is a big town, a big community and a big province. He went down there and saved a woman. What kind of woman was she? She was a sinful woman. You know the story. You know how many times she had been married and what kind of woman she was. Our Lord saved her.

When He went down into Jericho, for whom did He go? He went there for Zacchaeus the Publican. That was the man that our Lord called down from the tree and said, “*I am going home with you. I am going to have dinner in your house.*” When He walked off with Zacchaeus, some of these religious fellows, these holier-than-thou fellows, (touch not, taste not, handle not), said; “*Well, look at him; he is going to be the guest of a man that is a sinner.*”

“*He’s the friend of sinners.*” My friend, that is why He came; He came to save sinners. That is why He died. Aren’t you a sinner? Whom did He save and free from bondage in the land of the Gadarenes? He saved a wild man. They couldn’t even tame him; they chained him. He ran

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around naked among the tombs as a crazy man. He was possessed of demons. Our Lord saved him. Christ didn't do anything for the fellows down in the synagogue.

Among all the people about the cross, do you know how many people were standing about that cross when they nailed Jesus Christ to the cross? Among all of those people, whom did the Lord save and escort personally into glory? There was one, the thief.

What do all of these people have in common? There was Mary Magdalene, the woman found in adultery, the harlot who bathed His feet, Simon Peter and Saul of Tarsus. These were the chief companions, an inner circle. These were people to whom our Lord ministered to and who He called friends and were people whom He saved. What did they have in common? These were all sinners!

Then, I ask you; why do we today, in religion, do our best, our very best, to hide and to deny the one thing that would qualify us for the mercy of God? The answer is our sins. Think that over. Everybody I know in religion claims to be better than the rest of them. The most difficult thing in the world today is to find a sinner. The most difficult thing in the world to find is a person who will confess, admit, and not deny that he is a sinner and needs desperately, the grace and mercy of God in Christ Jesus.

One old hymn writer said this:

**A sinner is a sacred thing  
The Holy Ghost hath made him so.**

When the religionist today, uses the word sinner, sinner-man, sinner-woman he means by that word, that it is a person that does not go to church, a person who has not made a profession of faith, or is a person who has laid no claim to religion. Listen to me, you know this is so. I'm not telling you anything that you don't already know.

When God uses that word sinner He means, you too and He means everybody. *“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”* God said, *“There is not a righteous man on the earth who doeth good and sinneth not. Man at his best state is altogether vanity.”*

*“The Lord God looked down from heaven to see if there was any that did do well and He found that they are altogether become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good; there is none that understandeth, there is none righteous and there is none that seek God.”*

David was a man after God's own heart and wrote this in **Psalms 51**. These are words that the average preacher or religionist wouldn't dare speak to himself. That is the reason that he is not a David. That is the reason he is not a man after God's own heart. That is the reason those Psalms have been written.

*“Have mercy upon me O God, according to Thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies O Lord; blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly, (completely, altogether,*

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inwardly and outwardly), *from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sins for I acknowledge my transgressions. My sins are ever before me.*” Now, that is a man whom God owned and loved and redeemed. He calls him a man after His own heart.

Turn in your Bible to **First John 1** and let me show you something. The Apostle John, in this First Chapter encourages, yea demands, an honest heart before God. If we have any hope, if we have any hope of obtaining salvation, if we have any hope of eternal life, if we have any hope of knowing the Living God, we are going to have to remember that *“God looks on the heart.”*

God will have nothing to do with your hypocrisy, your put-on, your pretence, and your sham. God will have nothing to do with it. You will have to play your religious game somewhere else. It is a fatal, fatal mistake. If you cannot come honestly before God, then don't come. If we can see through your game, think how He sees through it.

He says in First **John 1:6**, *“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”* If we say we know God, we have fellowship with God, we have communion with God and then walk in darkness or indifference, in the darkness of ignorance, in the darkness of false piety, in the darkness of self-righteousness, *“We are liars.”* God says. *“We do not the truth.”*

What a ridiculous claim; what a ridiculous claim for a man to make; what a foolish position for a man to assume, what on earth for? Is it not ridiculous to claim to know God and not know Him? Is it not ridiculous to claim to walk with God, and not walk with Him?

What are we seeking? Are we seeking gain? We gain nothing. *“What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?”* Is it glory? Is it human glory? *“It fadeth like the flowers of the field.”* Is it for human approval or reputation?

*“God will not hold him guiltless who taketh (or wears) His name in vain.”* Think about that for a moment. *“God will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”* That doesn't just mean with the mouth. That means who assumes His name, who wears His name, and who takes His name in vain.

Then He says in **verse 8**: *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”* I'm saying no sin, singular. The word sin does not refer to an act. It does not refer to a deed. It does not refer to a habit; it refers to a nature. *“If we say that we have no sin (sinful nature), we deceive ourselves.”* We are deceiving ourselves. *“The truth is not in us.”*

You see; we are born with a sinful nature. We do what we do because of what we are. We are not what we are because of what we do. We do what we do because of what we are. You see; man likes to present himself as basically good by nature. That is the way we like to come off before people, basically good by nature.

You might say, “I have a few bad habits, I have a few faults. Basically, I am a good man or I am a good woman.” No! Basically, in reality; we are evil and we occasionally do an acceptable deed.

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*“In the flesh dwelleth no good thing.”* That is what God says. *“In the flesh no man can please God. The natural mind is enmity against God.”*

Let me show you something; we are so evil by nature that only the restraining hand of God keeps any and all of us from the most perverse, lowest form of evil. Did you know that? Only the restraining hand of God keeps us. God will restrain. The Scripture says in **Psalm 76:10**, *“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”*

The nature is there, don't mistake it. Only sovereign Divine restraint keeps us back. Don't you mistake sovereign restraint for personal merit. To deny your sinful nature is to be deceived. Watch this, *“If we say we have not sinned, then we make God a liar and His truth is not in us.”*

This is what is difficult for the religionist to admit, that he does actually sin. He said with the Pharisees, *“I'm not like other men; I'm not an adulterer; I'm not an extortioner; I'm not unjust; (I'm not like other men).”* Yes you are!

Did you know that the thought of foolishness is sin? Sin is not only the presence of hate; it is the absence of perfect love. Sin is not only an act; it is a thought. Sin is not only a deed, but a look. *“To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, is sin.”*

Do you love God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength? If not, it is sin. Do you love your neighbor as yourself? No! That is sin. Sin is envy, covetousness, jealousy, gossip, pride, lust, discontent, murmuring, finding fault, being anxious and worrying. Anything short of God's holiness is sin. If you say you have not sinned this day, *“You make God a liar.”* He said that you did.

Here is the beauty, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

*“If we confess our sin,”* if only you could just do it. If you could just face it honestly before God and confess your sins, He is faithful to His promise, faithful to His Son and His work and He is Just. Christ died that God may be Just and Justifier, and to cleanse us from all sin.

What a promise. Be honest before God!