

## CONFESSION OF SIN

### *Psalm 51:1-4*

All Christians do acts of sin and have evil thoughts after they are converted to Christ. The Christian will struggle with sin and fall captive to it at times as long as he is in his sinful, unredeemed body. This is a fact of life for the Christian, and he must learn how to get right with God when he does sin.

God's desire is that His children would not sin and this is the goal for the Christian *"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin."* (1 John 2:1). But we do sin. We thank God that He has made a provision for the Christian who does sin in the shed blood of Christ and confession of that sin by the offender.

As the Christian comes to know the Lord better, he will come to understand himself better and will admit without hesitation the horror of the potential for sin which is within his heart. The closer the Christian grows to the Lord the more he becomes aware of his own sinfulness and wretched life. What this means is that there will never be a decrease of confession as one grows older in the Christian life. Confession is necessary no matter what degree of spiritual maturity one has attained.

When sins appear in the life, you must remember Christ died for every sin you will ever commit—past, present, and future. God knew about your sin nature, which would produce sins after conversion, and God has provided daily cleansing for these sins through the death of His Son and confession of these sins. *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us (keeps on purifying us) from all sin."* (1 John 1:7). *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9).

When a Christian thinks he has done a sin God could never forgive, he is stating God is a liar and the death of Christ was not sufficient to save perfectly. The solution to every sin is the person of Jesus Christ and His completed substitution for sin and sinners.

If the Heavenly Father were ever to degrade one of His redeemed sons or daughters because of some sin or sins they committed, He would be taking away the value of the death of the Lord, for Christ died for every sin the true believer will ever do and that death is final.

God wants Christians to understand about the death of Jesus Christ for their sins and to lay hold of this death through confession of sin. The cleansing of the believer from his daily sins of omission (good he should have done) and sins of

commission (sins he does with intent) is the gateway to the maintenance of unbroken fellowship with God.

## **I. THE NEED FOR CONFESSION**

*We need confession because even as Christians we do acts of sin. When any known sin comes into the life, it must be confessed. We unconsciously sin all the time but when we are aware of some specific sin we must confess it to the Lord. Sin is sin and nothing less. It is not inconsistencies, areas of weakness or shortcomings, but sin which needs to be confessed, cleansed, forgiven and forsaken. Acts of sin are simply the Christian's rebellion against God and His moral law.*

Sin grieves the Holy Spirit and hinders God's full blessing to the Christian. Sin unconfessed will grow and control the believer. Sin not only has devastating effects upon the one who commits it but also affects other people.

**Sin is very devious and deceitful in the way it takes over in the life of a person. It is like a spider spinning it's web. At first we see the spider make what appears to be an insignificant strand, then another and still another, until there is an intricate maze.**

**So is sin, for at first a little sin seems insignificant, but then there is another and another, until a person is trapped in the maze of sin. Only Christ can get that person out of his mess.**

## **THE MEANING OF CONFESSION**

The Bible says we are to confess our sins. *"If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9). The "if" tells us we have an option in this matter, for it means "maybe we will and maybe we won't" confess our known sins. This is something a Christian must do himself. God will not do it for him.

The word "confess" means "to say the same thing." The Christian is to name the sin the same way God would name it. The Christian is to hate sin the same way God hates it.

The idea in confession is not to ask for forgiveness of sins in general (although this is all right at times), but to be specific about the sins committed. The Christian is to name the sin and then claim the forgiveness he has in Christ.

We are to confess by naming the specific sin and getting God's perspective of it. "Lord, I coveted that person's new home You hate greed. I am wrong!" "Lord, I lost my temper. I'm sorry, for this did not please you." "Lord, I spoke evilly of that Christian brother and you hate gossip. I'll not do it again." "Lord, I lusted after that woman and you hate mental adultery as well as physical adultery. I'm so very sorry."

### *THE PURPOSE OF CONFESSION*

**The purpose of confession is to get the the one committing the sin forgiven with the final view of being restored to temporal fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.**

The basis of fellowship is not just being a Christian, but being in personal communion with the Lord.

The Lord will not have close, intimate fellowship with someone who is living in sin. *"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened"* (Psa. 66:18).

### THE BASIS OF CONFESSION

The Death of Jesus Christ. *"and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."* (1 John 1:7). In the Greek this literally says, "and the blood of Jesus, his Son, keeps on purifying (cleansing) us from all sin." Christ's death always and continually and repeatedly cleanses from sin or God would bring His eternal wrath upon the Christian, for all Christians sin. God can never judge the Christian with eternal wrath because He judged Jesus Christ in place of the Christian.

The Faithfulness and Justice of God. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9). God's very character is the basis for forgiveness when the Christian confesses his sins. Forgiveness does not have as its foundation the mercy and grace of God, but His faithfulness and justice. Why? Because God must forgive the Christian according to the death of His Son and His own promise to forgive when the Christian confesses. God's dealings with His children are always on the basis of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

*A Christian who knows his own sinful heart even as a converted man can only be overwhelmed with the love and patience of God and say, "Why does God put up with me? I rebel and upon my confession He forgives me and showers me with His love and grace? Oh, what a great God I have!"*

### THE PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

The Goodness of God. *“Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance?”* The context of Romans 2:4 is dealing with the unsaved, but the goodness and love of God should bring the wayward Christian back to God. The wayward Christian, when he becomes frustrated and tired in his rebellion, will remember that God is good, kind, merciful and gracious, and he will begin to long for the experiencing of the love of God again. This will bring him to the point of confession to have the joy of God’s salvation restored to him.

Godly Sorrow. \_\_\_\_\_ *“Godly sorrow brings repentance”* (2 Cor. 7:10). Godly sorrow is remorse over sin. Godly sorrow is the result of conviction from the Holy Spirit. Godly sorrow is a feeling of failing your God and a genuine desire not to do it again.

Godly sorrow leads to repentance and true repentance involves a change of attitude about sin. There must be a need (conviction of sin) or confession will never take place.

Many times in my counseling with people I will have to confront them with their sins. Sometimes professing Christians get very upset with me. They are not ready to confess and forsake some darling sin. When this happens, I often have to wait for the Lord to break their wills. Weeks, months and sometimes years later, they will come back to me, beaten down by the discipline of God, ready to deal with their sin.

## **THE PERSON TO WHOM CONFESSION IS MADE**

Confession of sin is to be made directly to God and not to a priest or a minister. *“Who can forgive sins but God alone?”* (Luke 5:21b). No human being has the power to forgive another man’s sin. Each Christian is a believer-priest and has the privilege of confession to the Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ.

The Christian must see he has sinned against God and God’s moral law, and confession can only be made to God.

King David was guilty of adultery with Bathsheba and was indirectly responsible in the murder of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba. David finally saw his sin was against God and he confessed it. *“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight”* (Psa. 51:3-4).

## THE NATURE OF CONFESSION

When the Christian sins, he makes a judgment about this sin, names it, admits he is wrong and determines not to do it again. *“But if we judged ourselves, we should not come under judgment.”* (1 Cor. 11:31). The Christian must honestly judge himself as to his sin and do something about it. The believer must desire to turn from sin even though it may come back at any moment again. God honors the desire of the heart.

## THE TIME OF CONFESSION

The time to confess is the moment the sin happens. Wherever you are and whenever you sin, confess immediately! Do not wait until your evening prayer time or you may never get to confession. Confess repeatedly any acts of sin that keep showing up in your experience. Repeated confession builds habit patterns.

Repeated confession is needed especially in relationship to sins of the mind. If the sin keeps reoccurring in your mind keep confessing it. If you need to confess the same sin 50 times a day, do it. Confess and put to death the sin as best you can.

***Immediate confession of one’s sin may stop God’s discipline of the believer. God may be gracious and not bring any chastisement upon you.***

## THINGS WHICH ACCOMPANY CONFESSION

Faith *“And without faith it is impossible to please God”* (Heb. 11:6). When you confess, God has forgiven you whether you feel like you are forgiven or not. By faith, you must believe God has forgiven you and get up and keep moving for the Lord. If you say you are not forgiven, then you make God a liar because He says you are.

Forsaking the Sin. There must be a genuine desire on the part of the Christian to turn from this sin and do it no more even though it may happen again.

***Confession of sin means also a turning away from the sin. One may have to turn back from a sinful practice. It may mean turning away from a rough crowd. It may mean turning away from a boy friend or a girl friend who is dragging you down spiritually. It may mean turning away from a business partner who is dishonest.***

Restitution. Sometimes restitution is necessary after confession, for we must not only right this thing with God but we must right it with man if another person has been involved. There are some sins which have no restitution involved but most do. If we have cheated, we must right it with the one offended. If we have gossiped, we must ask forgiveness from the one gossiped about. If we have acted like a fool in front of our family, we must gather them together and tell them we are sorry.

**I heard of a man who was taking things home from his company. He did not think it was sin because every other employee was doing the same thing. He was subtly stealing from his company for over ten years, amounting to thousands of dollars. This man was converted to Christ and became convicted about this sinful practice of stealing. He confessed his sin and went to his boss to tell of his activities, knowing full well the boss might fire him. He told the boss about his conversion and about his stealing from the company and he was willing to pay the money back. God was very gracious, for the boss was so overwhelmed with an honest man that he commended him instead of firing him.**

One time when I was in seminary, I cheated on an exam. It was not an intentional act but just as I was getting up from my desk my eyes glanced over on another person's paper. By impulse, I sat down and changed an answer. Immediately the Holy Spirit put me under conviction and I was miserable. I confessed it to the Lord but I knew I had to go talk to my professor about this sinful act. All night I wrestled and the next morning I ran to his office to tell him but he was out of town that particular day. So I was miserable that whole day too. The third day I went to him and said, "Dr. Ryrie, I have cheated on an exam and it is my desire that you fail me for doing so." I told him all the circumstances and a great weight of guilt was lifted from me. Again God was gracious because the professor saw that I had had my punishment from God and merely marked that question wrong. The irony of it all was that I had the right answer before I cheated. Anyway, I had to make restitution before I could get peace with God.

## THE RESULTS OF CONFESSION

The Christian is Forgiven There is the forgiveness of sin for those who do confess to their God.

Cleansed from All Unrighteousness. When we confess our known sins, then God cleanses us from our unknown sins. We commit sins unconsciously which we are not even aware of but God takes care of those through the continual cleansing of the blood of Christ.

Fellowship Restored. Upon confession, the Christian is immediately forgiven by God. The guilt may linger for a few days but faith never depends on how we feel but what God says.

Do not dwell on the sin after it is confessed. God has forgiven and forgotten, so why shouldn't you forgive yourself and try to forget the sin. Confess the sin and keep moving forward for the Lord.

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