

CONFESSION OF SIN

- I. Biblical statements.
 - A. General.
 - Lev. 5:5 - "he shall confess that in which he has sinned"
 - Numb. 5:7 - "he shall confess his sins..., make restitution..."
 - Prov. 28:13 - "he who confesses and forsakes his transgressions will find compassion."
 - Acts 19:18 - "many kept coming and confessing and disclosing their practices."
 - James 5:16 - "confess your sins to one another"
 - I John 1:9 - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."
 - B. Examples.
 - Ps. 32:5 - "I acknowledge my sin to Thee...I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."
 - Ps. 38:18 - "I confess my iniquity"
 - Isa. 6:5 - "Woe is me...I am a man of unclean lips"
 - Luke 15:21 - "I have sinned against heaven and in your sight"
 - Luke 18:13 - "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!"
- II. Defining confession.
 - A. Greek word *homologeō* means "to say the same thing," to agree, concur.
 - B. What confession of sin is NOT:
 - 1. Informing a human priest in the confession booth.
 - 2. Giving God information. "God, You won't believe what I've done."
 - 3. Speculating. "IF...I have sinned..." "I have..."
 - 4. Saying "I'm sorry..." "...just a joke!"
 - 5. Asking/pleading to God for forgiveness for our sins. Forgiveness already available in Christ's death.
 - 6. Plea-bargaining for a lesser charge. "Yes...but..."
 - 7. Emotional groveling; mental contortions.
 - 8. Psychological catharsis. "Feel good when you get it off your chest"
 - 9. Superficial or flippant incantation. (Sin was reason for Jesus' death).
 - 10. "Confessionalism" - (Excessive sin-consciousness; wallowing in weakness; focusing on 'flesh'; navel-gazing introspection; "Worm-theology"; Pride of sinfulness; back-handed basis of spirituality; exhibitionism; revel in relating sinfulness in testimony; Who was the worst?)
 - 11. Based on false established attitudes which create false-guilt and false-confession. Some try to agree with God that something is wrong, when God never said it is sin. But, if not done in faith, it is sin. (Rom. 14:23).
 - C. Confession is...
 - 1. Ceasing to deceive ourselves - I John 1:8
 - 2. Ceasing to continue the defense mechanisms of denial, avoidance, distortion, cover-up.
 - 3. Calling sin "sin." Calling a spade a spade!
 - 4. To recognize, admit, acknowledge, concede and declare our guilt of sin.

5. Part of repentance. A change of mental attitude leading to changed behavioral action.
6. Inclusive of asking forgiveness for wronging another person.
7. Inclusive of restitution - Numb. 5:7; Lk. 19:8

III. Defining sin.

- A. Anything contrary to character of God.
- B. Any activity not done in faith (Rom. 14:23), and thus not derived from God.
- C. May include hidden, secret, unknown sins
 - Ps. 19:12,13 - "hidden faults"
 - Ps. 90:8 - "our secret sins"
 - Eccl. 12:14 - "everything which is hidden"
- D. May include besetting sins; habituated, life-dominating sins (Heb. 12:1,2)

IV. Practical concerns of confession of sin.

- A. To whom do we confess our sin?
 1. To those wronged by our sin. Sphere of confession only as broad as context of sin.
 - a. Intrapersonal sin confessed to God alone. (Ps. 32:5; Prov. 28:13; I John 1:9)
 - b. Private interpersonal sin confessed to God and the one sinned against. (Matt. 5:23,24; James 5:16).
 - c. Public interpersonal sin confessed to God and those affected. (II Cor. 2:6; James 5:16).
- B. How long should we go before confessing sin?
 1. Unconfessed sin in past needs to be dealt with. (Eccl. 3:15; Phil. 3:13)
 2. Is God keeping ledger book of our sins? Those who encourage keeping "short sin accounts" seem to imply such.
 3. Confessing sin is like reacting to a stumbling on sidewalk. (Quick down; quick up!)
 4. Confessing sin is like rebounding a missed basketball shot.
- C. What happens if our sins is not confessed?
 1. Does unconfessed sin affect...
 - a. Our redemption? (Isa. 59:2; Rom. 8:39)
 - b. Our salvation? (Prov. 28:13)
 - c. Our sanctification?
 - d. Our eternal destiny?
 - e. Our physical well-being? (Ps. 32:3)
 - f. Our psychological well-being? (Ps. 32:4)
 - g. Our prayer-life? (Isa. 59:2; 66:18)
 2. Confession of sin is not a "work" that has any merit before God.
- D. What if a person doesn't feel forgiven after he confesses his sin?
 1. We do not live by feelings, but by faith.
 2. God is faithful - I John 1:9
 3. When you still feel guilty of sin
 - a. Examine the motives of your confession.
 - b. Remember that Satan is the "accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10).
 - c. Have you forgiven others or asked for their forgiveness?
 - d. Have you made necessary restitution?
 3. Have you forgiven yourself? "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33).