

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Lesson 9 w/Answers

The Discipline of Confession

We take another step in our journey through the Christian Disciplines by exploring the Discipline of Confession. As we acknowledge God's authority in our lives, we must also acknowledge how far short we have fallen in following His will and living according to His word. Confession cleanses our soul and restores our relationship with Him through His unending and boundless grace and forgiveness.

As we submit to God's will, let's also confess our sins to Him.

To help us accomplish the above, let's reflect on what His Holy Word has to say about confession.

1. Read 1 John 1:9. What does this verse tell us regarding confession? What are we to do? What will God do in return?
 - a. ANSWER: We are to confess our sins to God, and if we do, He will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Note that we must take the first step in confessing our sins, before God will reciprocate with His forgiveness.
2. We are provided many instructions throughout the Bible concerning how we are to live in order to please God. Romans 13:11-14 speaks to this. What does this passage tell us; and specifically, how does Romans 13:14 relate to 1 John 2:16?
 - a. ANSWER 1: God is clear about the manner in which we are to behave and conduct ourselves, and the urgency of doing so as the time of Christ's return draws near.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Romans 13:14 and 1 John 2:16 both speak to the weakness of the flesh and the various mechanisms by which we fall prey to it: the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. We need to be on guard that we do not allow these mechanisms to occur in our lives. When we fail and allow sin to enter our mind and heart, we need to confess it to God.
3. In Luke 15:11-31, the well-known parable of The Prodigal Son is told by Jesus. It provides lessons for us regarding sin and confession. Note below what we can learn about these two topics from this parable.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Pride comes before the fall. The prodigal son sought to impose his own will on his life and not wait on his father. Accordingly, he asked for his inheritance early so that he could enjoy the pleasures of life now.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Sin, at first, seems pleasurable. Nothing appears wrong to the sinner with the initial desire to sin; it actually seems logical. In another example, look at Eve's thought process as she stared at the forbidden fruit and listened to Satan.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Repentance must occur before healing from sin can begin. Only after having lost everything does the prodigal realize that, not only did he do the wrong thing, but that there is no hope of things becoming better in the future unless, and until, he returns to his father and lives according to his father's will. In doing so, he must subvert his own will. We call this repentance. Many people fall into sin, but few realize the error of their ways and repent.
 - d. ANSWER 4: Confession of sin is required as well. The prodigal son confessed his sins and acknowledged to his father that, as a consequence of his actions, he was no longer worthy to be called a son. In addition to the sin itself, consequences also accompany a fallen life. Many times, while we may be forgiven of specific sins, we will still have to live with the consequences of them. For example, King David's loss of his firstborn son in the wake of his sin of murder reflects this reality.
 - e. ANSWER 5: God is a loving God. We see a great picture of God in this parable, as we see the prodigal son's father's ceaseless vigilance in watching and waiting for the return of his lost son, and his eagerness to have him back. This is the true picture of love and the reflection of forgiveness that accompanies it. Even before the boy was in his father's arms, and even before he had actually confessed his sin to his father, the father was running out to meet him with open arms once he saw his son on the horizon. What a picture Jesus paints for us of our loving Father, who waits for us to repent, to confess, and to return to His loving arms.

4. Read the following Bible passages and note what each of them tells us about sin and confession.
- a. Psalm 32:5
 - i. ANSWER: We must confess our sins. This means that we must acknowledge them and own up to them, and we must do this in front of God. When we do, He will forgive them and remove the guilt from us.
 - b. Proverbs 28:13
 - i. ANSWER: If we want to find mercy, we need to confess our sins. Hiding them only makes us worse.
 - c. 2 Timothy 2:19
 - i. ANSWER: God knows us. If we truly choose to become Christians, followers of Christ, then we must turn away from sin and the ways of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,; and we must confess that Jesus is the Lord of our lives.
 - d. James 5:16
 - i. ANSWER: We should confess our sins and shortcomings to one another—our fellow believers. The Bible assures us that the prayers of a righteous person are very effective. Conversely, if there is hidden sin in your life it, will hamper—or even prevent you—from praying for yourself or on behalf of someone else. We must be righteous in God’s eyes, and this requires comprehensive confession of our sins, leading to forgiveness.
5. Lest we forget, there is also a "confession" of a different sort. What type of confession do these passages refer to?
- a. John 1:20
 - i. ANSWER: This verse refers to John the Baptist and his confession to the crowd that he was not the Messiah that they were looking for. He asserted that he was only a messenger preceding Christ.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 9:13
 - i. ANSWER: As followers of Christ, we are called upon to "confess" the Gospel, i.e., to proclaim to the world around us the good news that there is forgiveness of sins through Jesus, who is indeed the long awaited Messiah, the returning Christ.
 - c. 1 Timothy 6:12-13
 - i. ANSWER: We are also to "confess" Christ in public, to those we meet each day. Our belief in Christ, our desire to follow His will in our lives, and our hope in an eternity with Him is to be confessed to all we meet—in any, and every, setting that we find ourselves in.

Confession is difficult for us, because it means approaching God’s throne in an unclean condition and admitting to God that we have done wrong. Often, it means also acknowledging and admitting to God that when we did wrong, we knew that it was wrong—but that we allowed our will and our desires to cloud our judgment and come between us and God, enabling sin to enter our lives. On a personal basis, this is particularly difficult for me, because I find myself having to confess the same sins over and over again. I ask myself, "How long will God continue to forgive me and to love me?" God whispers back His answer in a still quiet voice: "Forever.". God loves each of us, and His desire is that we confess our sins and get our relationship right with Him again. He stands waiting and looking for our return with His arms open wide. All we have to do is take the first step towards Him, and He will come running toward us!

Have a great week everyone!!

In Christ,

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