

Scriptures and Doctrine :: sin and repenting

sin and repenting - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2010/1/29 12:06

I have a question. I was told that its very important when we pray and ask for forgiveness that we repent and be very specific about our sin and not just pray in such a way as asking for broad general forgiveness. I have been thinking about this and wondering what others are seeing. I think that there are those sins that the Lord opens our hearts to and when we feel conviction we should respond and repent but does this mean that sins we may have been guilty of years and years ago need to be repented of specifically. For example is it vital that we make a list of every time we lied, or every time we got angry ect. Seems this would become an impossible task to do? Does this seem like a works based understanding or repentance or am I not looking deep enough?

love in Him
rdg

Re: sin and repenting - posted by daniel- (), on: 2010/1/29 12:42

Hi,

simply ask the Lord if there is anything specific that needs to be dealt with. But if He does not clearly show you something - simply walk on! If we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus continually cleanses us from all sin. Walking in the light is having a pure heart attitude towards God. The enemy wants you to analyse everything and ever wonder if you have really repented etc. But God is not playing games with us and He clearly shows us when we invite Him. Be free, do not allow the yoke of bondage to entangle you! Do not allow introspection to bring you into condemnation. It is one of the most deadliest weapons of the enemy. We are changed by loving and looking at Jesus. Not by looking at us and analysing everything.

Daniel

Re: sin and repenting - posted by Goldminer (), on: 2010/1/29 16:46

good word Daniel

Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2010/1/29 17:10

Hi Daniel

I agree that if we come before the Lord with an open heart to hear His voice He will show us those things that are not of Him. I wanted to hear what some others might be seeing because this kind of teaching with the importance being placed on being really specific about our sins is new to me. I agree spending too much time in introspection can open the door for the enemy to bring about condemnation and doubt. I also see where there could become a real pitfall if we allow our prayers to become so routine in nature that we not really looking to repent but rather clear our conscious from guilt. I am just kind of puzzled though because this sister in Christ that shared with me has a deep love for the Lord and a very fruitful walk. I am not sure how I will respond to her next time we come together.

If anyone else has some thoughts on this they would like to put forth I would very much like to hear what the Lord is showing you all in this.

love in Him
rdg

Re: sin and repenting - posted by twayneb (), on: 2010/1/29 18:33

rdg:

There is nothing in scripture that I know of that says that sins need to be specifically listed to be repented of. Repentance is a turning from sin, an about face so to speak. It is good for us personally to be specific about things that God deals with us about. For example, God might deal with me about an attitude of the heart and He might say, "That attitude is sin." I then might repent of that attitude specifically, confessing that I have had it, and asking God to cleanse me of it.

The idea of making a sin list is another thing entirely. There are those who would say that all individual sins must be remembered and specifically repented of. For example, if you confessed and asked forgiveness for 11 out of 12 lies you told but forgot one, uh-oh... Well, you get the picture. I cannot find any scriptural support for this view. It is an absolutely impossible task. It is very works based.

Hebrews chapter 10 speaks about this. Under the law, sins were continually brought before God each year and remembrance of those sins was made. But Jesus offered His body for sin once for all (in context all time, not all people. Paul is contrasting yearly remembrance with a total one time sacrifice.) All of my sins, past, present, future were paid for, even when all of my past sins were yet future tense.

I came to the Lord 30 years ago and, under conviction of the Holy Spirit over my sinful condition, repented of that sinful life, accepted the atonement of Christ, received His forgiveness, and was born again (My spirit was regenerated or reborn - see John chapter 3). There have been times since then when I have given in to one sort of temptation or another. Since I am born again, my spirit in fellowship with the Holy Spirit of God, smote me. God convicted me and I knew I had done wrong. So, I cleared the board so to speak as I came to the Lord admitting my sin (He already knew anyway), receiving His forgiveness (which He had already 2000 years before granted), and asking Him to cleanse me of this unrighteousness. I had not lost my salvation or become a sinner. Hebrews also speaks specifically to how we can lose salvation. That is another topic I guess. But what of all of the hidden things of the heart that God has opened my eyes to as I have grown in Him, all of those things that He has gently said, "Travis, that too is sin against me." You can see the impossibility of the list. We can never in our lifetime be aware of everything on the list. Look at Matt. 5. Jesus contrasts the law (a representation or figure of His righteous standard) and the things of the heart. Even if someone had been able to keep the law perfectly, they would still have fallen short of His standard. Notice that the Bible says if we live by the law we will be judged by it, not redeemed by it. It was a ministration of death through the judgment it carried for 100% of mankind who could never keep it.

To me, the idea of a sin list is just another way of putting ourselves back under bondage to works as Paul spoke of in Gal. 5:1.

Travis

Oh, by the way, many of us, including me, have a very fruitful life in the spirit and walk close to God, but don't have all of our doctrine together. Praise God I don't have to have all of my theological ducks in a row to have relationship with Him.

That is why when we discuss doctrine with our brothers and sisters we need to always speak with grace and be willing to adjust if we see what we believe not quite lining up with what the Word says.

Re: - posted by Giggles (), on: 2010/1/29 19:11

Great stuff twayneb. It's funny, I was actually going to go in the other direction. Repentance is a turning, but confession is a naming. So while we repent of sins by leaving them and going toward's God's principles, we receive forgiveness by confessing them:

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Granted this is not a justification process every time. If you are born again, every sin you ever will commit has been paid for at the cross. Confession here is like the sanctification process, where we are growing in holiness and relationship with God.

It's like if we sin against each other, we of course should repent and cease the sinful action and pursue the righteous thing, but we also need to mend the relationship to make sure there is no hindrances to communication, transfer of affection

ns, etc. So for that we usually confess the wrong before the other person and ask for forgiveness. The relationship gets restored real-time and then the repentance prevents it from going down that road again.

With God it's kind of like that. Confession is coming to Him as a son or daughter and saying, "I missed it here Abba, forgive me." Can it be a general, all-encompassing sin confession? Yes. Can it be specific? Yes. As Daniel said, it depends on the leading of the Lord. Like twayneb said, we don't want to make laws to follow. So you have to go as the Spirit leads.

You know what though? It's okay if you go through a season of deep confession. I believe the Lord can lead that way. I went through a time, post-conversion, where the Lord would bring to my remembrance many things I did before He came to me. It was not in a condemning way at all. It was gentle and in love. I looked at those things and just sweetly confessed them and thanked Him that He had forgiven me from them. It's not that they weren't covered by the blood; it's just we had never talked about them. And God is interested in us letting Him into to everything we are and have been...a real, vital, nothing held back relationship.

And for some folks, confession, along with thanksgiving, is a good way to start a prayer life. Maybe make those 2 lists all day long of things you can talk about with God: all the ways he has blessed you and all the things you want to bring before Him in cleansing confession. This can take a 5 minute prayer life and turn it into a much longer one, and give the Spirit many more leaping off points to run with into deeper prayer.

Trying to remember some specific testimonies of saints past on this, I'll write more when I remember.

Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2010/1/29 19:11

Quote:
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Hi Travis

I like what you shared here. Thanks for taking the time to write it all out as you did. Great points and I can relate to what you shared. The reason I mentioned this sister in Christ and her walk with the Lord is I am not really sure how to share with her that I just don't see the Lord leading me to come to the same conclusions in this that she is? She is older than I am so I want to speak to her from a loving heart and not come off like I am trying to prove a point? Make sense?

Anyway thanks for sharing, if you do not mind I will use some of what you shared and pass it along to my friend.

love in Him
rdg

Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2010/1/29 19:21

Hi Giggles

I think we posted at the same time. I really liked what you shared to. If you do come across those testimonies please do come back and share them.

Quote:
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You know this really touched my heart. This may just be what my friend was getting at(sometimes I need to listen more) when she was talking with me.

If we do pray at times in a general way I do believe that the Lord forgives, but I have had times when I just knew I had to be specific in my repentance not only with those that I had offended but with the Lord to.

I think I am going to give my friend a call and ask some more questions on this. This time I will listen more too:)

love in Him
rdg

Re: sin and repenting - posted by stephenmac, on: 2010/2/3 1:12

Hi,

Because I am a sinner and have a very limited understanding of my amazing God and His ways I can only ask God to forgive me of the sins that I know of. Because the basis of sin is anything that hurts God there is a big list.

I always ask for The Holy Spirit to convict me of sin as part of my prayer time with Him and during the day I will be convicted of something and then draw aside to ask forgiveness and then make a stance never to do that again.

I also ask forgiveness for anything that I have thought, said or done that had grieved, quenched or resisted Him.

Thanks.

Stephen

Re: - posted by Giggles (), on: 2010/2/21 16:50

Old thread, but I think I what I was trying to recall rdg was this chapter from The Hidden Life of Prayer by David MacIntyre:

The Engagement: Confession

'The garden of spices is sprinkled with red flowers.'-Heinrich Seuse.

'It is a great and rare thing to have forgiveness in God discovered unto a sinful soul....It is a pure Gospel truth, that hath neither shadow, footstep, nor intimation elsewhere. The whole creation hath not the least obscure impression of it left thereon.' -John Owen.

'Before His breath the bands
That held me fall and shrivel up in flame.
He bears my name upon His wounded hands,
Upon His heart my name.

I wait, my soul doth wait
For Him who on His shoulder hears the key;
I sit fast bound, and yet not desolate;
My mighty Lord is free.

Be thou up-lifted, Door
Of everlasting strength ! the Lord on high
Hath gone, and captive led for evermore
My long captivity.'

-Dora Greenwell

'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John

1:9).

Confession of sin is the first act of an awakened sinner, the first mark of a gracious spirit. When God desires an habitation in which to dwell, He prepares 'a broken and a contrite heart.' The altar of reconciliation stands at the entrance of the New Testament temple; from the altar the worshipper passes on, by way of the laver, to the appointed place of meeting to the blood-stained mercy-seat.

But we speak now rather of the confession of sin which is due by those who are justified, having found acceptance in Christ Jesus. Though they are children, they are sinners still. And if they walk in the light, they are conscious-as in their unregenerate state they never were-of the baseness of their guilt, the hatefulness of their iniquity. For now they bring their transgressions and apostasies into the light of God's countenance, and holding them up before Him, cry, 'Against Thee, O Lord, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest' (Psa. 51:4).

Confession of sin should be explicit. 'The care of Christianity is for particulars,' says Bishop Warburton. The ritual law in Israel which provided for the transference of sin on the Day of Atonement pre-supposed definiteness of confession: 'Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins' (Lev. 16:21). In private sacrifices, also, while the hands of the offerer (Lev. 1:4) were laid on the victim, the following prayer was recited: 'I entreat, O Jehovah: I have sinned, I have done perversely, I have rebelled, I have committed _____;' then the special sin, or sins, were named, and the worshipper continued, 'but I return in penitence: let this be for my atonement.' Standing beside the ruins of Jericho, Joshua said to Achan, 'My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him' And Achan answered, 'Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel; and thus and thus have I done' (Josh. 7:19, 20). The great promise of the New Testament is not less definite: 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9). A wise old writer says, 'A child of God will confess sin in particular; an unsound Christian will confess sin by wholesale; he will acknowledge he is a sinner in general; whereas David doth, as it were, point with his finger to the sore: 'I have done this evil' (Psa. 51:4); he doth not say, 'I have done evil,' but 'this evil.' He points to his blood-guiltiness.'

When, in the course of the day's engagements, our conscience witnesses against us that we have sinned, we should at once confess our guilt, claim by faith the cleansing of the blood of Christ, and so wash our hands in innocence. And afterwards, as soon as we have a convenient opportunity, we ought to review with deliberation the wrong that we have done. As we consider it with God we shall be impressed by its sinfulness, as we were not at the time of its committal. And if the sin is one which we have committed before, one to which perhaps our nature lies open, we must cast ourselves in utter faith upon the strong mercy of God, pleading with Him in the name of Christ that we may never again so grieve Him.³¹

As our hearts grow more tender in the presence of God, the remembrance of former sins which have already been acknowledged and forgiven will from time to time imprint a fresh stain upon our conscience. In such a case nature itself seems to teach us that we ought anew to implore the pardoning grace of God. For we bend, not before the judgment seat of the Divine Lawgiver, but before our Father, to whom we have been reconciled through Christ. A more adequate conception of the offense which we have committed ought surely to be followed by a deeper penitence for the wrong done. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we shall often be led to pray with the Psalmist, 'Remember not the sins of my youth' (Psa. 25:7), even though these have long since been dealt with and done away. Conviction of sin will naturally prompt to confession. When such promptings are disregarded, the Spirit who has wrought in us that conviction is grieved.

'My sins, my sins, my Saviour,
How sad on Thee they fall;
While through Thy gentle patience
I ten-fold feel them all.

'I know they are forgiven;
But still their pain to me
Is all the grief and anguish
They laid, my Lord, on Thee.'

It is of the first importance that in all the exercises of the secret chamber we should yield ourselves to the blessed influences of the Comforter, by whom alone we are enabled to pray with acceptance. An important caution in regard to this has

been noted by Ralph Erskine. In his diary he writes, under the date January 23, 1733: 'This morning I was quickened in prayer, and strengthened to hope in the Lord. At the beginning of my prayer I discerned a lively frame in asserting a God in Christ to be the fountain of my life, the strength of my life, the joy of my life; and that I had no life that deserved that name, unless He Himself were my life. But here, checking myself with reflections upon my own sinfulness, vileness, and corruption, I began to acknowledge my wickedness; but for the time the sweetness of frame failed me, and wore off. Whence, I think, I may gather this lesson, that no sweet influence of the Spirit ought to be checked upon pretense of getting a frame better founded upon humiliation; otherwise, the Lord may be provoked to withdraw.' When Thomas Boston found himself in danger of giving way to vain-glory, he took a look at his black feet.³² We may well do the same, but never so as to lose our assurance of sonship, or our sense of the preciousness of Christ. As Rutherford reminds us, 'There is no law-music in heaven: there all their song is, 'Worthy is the Lamb.'" And the blood of ransom has atoned for ALL SIN.

Believers of a former age used to observe with thankfulness the occasions on which they were enabled to show 'a kindly, penitential mourning for sin.' At other times they would lament their deadness. Yet it never occurred to them that the coldness of their affections should induce them to restrain prayer before God. On the contrary, they were of one mind with 'a laborious and successful wrestler at the throne of grace,' who determined that 'he would never give over enumerating and confessing his sins, till his heart were melted in contrition and penitential sorrow.'

For such deadness of heart there may be many explanations.

He who was once as a flame of fire in his Master's service may have allowed the fervor of his first love to decline for want of fuel, or want of watchful care, until only a little heap of gray ashes smolders on the altar of his affections. His greatest sorrow is that he has no sorrow for sin, his heaviest burden that he is unburdened. 'Oh, that I were once again under the terrors of Christ,' was the cry of one who had hung in agony over the brink of the pit, but who had learned that a cold heart towards Christ is still more insupportable. Those who are in such a case are often nearer the Saviour than they know. Shepard of New England, speaking from a wide experience, says: More are drawn to Christ under the sense of a dead, blind heart, than by all sorrows, humiliations, and terrors.'

That which impresses us as deadness of heart may be the operation of the Holy Spirit, convincing us of sins hitherto unnoticed. As one looks at some star-galaxy, and sees it only as a wreath of dimming mist, so one becomes conscious of innumerable unregarded sins, merely by the shadow which they fling upon the face of the heavens. But when one observes through a telescope the nebulous drift, it resolves itself into a cluster of stars, almost infinite in number. And when one examines in the secret place of communion the cloud which darkens the face of God, it is seen to scatter and break into a multitude of sins. If, then, in the hour of prayer we have no living communion with God, let us plead with the psalmist, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' (Psa. 139:23, 24, R.V.). He who has engaged to 'search Jerusalem with candles' (Zeph. 1:12) will examine us through and through, will test us as silver is proved, will sift us as wheat. He will bring up from the unexplored depths of our nature all that is contrary to the mind of Christ, and reduce every thought and imagination to the obedience of His will.

Deadness of heart may arise also from the consciousness of our many sins of omission—duties unattempted, opportunities unimproved, grace disregarded. Often, when we kneel in prayer, 'the lost years cry out' behind us. What was related of Archbishop Ussher might be said of very many of the Lord's servants—'He prayed often, and with great humility, that God would forgive him his sins of omission, and his failings in his duty.' Each day is a vessel to be freighted with holy deeds and earnest endeavors before it weighs anchor and sets sail for the eternal shores. How many hours we misspend! How many occasions we lose! How many precious gifts of God we squander! And the world passes away, and the fashion of it fadeth.

But there is that which lies still deeper in the soul than even secret sin—there is native sinfulness, the body of death. When we acknowledge the depravity of our nature we should endeavor to speak according to the measure of our experience. We can scarcely exaggerate the facts, but we may easily overstate our appreciation of them. As we advance in grace, as we become accustomed to hold our lightest thought or feeling within the piercing illumination of the Divine purity, as we open the most hidden recesses of our being to the gracious influences of the good Spirit of God, we are led into a profounder understanding of the sinfulness of inbred sin, until we lament with Ezra, 'Oh, my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to Thee, my God' (Ezra 9:6). It is reported of Luther that for one long day his inborn sinfulness revealed itself in dreadful manifestations, so vehement and terrifying that 'the very venom of them drank up his spirits, and his body seemed dead, that neither speech, sense, blood, or heat appeared in him.' On a day of special fasting and prayer Thomas Shepard, of Cambridge, Connecticut, wrote as follows: 'November 3rd. I saw sin as my greatest evil; and that I was vile; but God was good only, whom my sins did cross. And I saw what cause I had to loathe myself....The Lord also

gave me some glimpse of myself; a good day and time it was to me....I went to God, and rested on Him....I began to consider whether all the country did not fare the worse for my sins. And I saw it was so. And this was an humbling thought to me.' President Edwards had at one time an amazing discovery of the beauty and glory of Christ. After recording it in his diary, he continues: 'My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination, like an infinite deluge, or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often for these many years these expressions are in my mind and in my mouth, 'Infinite upon infinite! Infinite upon infinite!' When Dr. John Duncan was drawing near to death he remarked with great earnestness, 'I am thinking with horror of the carnal mind, enmity against God. I never get a sight of it but it produces horror, even bodily sickness.

These are solemn experiences. Perhaps God leads few of His children through waters so wild and deep. Nor must we try to follow, unless He points the way. Above all, we dare not, in confessions which are addressed to a holy God, simulate an experience which we have never known. But let us, as far as God has revealed it to us, confess the deep sin of our nature. It has been said³³ with much truth that the only 'sign of one's being in Christ which Satan cannot counterfeit' is the grief and sorrow which true believers undergo when God discloses to them the sinfulness of inbred sin.

But, on the other hand, the love of Christ at times so fills the heart that, though the remembrance of sin continues, the sense of sin is lost-swallowed up in a measureless ocean of peace and grace. Such high moments of visitation from the living God are surely a prelude to the joy of heaven. For the song of the redeemed in glory is unlike the praises of earth in this, that while it also celebrates the death of the Lamb of God there is in it no mention of sin. All the poisonous fruits of our iniquity have been killed; all the bitter consequences of our evil deeds have been blotted out. And the only relics of sin which are found in heaven are the scarred feet and hands and side of the Redeemer. So, when the saved from earth recall their former transgressions, they look to Christ; and the remembrance of sin dies in the love of Him who wore the thorny-crown, and endured the cross.

'The fouler was the error,
The sadder was the fall,
The ampler are the praises
Of Him who pardoned all.'

Re: sin and repenting, on: 2010/2/21 19:17

Quote:
-----I think that there are those sins that the Lord opens our hearts to and when we feel conviction we should respond and repent but does this mean that sins we may have been guilty of years and years ago need to be repented of specifically

Yes, it can be both. It depends on the sin, all sins are covered, however, some sins especially against another person God may want us to rectify with that person. I have seen Him move upon me at by times to confront someone that I had wronged years before, when I attempt to make the effort the LORD stopped me and told me that He has settled it. However at other times I have gone right up to the person. One of those times is when I skipped out on part of the rent and moved across town. I owed the guy \$50 bucks. When I showed up at his door a few years later with the \$50 dollars he was taken aback, he forgave me. I left him in amazement. God does the accounting and if we have wrong anyone, He expects us to go to that person. Most times we have simply forgotten the incident and He brings it to the forefront to be dealt with. Especially when we are seeking God. We are constantly asking Him to search us to see if we have wrong anyone and He is faithful and just to show us what is there that may be a hindrance. And when He does show us, our immediate response is to go to that person. That is not always the best way, asking the LORD to set it up so that the moment is right is always the best way. However, it's not a rule, it works for me.