

**General Topics :: Question about confession/restitution****Question about confession/restitution - posted by Isaiah64, on: 2007/10/15 22:41**

One thing I notice about many of the revivalists on this site is that they place a special emphasis on restitution. Confessing our sins and making restitution to someone we have wronged is necessary, say they, and failure to do so will hinder the "blessing", preventing us from being personally revived. And I know that to a large degree this is biblical.

But my question is, how far do you have to go? Do you need to find as many people as you can remember that you have wronged and ask for forgiveness (even for small things), or just those whom you need to make restitution for (restore what was stolen)?

At work, for example, I know I have done a couple things that are wrong, though nothing that would be considered a "great" sin--like wasting time, and one time in particular I remember accidentally making a scratch on one of the products we sell and trying to cover it up.

My conscience has been bothering me about this lately. Today I read this passage from Scripture:

"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

1John 3:20-22

I want to have a clear conscience and unwavering faith in the Lord, and I certainly don't want my prayers to be hindered. The only problem is that I suffer from a "weak" conscience many times, tend to be obsessive and compulsive, and often fall prey to condemnation.

I mean, on the one hand, I can see where maybe I'm being too obsessive about this, but on the other I know that all sin is great and equally abhorrent in the eyes of God. So I'm not sure what to do. Any thoughts/advice??

Re: Question about confession/restitution - posted by dohzman (), on: 2007/10/15 23:11

Prayerfully follow your heart and continually seek the Word of God in confirmation that you may hear the Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord on any matter. Don't let the adversary tie you up with guilt or condemnation, when you start to sense that the voice you're hearing is more of do this in repentance, but it seems to be filled with condemnation than it's more than likely the devil trying to place a burden on you and not the Spirit of Truth which brings liberty with conviction that leads to true repentance.

Re: - posted by TonyS (), on: 2007/10/15 23:24

I agree with dohzman, if you are in the Word and if you are in prayer God is well able to communicate His direction to you in a very personal and sure way.

And I believe also it is correct, some who call themselves "repentance" preachers have built an entire new doctrine far beyond anything found in scripture. And what happens, the larger emphasis becomes what I do, rather in what Christ has already done.

I will say perhaps it is even possible to open old wounds long since forgiven and healed because of a miss-placed idea of repentance and restitution. In other words, I allegedly clear my conscience but I in the process damage another's?

Re: Question about confession/restitution, on: 2007/10/15 23:34

One of the lessons I'm hard-pressed to learn is that we're saved by faith but we overcome, in part, by grace.

Fact is, you and I have probably sinned thousands if not millions of times more than we can remember. Also, we sometimes sin unconsciously, unaware that even a careless remark, laziness at work, etc, is sin as well. God's grace protects us from the past sins we can't recall and the present sins we can't identify - and even extends to the greater, willful sins we have committed as well as those we may commit in the future.

Grace allows us to examine our past mistakes and present misconceptions without beating ourselves down with guilt and

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d/or shame. Guilt, shame, and conviction, and repentance are not necessary the same experiences - though they sometimes overlap. This is where the Devil gets us.

The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins by inwardly telling us we are indeed guilty of the crimes, He also reassures us that our sentence (Death, Hell, and Judgment) is commuted via our faith in, and communion with, the only man ever to be found "not guilty". We are innocent by association with Jesus Christ, our Defender Divine.

The Devil, as the diabolical prosecutor, lays guilt trips whenever we falter. Where Jesus frees, Satan tries to imprison. Where Jesus forgives, Satan blames. His game is to make one feel so dirty, unworthy, and so painfully aware of their own unholiness and unworthiness that they are beyond salvation...

But, where was I?

As a personal testimony, I have a very sinful past. During my time of regeneration, penitence, and reformation, I went through my past memories of people I had hurt (particularly ex-girlfriends) and wondered whether or not I ought to try to re-establish contact to make amends.

The question is, "am I contacting this person to quiet my own conscience, or for their good as well?"

Is contacting that girl whose heart I broke a good idea now that she's married with children? How would I feel if my wife got a phonecall tonight from the ex-boyfriend who once hurt her?

So, I've decided that many past sins need to be left alone instead of reopening old wounds - just to clear my conscience.

There are other things, though, that I may have to make amends for - that can't potentially hurt anyone but me.

I know through faith in the grace of our Lord Jesus I am a better man - not perfect by any means, and an infinity away from many Christians I know. But I'm growing in grace, knowing I'm not perfect while I'm here on Earth (even though I must strive to be perfect). But one day, He will finish the work He began...

edit (next day): upon further consideration I believe it's important to repent about anything and everything one has done wrong and to make restitution wherever one can do so without causing more harm.

Re: Question about confession/restitution - posted by jarona (), on: 2007/10/16 3:21

I would just like to say that you may want to think more and more or realize more and more that demons use the Word of God as well. Just as Satan tempted Jesus; in this day and age the powers of darkness use God's Word to condemn us and lead us into self-pity, condemnation, shame, guilt we shouldn't have, fears we shouldn't have, etc. So you might want to consider or ask God to give you discernment about what feelings may be coming from demonic oppression and what things are coming from Holy Ghost conviction. Remember Satan is the "accuser of the brethren" not Jesus Christ. Jesus is the justifier, redeemer, restorer, God of grace and compassion, who pities His children, and who is quick to forgive those whose hearts are turned towards Him. Don't let the devil make you think you have to be walking around all the time feeling sorry for yourself and condemning yourself and thinking about how terrible you have been, etc. That is not God's will for your life. Jesus Christ died to redeem us from the curse of the law, don't let the devil make you a legalist. It is something we may continue to struggle with, but Christ can bring light to our lives so that we are not walking in darkness and feeling so heavy and burdened down with the weight of our sins. Christ shed his blood, the sin issue has been taken care of through the SUFFICIENT blood of Jesus that is sufficient enough to cleanse us from ALL sin. I felt God wanted me to make some restitutions and I went and confessed personally to a number of people, concerning things I stole. I don't believe we have to try and dig up every single time we did something wrong and every little thing we have done wrong and confess it to someone. The "accuser" who accuses day and night, wants us to be full of guilt and condemnation and feel insecure like we have to do all these things to be free and do this thing or that thing. He is a liar, and the father of lies. Seek God's wisdom and the truth of the freedom that is in Christ. Ask God to give you discernment as to what is the conviction of the Holy Spirit and what is just the accuser condemning you and robbing you from the freedom you should be having in Christ. In love, Jaron

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Re: - posted by death2self (), on: 2007/10/17 12:59

I would encourage you to allow the Holy Spirit to bring the conviction and tell you what to do. Several years ago I had to pay back a debt from 1990 to my brother.

I had no remembrance of what happened until it was quickened in my heart and then I very distinctly remembered it. I sent the letter and my brother wrote back with a very emotional letter and he tore the check into little pieces. I wept when I read the letter.

The next time I saw him, he gave me a big hug, the only time that ever happened to me in my nearly 46 years.

It won't always work out this way but doing what the Holy Spirit asks you to do is always a good plan.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2007/10/17 14:50

Quote:

-----It won't always work out this way but doing what the Holy Spirit asks you to do is always a good plan

Excellent advice!

One question: why would you *not* want to make restitution? This answer will reveal more to you about *who and what* you really are.

Think about that.

ginnyrose

Re: - posted by Isaiah64, on: 2007/10/17 21:09

Thank you all for your responses.

Quote:

-----One question: why would you not want to make restitution?

My question wasn't so much as to whether or not you should make restitution, but *how far* do you need to go? After restoring things that were stolen, do you need to then go to everyone that you can remember that you have at one point sinned against without getting right (taken advantage of, lied to, lost your temper with, been a bad witness to, etc.), and confess your sins to them? The "little" things. How far is too far, and how do you know if it's of God or of the devil (conviction vs condemnation).

That's what I've been struggling with. There are several instances that I can think of in my own life, and right now I'm not sure what I should do. I'm praying that the Lord will reveal the answer to me.