

Confess and Forsake

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.
– Proverbs 28:13 –

Human pride is an awful thing. Even post-conversion, man has a marvelous ability to justify his own actions. This is because the fleshly nature simply believes itself to be God.

Until we reach glory, every believer must battle the beast of the breast. David Brainerd, God's streaking firebrand of a missionary to the American Indian, called it "my vile, hellish heart". As was the case with Cain, sin is at the door, awaiting its moment to pounce. Thanks to Christ's resurrection and ascension, we are not left helplessly exposed. The power we possess to fight this parasitic internal monster is the resident Holy Ghost. But He is not a despot. He permits us to own the controls and enables our will, making it the means by which we choose to yield our members as instruments of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. It is gloriously true that the old nature no longer owns the day; however, we must simultaneously recognize that it nevertheless remains a body of death that must be mortified daily, and as such, we must grapple with the reality that we are still prone to sin. What we do about it is critical to our life, our witness, and our spiritual well-being. Yes, it is nothing short of daily and continuous war.

While victorious Christian living is and ought to be the normative state of the New Testament believer, we live in an age where watered-down preaching and the pseudo-science of psychology have infected the Western church to the point that many tend to wink at sin. When not yielded to the Holy Ghost, we are apt to excuse our sins merely as faults, innate character flaws, or simply mistakes. Spiritual laziness, lack of Bible study and devotional meditation, and a dearth of pulpit preaching against sin serves to embolden many contemporary professing believers to either cavalierly accept or else completely ignore sin in their own lives. When this is the case with a true believer, he grieves the Holy Ghost. It thus behooves us to beware, and then to carefully examine our own hearts.

We are all apt to stumble. But God has lovingly provided a means whereby we may quickly rise and continue our upward progress toward the Celestial City. John tells us that *if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. And yet we are often too long in coming to that place. Perhaps because we think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think? Richard Sibbes wrote, "Confession is verbal humiliation." There is a certain amount of shame we must own in order to advance, no matter our perception of the size of our offense. If we are to restore our broken fellowship with the Father and return to the shade of His smile upon us, it is imperative that we find a closet space, go deep within our souls, and cast away our pride before God. When we thus humble ourselves, acknowledging our transgression and confessing our offenses *openly and honestly* before our Father, we will find Him waiting to restore the joy of our salvation, uphold us with his free spirit, and enable us to forsake the sin which so easily besets us.

Brethren, let us not pretend that we are wholly sanctified, deceiving ourselves. Likewise, let us not justify sin nor glory in the struggle. Rather, let us be circumspect, hating the accursed thing and keeping a short list of offenses. Then let us humbly cast ourselves upon His endless mercies, that we may maintain right relationship to live in the fulness of the victorious power of His holy presence within.