

The Pathway to Repentance

LESSON TWO: Confession

Introduction

1. The woman caught in adultery: John 8:1-11
 - a. "I do not condemn you, either."
 - i. Perhaps singly one of the greatest illustrations of how we are saved by grace
 - ii. Salvation will not be based upon our moral purity, because we all sin
 - iii. Yet, Jesus adds an additional statement....
 - b. "Go. From **now on sin no more**"
 - i. The call to live a pure live. Grace, when accepted, demands that we live worthy of this great gift.
 - ii. The big question is "How?"- how do I live a life pure from sin? How do I keep from slipping back into my old patterns? How do I keep from repeating the same old sin over, and over, and over again? Answers to these questions are essential. Such answer will define the pathway of repentance.
2. David's great sin of adultery & murder
 - a. This sin is perhaps one the greatest examples of personal failure, **exposure, repentance, and recovery**.
 - i. David's restoration started with exposure of his sin (which up until this time have been a secret that David had hidden in his life)
 - ii. While often the most difficult exercise, exposure (coupled with confession) is essential to repentance and forgiveness.
 - b. The process of David's repentance: Psalm 51
 - i. In this chapter we will see three steps in David's repentance
 1. **Confession** – acknowledgement of the sin
 2. **Contrition** – brokenness over the sin
 3. **Correction** – renewal and restoration after the sin
 - ii. These are **fruits of repentance**. These fruits will serve as our model for the process of repentance.
 - iii. This lesson will deal with the step of CONFESSON. Contrition and correction will be dealt with in later lessons.

THESIS: The process of repentance involves three steps: confession of the sin, contrition due to the sin, and correction from the sin. This lesson will examine the step of confession.

1. Confession

- a. Bible *confession* – a genuine acknowledgement of a wrong committed.
 - i. **Defined:** homologeó, literally, to ‘speak the same as’;
 - to voice the same conclusion, i.e. agree ("confess"); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with (endorse).
 - I confess, profess, acknowledge
 - to **acknowledge** as true
 - ii. **Nathan** to David: “You are the man” 2 Samuel 12:7
 - Exposure: he had despised the word of the Lord; despised the Lord; speaks of murdering Uriah, and taking his wife;
 - Pronounces judgment: sword will never depart your house; evil will rise up; wives taken from him; public shame;
 - He is not merely **accusing** David, but **condemning** him for what he has already done
 - iii. **David** to Nathan: “I have sinned against the LORD” (2 Samuel 12:13)
 - More than a mere confession of what has already been exposed as true
 - But an **acknowledgment** of his *complicity*
 - **Recognition** of who he has harmed: I have sinned *against the Lord*.
 - He is “self-accusing” (Nathan accused him, “you are the man” David self-accuses, “I have sinned”
 - David’s offers no excuse, no explanation, or any attempt to minimize his sin
- b. Confession as a part of the process of our repentance
 - i. A person moves from the realm of denial to acknowledgement; from secrecy to exposure; from excuses to accountability.
 - ii. With this exposure the façade which was erected to hide the sin completely collapses
 - Either by being exposed, or by exposing self – the error is now clearly out in the open and one is finally able to freely talk about it
 - The sin is detailed: Nathan spared no words, was not mean, but exposed exactly what David had done
 - Anything short of total transparency cannot be construed as confession
 - NOTE: Regarding public confessions - while there are times when it is expedient to not give all the details of one’s sin, failure to **name** the sin is to allow the sin to remain secret. There is no real exposure. Objection to naming one’s sins is usually based on saving the person embarrassment. Doing so only short circuits the repentance process due to the fact that godly sorrow is essential in producing the contrite heart needed for recovery.
 - iii. Confession begins the healing process
 - Contrary to what we might think; exposure (why admittedly difficult) is cleansing for the person.

- The **secret is gone**, no more checking your back, no more worry when it is all going to blow up around you, no more living a double life; no more spiritual schizophrenia.
 - James 5:16 *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*
- c. Confession involves three essential parts. Notice the words of David...
- i. **Acknowledgment** – “*I have sinned...*” no more denial, or excuses; but acceptance of the truth so you are able to speak the truth: “I have done that which is wrong”; the sin has to be detailed, spelled out (this will help later in restoration; *if you don’t know what you have done wrong you will not be able to correct it*)
 - The ability to call it as it really is
 - **News Item:** Much like the term ‘illegal immigrants’ became politically incorrect, so too has ‘juvenile delinquent,’ apparently. The government is now referring to this group of individuals as “justice-involved youth.’ In a news release on Monday, Attorney General Loretta Lynch said the DOJ is “committed to giving justice-involved youth the tools they need to become productive members of society.”
 - White washing the sin only keeps us trapped in it. Until we face what we have done we cannot recover from it.
 - No pushback, no resentment
 - Those who feel guilty, scared, embarrassed, and ashamed often avoid taking responsibility. They want to hide it, deny it. They get angry and/or flustered when caught or confronted. When pressed they may apologize, but insincerely. But true repentance starts with ownership of the sin.
 - ii. **Accountability** – “*I have sinned...*” this is not self-abasement, but taking full ownership for the transgression; “This is all on me”
 - Accountability means responsibility:
RESPONSIBLE: (adj) legally or morally obliged to take care of something; having to account for one’s actions; liable;
 - **Example:** Let’s say you accidentally dropped hot coffee in your lap while driving, got distracted, ran a stop sign, and hit another car. You didn’t mean to do it, but you did it anyway. There’s no need to be defensive or view this as a personal attack- *it’s just a statement of fact*. The accident is YOUR FAULT, even though it was unintentional. That’s the truth, plain and simple. You’re the one who ran the stop sign, regardless of the reason you had for doing it. It’s certainly not the other driver’s fault, because he had the right of way. So who should pay for the damage you did to his car? Who should take responsibility? Who should be accountable? Certainly not the other guy, the innocent victim!

- **Do not give excuses**, there is no need to explain (only comes across as an attempt at justification of the sin)
- **No blaming** (others or circumstances), There is a saying in regards to *affair-recovery*: My mate is never my problem (that is not to say my mate doesn't have serious problems), my mate reveals the problems in me.
- Psychologists place excuse-making in the '**self-handicapping**' category. (For example: someone asks you why you failed the test. Anxiety and shame ensue. Your subconscious quickly tries to protect your sense of self from being attacked or criticized, and you blurt out – *the test was unfair!* This shifts the focus from your lack of preparation to the external source that was ultimately out of your control.)
- An Ironic Statement: *"The day you take complete responsibility for yourself, the day you stop making any excuses, that's the day you start to the top."* **O. J. Simpson**

iii. **Awareness** – "I have sinned **against the Lord**" *Know your sin*

- All sin is first and foremost an offense against God. In David's famous Psalm, he elaborates about his sin:
*For I **know** my transgressions,
 And my sin is ever before me.
 Against You, You only, I have sinned
 And done what is evil in Your sight,*
 Psalm 51:3, 4
- Questions to ask and answer to increase awareness of ones sin:
 - a. Who have I sinned against?
 - b. How has my sin harmed the Lord?
 - c. How have I harmed others?
 - d. Why did I sin in the first place?
 - e. What vulnerabilities was I dealing with?
 - f. What lies have I accepted as true in my life?
 - g. What compromises have I made?
 - h. What secrets have I been keeping?
- If a person does not know what their sin is, who it was against, and most importantly – *why they sinned*, it is going to be nearly impossible to repent from it and keep from falling back into it again and again.

d. David's acknowledgement of his sin as recorded by him

i. **Psalm 32:3-5**

³ *When I kept silent* about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.

⁵ I *acknowledged* my sin to You; and my iniquity I *did not hide*; I said, "I will *confess my* transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of *my* sin.

- Confession began David's healing, hiding sin makes one sick (spiritually and physically)

- ‘I acknowledge’, ‘I did not hide’, ‘I will confess my transgression’ – all confession verbs
- Imagine David coming forward saying, *“I just want to let the congregation know that I have been dealing with some personal things and along the way I have made some bad choices. I have been under a lot of pressure lately, you know, being king and all, so I need your prayers. Thank you.”*
- Knowing what he had done, wouldn’t you think a little more disclosure would be in order? Yet on the other hand, David isn’t asked to wallow in his sin. Notice his words to God in Psalm 51 – remember that God already knows all that David did and it was God that exposed David through Nathan...

ii. **Psalm 51**

- 1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;
According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.
- 2 Wash me thoroughly from **my** iniquity
And cleanse me from **my** sin.
- 3 For I **know** my transgressions,
And **my** sin is ever **before me**.
- 4 Against **You, You only**, I have sinned
And **done** what is evil in **Your sight**,
So that You are justified when You speak
And blameless when You judge.

Awareness
Accountability
Awareness
Acknowledgement

Summary of Step One: Confession

- Confession means taking full responsibility
- Confession means you become a ‘self-accuser’ (“I have sinned”)
- Confession means naming the sin (“I have sinned the sin of _____”)
- Confession leaves no room for pride
- Confession is totally transparent
- Confession does not minimize, rationalize, justify, deny, or blame
- Confession leaves one broken – which will be the next step in the process of repentance

A Christian is not a person from whom the possibility of sin has been removed, but a person from whom the penalty of sin has been removed.