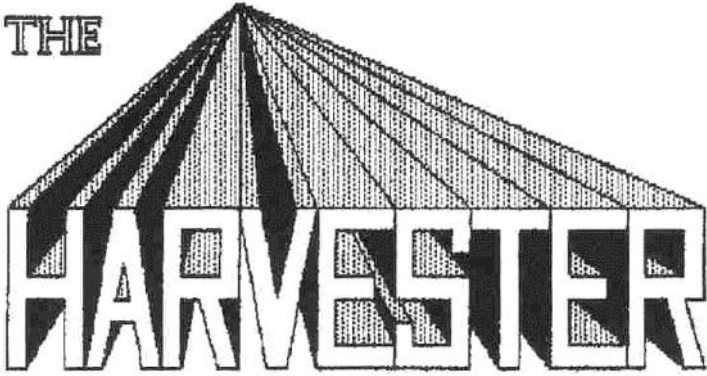


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*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)*

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### ADMIT IT AND QUIT IT!

We live in a society today where personal responsibility is no longer common. Rather than accepting the responsibility/blame and the accompanying consequences, most people today try to deflect blame elsewhere. Through the use of excuses, double talk, and even downright lies many try to evade the truth and lessen or shift the blame.

I see this type of behavior on a daily basis in the high school where I teach. Many times when kids are caught doing something

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wrong their parents defend them. They know their sweet little son or daughter would never do such a thing. There are dozens of cameras located throughout the school and a lot of inappropriate and even criminal behavior is recorded. Yet you will still find some parents proclaiming their child's innocence even after seeing their actions on video.

Why is it so hard to admit a mistake? Why is it that no one seems to plead guilty in court unless their lawyer tells them it is their best chance to get a lighter sentence? Why not just tell the truth because it is the right thing to do? I know that would be a novel concept in today's world.

The title of this article was on a sign outside a local congregation recently, along with an accompanying verse. *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy"* (Pro. 28:13). The idea expressed here is quite simple. The person who is forthright and acknowledges their mistakes will be successful in the long run. But the person who tries to hide his misdeeds or blame others will not succeed.

Failing to take responsibility for one's own actions is not a new thing. It actually began in the Garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit, God appeared to them. *"And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was*

naked; and I hid myself. And he said, *Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*" (Gen. 3:9-11)

Adam had sinned and God had confronted him about it. Was Adam forthright about his mistake and did he accept responsibility? *"And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat"* (Gen. 3:12). Adam did not tell a lie, but he also did not accept responsibility. Eve did not put it in his mouth while he was sleeping. He took it from her and put it in his own mouth. He is to blame for his own sin!

Next God turns to Eve and asks her about her role in all of this. Does she accept the responsibility for being the first one to sin and then enticing Adam to do the same? *"And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat"* (Gen. 3:13). Just like Adam, she tries to "pass the buck." Also like Adam, what she said was true, but it was evading the issue. Regardless of what the serpent had said, Eve was the one who gave in to temptation and disobeyed God.

We speak of confession today as Christians, but this is not a new idea. Confession of sin was mentioned numerous times in the Old Law. For example, *"And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: And he shall bring his trespass of-*

*fering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned..."* (Lev. 5:5-6). Confessing sins is also mentioned in Leviticus 16:20-22, 26:40-42, Numbers 5:6-7, 1 Kings 8:33-36, Daniel 9:20, & Nehemiah 1:6-11.

The sins of King David are well chronicled. He was guilty of ignoring God's commandments regarding the transporting of the Ark of the Covenant, for which Uzzah died (2 Sam. 6). He was guilty of lust, adultery, deceit, conspiracy, and murder in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11). Here Uriah died along with the child David conceived with Bathsheba. He was guilty of pride when he numbered Israel (2 Sam. 24). In this instance, 70,000 men died! (v. 15)

Despite these sins, God said *"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will"* (Acts 13:22). How could a man guilty of such atrocities be a man after God's own heart? All men sin, but it is the response to sin that separates the righteous from the unrighteous. David said, *"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin"* (Psa. 32:5).

When David was confronted with his sin, he always acknowledged it and accepted responsibility. Even though we find three different episodes containing David's sins and the resulting consequences, we never see David repeating the same type of sins. He acknowledged his sins, repented, learned from his

mistakes, and moved on. That is what God expects from us. God understands our weaknesses, and He does not expect perfection.

I am sure we have all seen people who have a "holier than thou" attitude. Those who walk as though they seldom if ever make a mistake are never pleasing to God. Remember the parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:10-14? The Pharisee boasted of his deeds and accomplishments while never mentioning any faults. He was rejected by God. The publican *"standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner"* (v. 13).

Committing sin is not what separates us from God. Failing to acknowledge sin, repent, and sincerely try not to repeat the same sin is what separates us from God.

Some sins we commit may be known to everyone, others by only a few, and some perhaps to none. But we must be careful to not become conceited and think that we can "get away" with sin. We are given numerous warnings in Scripture. *"Be sure your sin will find you out"* (Num. 32:23). *"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance"* (Psa. 90:8). *"For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad"* (Luke 8:17).

We find in Proverbs 16:6 that *"by mercy and truth iniquity is purged."* If we want forgiveness, we need to be honest and forth-

right about our actions. It takes God's mercy and our truthfulness together to purge iniquity.

John summed it all up very well. *"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:6-9).

James even said, *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed"* (Jam. 5:16). He was speaking about physical healing, but offers us a very important lesson. If we are "living in our sin," instead of confessing it and repenting, then God will not be inclined to help us with our ailments nor answer our prayers.

When and to whom should we confess our sins? Obviously those who know about it. But just as importantly, those who may have been affected by it, even if they are un-

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ware of what we have done. And we should do this as soon as possible. The longer we delay, the less likely it is that we will ever do it.

Owning up to our sins in front of others can be humiliating. It will humble us, but this actually makes us stronger and less likely to repeat the same mistake.

Not only must we acknowledge our sins or mistakes, but we must also show remorse and a change in attitude and behavior. This is what Christ meant when he said, "*Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*" (Matt. 3:8). Or in other words, we need to admit it and quit it!

TONY WHIDDON  
Roanoke, AL

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PSALMS 136:3-7

Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for  
His steadfast love endures forever;

Give thanks to him who alone does great wonders,  
for His steadfast love endures forever;

Give thanks to him who by understanding made  
the heavens, for his steadfast love endures forever;

Give thanks to him who spread out the earth  
above the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever;

Give thanks to him who made the great  
lights, for his steadfast love endures forever;

# Gospel Meetings

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| <b>DATES</b>     | <b>PLACE</b>                     | <b>SPEAKER</b>                      |
|------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| March<br>21 - 23 | Napoleon<br>Woodland, AL         | Bill Prince, Jr.<br>(Oxford, AL)    |
| April<br>4 - 6   | Liberty<br>Liberty, KY           | J.D. McDonald<br>(Woodbury, TN)     |
| April<br>6 - 13  | Ashlock<br>Celina, TN            | Harry Cobb<br>(Wedowee, AL)         |
| April<br>7 - 11  | Goochtown<br>Eubank, KY          | Joe Hill<br>(Hager Hill, KY)        |
| April<br>11 - 13 | Valley<br>Valley, AL             | Kevin Mills<br>(Newnan, GA)         |
| April<br>11 - 13 | Claud<br>Eclectic, AL            | Hunter Bulger<br>(Fort Deposit, AL) |
| April<br>18 - 20 | West Broad Street<br>Wedowee, AL | Hunter Bulger<br>(Fort Deposit, AL) |
| April<br>21 - 25 | Oak Grove<br>Eubank, KY          | J.D. McDonald<br>(Woodbury, TN)     |
| April<br>27 - 30 | Goose Creek<br>Neon, KY          | Joe Hill<br>(Hager Hill, KY)        |

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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What was the name of the woman who hid the spies at Jericho?
2. Which river was Naaman told to wash in to rid himself of leprosy?
3. What should you not "throw before swine?"
4. With what was Peter's mother-in-law sick?
5. When in prison at what time did Paul and Silas pray and sing to God?