

WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS

Int.

1. Aim: To show what a Christian is to do when he sins in order to be right with God.
2. Our sins are forgiven when we obey the gospel:
 - a. Acts 2:38 - "Remission of sins" = freedom or pardon - from our past sins
 - b. Other terms - "wash away thy sins" - "Saved"
3. It is possible to sin after we obey the gospel - once saved always saved is not in Bible!
 - a. 1 Cor. 10:12 **"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."**
 - b. 2 Pet. 1:10 **"... for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:"**
 - c. 2 Pet. 2:20-22
 - d. Jas. 5:19-20 **"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20. Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."**
 - e. 1 Jn. 2:1 **"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"**
4. We have examples of people who sinned - Peter, Judas, Demas Why?
 - a. Peter was afraid and would not stand up for what is right.
 - b. Judas had an interest in Money!
 - c. Demas loved this present world - **2 Tim. 4:10**
5. What can we do if we sin after becoming a Christian?
 - a. If we claim that we do not sin, then we have just added another sin to the list. 1 Jn. 1:10
 - b. There is a wrong way and a correct way to proceed when we sin.
6. What should we do when we as Christians sin?

Discussion

I. SATAN'S FALSE FORMULA $S + T = F$ Sin + Time = Forgiveness

A. Satan's formula

1. A Christian sins. He does not repent. But after a period of time he acts as if the sin has been forgiven.
2. He acts as if time causes the sin to be forgiven.
 - a. Put himself on probation and now he is off probation.
 - b. Sometimes this includes not attending the services for long periods of time.
 - c. Then they start back attending the service.
 - d. He does not take the Lord's Supper at first.
3. Then the person declares themselves off probation and they act as if everything is OK!!!

B. We have Insliders

1. A backslider is one who has left the pathway of right living
2. An inslider is one who has publicly sinned so as to bring reproach on the church, but instead of making a public confession and asking forgiveness of the church, they just slide into the congregation and feel forgiven.
3. Illustration: Erring Christian - Inslider
4. This is following Satan's plan $S+T=F$

C. The passage of time will never bring forgiveness of a single sin.

1. Acts 8:22 - Peter told Simon to repent and pray
2. If passage of time brought about forgiveness then Peter should have told Simon "Keep a low profile until this blows over and then everything will be all right."

II. GOD'S FORMULA FOR FORGIVENESS S+R+C+P = F

A. Sin + Repentance + Confession + Prayer = Forgiveness

B. Simon - **Acts 8**

C. God's Formula - Restore

1. Gal. 6:1 **"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."**

2. Fault = sin

3. Spiritual = one who has not been overtaken in a fault - not perfect

4. Restore = means to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be.

5. One who by correction may be brought back into the right way

D. Repentance - Acts 8:22 **"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."**

1. Simon - obeyed - forgiven of past sins - then He sinned again

2. Was told what he should do

3. Then he repented, confessed and prayed

E. Confession -

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

2. Confession = means to make known or acknowledge

F. Prayer - Jas. 5:16 **"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."**

G. God's plan for being restored

1. We must repent of that sin - repent means a change of mind which brings about a change of life - we turn from sin and turn back to God!
2. Confess - admit we have sinned - not "If I have sinned".
3. Pray - ask God's forgiveness and have others pray for us. -
 - a. Acts 8:22
 - b. 1 John 2:1-2

III. QUESTIONS ABOUT BEING RESTORED

A. **Is confession really necessary ?**

1. Do we really have to confess our sins to be forgiven?
2. Yes!! God has commanded us to confess our sins - 1 Jn. 1:9
3. We confess to show that we have repented of our sins. The confession shows that our repentance is sincere and honest.
4. The repentance of the sin is the thing needed to be confessed or made known. I'm sorry that I have sinned!!!

B. **Do we have to name or list the sins?**

1. If one must confess all of his sins by naming them one by one in catalog fashion, then what if he were to forget one of them?
2. Would God forgive him only of those he had named and hold the other one against him?
3. When a Christian sins and asks for forgiveness a real brother is not going to insist that the erring brother name or list all of his sins. We are not running a detective agency to see all that a person has done.

4. It is not a confessional where all sordid details are given.
5. Nehemiah said he had come before God to "...**confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.**"

Neh. 1:6-7

6. Here is a confession of sins in general terms, but not specific sin is mentioned by name.
7. It would not be wrong to name the specific sin, but it would not always be necessary.
8. 1 Jn. 1:9 "**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**"
 - a. Confess = means to admit or declare
 - b. Our confession could be in general terms
 - c. We could confess that we have been guilty of dishonesty - but that does not require that we go into all the details of dishonesty.

C. **What about sins in another city ?**

1. Suppose a Christian falls into sin. Then he moves to another town and desires to be restored. Does he have to go back to that former home and repent of his sins there in order to be forgiven?
2. Those people who knew the person thinks of him/her as an erring Christian, backslider, or unfaithful child of God.
3. If it is not too far then it would be best to go back.

4. If the person cannot go back then write them a letter that is to be read before the congregation.
5. The person being restored wants to make correction of his sins.
 - a. He wants the prayers of his brethren
 - b. He wants the forgiveness of those he's harmed.
 - c. He could confess his sins where he now lives, but he certainly wants to make it known in the area where the sin was committed.
 - d. A letter, a phone call, a visit in person - but let the brethren there know about the repentance and confession of the erring one.

D. Should all sins be confessed publicly ?

1. No! Sins known only to God should be confessed only to God.
2. Sins known to one or a few should be confessed only to the one or few who knew of the sins.
3. Public sin, sin known to all or at least many, should be confessed publicly and before the church.
4. Illustration -- $2 + 2 = 5$ Johnny is sitting at his school desk and writes $2+2=5$. The teacher looks over his shoulder and privately helps him correct his error. The class may never know that Johnny made a mistake. But if Johnny is writing on the chalk board and all the class is watching and he makes the mistake of writing $2+2=5$ then it must be corrected publicly. The teacher does not correct the error if she takes Johnny aside and explains the mistake. She must publicly explain the error.

5. Ga. 2:11-14 Paul withstood Peter to the Face
6. 1 Tim. 5:20 "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

E. Why confess anyway ?

1. Some would argue that it is useless to confess a public sin. Why make it known if it is already known?
2. The confession is not to make the sin known!
 - a. Confession is to make known our purpose to quit the wrong.
 - b. The confession is making known our repentance or sorrow for the sin.
 - c. We are saying that we are going to give up that sin.
3. Acts 19:18-19 "**And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. 19. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.**"
 - a. Some of these early converts were still practicing the things they did before conversion.
 - b. Now the fear of the Lord was in their heart and they were ready to destroy everything that pertained to sorcery.
 - c. Confessed = confessed their evil deeds.
 - d. And shewed their deeds - they burned their books.
 - e. They were not going to use the books again. They put the temptation away, so they would not return to this sin again.

f. By burning the books they kept others from falling into the same mistake.

Those who are recovered from sin will do all they can to keep others from falling into it.

4. Application

a. Sin of drinking - repent - have some strong drink left - pour it down the sink!!

b. Sin of pornography - burn the books or magazines.

F. Could a public sin be confessed privately ?

1. Suppose a brother has committed a public sin of drunkenness. could he just confess this sin to the elders or some of the brethren, or is he required by the scriptures to confess it publicly before the church?
2. A person ashamed to make a confession is not sincere and not repentant.
3. It is not degrading to go before the congregation and publicly acknowledge that we have done wrong.
4. A person who has committed a public wrong is never humble enough to be forgiven till they are ready to take away the reproach he has brought upon the church.

CONCLUSION

1. Sin in the life of a Christian must be forgiven
2. Satan has a plan that will not work - it does not matter if every human being has forgotten about our sin, forgiveness take place in the mind of God. $S+T=F$
3. We must follow God's formula for forgiveness or else we will stand in judgment with our sins unforgiven.

4. Jas. 5:19-20 **"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."**
- a. Err - an erring Christian needs to be restored - you are lost
 - b. Convert - bring him back - restore to rightful place
 - c. Save a soul from death - not physical death, but spiritual death.
 - d. Hide a multitude of sins - God will forgive, completely forgive and cancel them
5. If you are erring then you need to be restored now
- a. No need to wait
 - b. Repent of those sins
 - c. Confess that you have sinned
 - d. And pray to God and we'll pray to God for you.
6. There shall be "Joy in heaven" Lk. 15:7
7. Why not be restored to God now!! Then bring forth fruits of repentance.