

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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I Have Sinned

"And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man ...And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah (II Sam. 12:7,13). When Nathan went to David to reprove him for his sin with Bathsheba, David was honest enough with himself to admit his sin. He did not try to rationalize or conceal or place the blame elsewhere — he simply accepted the fact that he had sinned, took responsibility for his actions, and confessed to Nathan and God, "I have sinned."

Many Christians today find it hard, if not impossible, to face the fact that they have sinned. This usually results in unnecessary anxiety and guilt that often hinders their full potential as Christians. David was not able to deal with his sin until he had faced it. We must also have this ability to be honest with ourselves if we are to deal with our sin. We must accept the fact that we sin, take responsibility for our actions, and confess our sins to God and our brethren.

The publican, in Luke 18:13, exclaimed, "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner." Paul wrote that "There is none righteous, no, not one" and "for all have sinned" (Rom. 3:10, 23). If we accept the fact that we are human, then we must also accept the fact that we are not perfect. "In admitting to yourself that you are or have been guilty of lust, or greed, of pride and of judging, of an unforgiving nature, you are not saying that you are worse

than others... You are simply joining the human race and confessing that you are in need of God's help and forgiveness." (Cecil Osborne)

After we can face the fact that we sin, we must then take the responsibility for our sin. We often try to blame others for our actions. We tend to say that "we are mad because **he** did this!" rather than admitting that we are mad because **we let ourselves** get mad. Someone reminded me that I was not responsible for what people did to me — I was responsible only for the way I reacted to them. John tells us that we will be judged according to our works (Rev. 20:12) — not according to what others did to us. It's a waste of time to recount the mistakes of others that "made" us react in one way or another. David did not try to make any excuses for his sin; he simply admitted, "I have sinned."

When we're finally able to make this admission without making any excuses, then we can begin to deal with our sin by relying on our brethren and God. Paul tells us that we are to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal.6:2). James says that we are to "confess our faults one to another" (Jas. 5:16). I'm not advocating that we confess our sins to every brother. It would be foolish to think that every brother will understand your weaknesses and can help you with them. Yet to refuse to confess our sins to those who can give us **mature** and **sound** advice and solutions is to neglect a very effective way to deal with our sins. We must, however, also rely on God and His word. David, who admitted that he had sinned, who accepted the responsibility for his sin, and who confessed this to God before Nathan, also wrote, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (Psalm 119:11)

- Kevan O'Banion

Perish The Thought!

While visiting a local area hospital recently, I was amused at their curb-side signs which read: "Don't Even THINK About Parking Here!" Such novel wording reveals an insight into human nature. When the motorist begins to

contemplate leaving his car in a no-parking zone, he is apt to think, "It'll only be for a little while", or "I'm in a hurry", or "well, everyone else does it, why shouldn't I?" Those who think thusly are likely to be found parked at the red curb. So, the admonition not to even think about it is appropriate — and not only for those tempted to park illegally.

Indeed, the Bible teaches of a serious correlation between our thinking and our temptations. "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings..." (Matt. 15:19). It is "from within" that all these evil things proceed and defile the man (Mk. 7:21). As someone has observed, "What we sow in thought, we reap in deed". How true! **Thinking about it** is the prelude to practically every sin committed. Like the motorist rationalizing about the no-parking zone, most find it easy to mentally "sell" themselves on their temptations — especially, after many weakening thought-rehearsals. What sinner has ever failed to find his own "extenuating circumstances" to minimize or excuse his sin? "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes" (Prov. 21:2) — even when he does that which he **knows** to be wrong. Maybe he didn't plan to be wrong, but then he didn't plan NOT to either! This is not to say, of course, that all who have evil thoughts will necessarily involve themselves in evil deeds. It largely depends on what is done with the evil thought. If it is dismissed at once ("don't even THINK about it"), it may do no harm. However, if it is nurtured, savored, and rehearsed, it is likely to find expression. As someone has said, "We can't help it if birds fly overhead, but we need not let them build nests in our hair". If we fail to control our thoughts, it is not likely that we will control our actions.

For this reason we need more teaching and preaching aimed at the HEART of ungodly conduct. True, evil deeds must be condemned, but we must not overlook the heart from which they are launched. If we can eliminate the hate we can eliminate the murder and countless lesser conflicts (1 Jn. 3:15; Matt. 5:21-24). Handling lust at the beginning will prove an effective deterrent to fornication and adultery (Matt. 5:27-28). When we are able to remove envy, jealousy, and anxiety from the heart, we will have spared the world their troublesome manifestations — not to mention all the misery and heartache associated therewith. How much better off we would all be if we

could just remember to **not even think** about such things! "Can't help it", you say?

Peter evidently thought men could control their thinking. He encourages "girding up the loins of your mind" (1 Pet. 1:13). Paul likewise admonishes "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5) and to "think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). Can't help it? Perish the thought!

- Dan S. Shipley

A Case of Mistaken Identity

A man was being tailgated by a stressed out woman on a busy street. Suddenly, the light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, though he could have beaten the red light, accelerating through the intersection. The tailgater was furious, honking her horn, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her cell phone and makeup.

While still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked right into the face of a very serious police officer. He ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He took her to the police station where she was searched, finger printed, photographed, and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours she was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm sorry for this mistake. I pulled up behind you while you were blowing your horn, rudely gesturing at the guy in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him. I saw the 'What Would Jesus Do' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'Follow Me to Sunday School' bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian fish emblem on the trunk. Naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car.

- Curt Hughes

Religious Freedom

Worshipping God however we would like to worship Him sounds like real freedom to man. Yet, the Bible calls it something different. In quoting from the Old Testament, Jesus Christ said of some of His Jewish brethren, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6-7).

Man has always sought to replace God's will for worship with his own ideas and agenda. The Scriptures refer to this as "vain worship." Here is an important question for us all to consider on the matter of worship - Who is it for? If it is for God whom we are seeking to honor, shouldn't we worship the way that He wants us to, the way that is revealed in the Bible? Yet, if we are trying to please ourselves, then by all means we should tailor our religion to suit our personal tastes. The problem with this is that God is the one who deserves our praise. Romans chapter 1 condemns people who worship and serve "the creature rather than the Creator" (vs. 25).

Freedom comes not by doing our will, but the will of our God. When we worship our way, we sin. Sin enslaves; it never liberates.

- Philip Mullins

Elders: Gordon Percell & Gary Smalley

Evangelist: Gary Smalley

Sunday AM: 9:30 & 10:30

Sunday PM: 5:00

Wednesday PM: 7:00



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)