

Romans 3:23 states, "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" Without being blasphemous or disrespectful towards the text at all.... may I just say DUH! Even if we didn't have this verse to point this out to us, we would still be keenly aware this message is completely true. None of us could possibly deny its accuracy. None of us even remotely live up the glory that God deserves. We are on this planet to Glorify God and this verse simply tells us that we fail to do that. Every single person here, who has the ability to know the difference between right and wrong has, at some point, committed the wrong and failed to glorify God.

This leaves us in a difficult predicament. Because the payment for that sin we commit is death, we are on this journey through this life trying to come to the throne of God in an effort to find the gift that cannot be found anywhere else. That gift we so desperately need.... the forgiveness of our sins. So for the Christian, the disciple of Jesus who seeks to live for Him and desires that home in heaven after this life is over, we must ask this question: How can I have my sins taken away? The short answer is found in **I John 1:9**. The answer being, we must confess our sins.

Whatever this process of confession entails, whatever it means for us to confess our sins, we can be sure that it is most certainly a worthwhile process for the Christian because through the confessing of sin our spirits are cleansed of all unrighteousness and we are brought back into a spiritual union with God again. The questions remains however, how do I confess my sins? Some pertinent questions might be:

- Do I just take a moment, bow my head, and ask God to forgive me?
- Do I feel great remorse for what I have done and just expect God to take it from there?
- Do I make a bunch of promises to God about how I will do better in the future?
- Is this something that last for just a moment, a few minutes, days, or weeks?
- How can I confess my sins so that I can be confident that they are forgiven by God?

Let's take a quick moment and consider how thankful we should be to not be under the Old Law any longer. When a person committed a sin under the Old Law, either intentionally or unintentionally, and they wanted to be forgiven, it was an all day event. **Leviticus ch.1-10** give us some very specific details, but here are the cliff notes version.

- Go to the field and get a spotless animal that has no blemish at all.
- Take that animal to the tabernacle or temple (depending on when you lived) to make the sacrifice. Location mattered not.
- Then you would have to wait in line for your turn to make the sacrifice.
- When it was your turn you had to lay your hand on the head of the animal as its neck was cut.
- Some of the blood had to be sprinkled. For the priests, it had to be sprinkled on their ear, thumb, and big toes.
- Then you had to walk back to your home after doing all of this.
- On top of all this was the spiritual, physical, and mental exhaustion that went along with this day.

People under the Old Law had a very difficult ordeal ahead of them when they need the forgiveness of sin in their lives. Thankfully, under the New Covenant, the blood of Christ was shed once for the sin of all mankind, so we don't have to worry about offering sacrifices. However, God still demands our complete attention and effort to making things right when we have sinned against Him.

There is one chapter in the bible that gives us a golden blueprint of the proper way to confess our sins before God. It is actually a Psalm, and it should change the way we look at our confession. David, after committing his grievous sins with Bathsheba, pours his heart out before God in absolute confession of his wrongs. I believe that if we follow his example with an honest and sincere heart then we can grow so much closer to God and move that much farther from sin. This Psalm goes far beyond animal sacrifices. It gives us a perfect insight into a distraught soul who longs to be back in the presence of his Heavenly Father. Let's consider the text of David's Prayer of Repentance from Psalm 51.

I. Appeal to God's Mercy (vv.1,2)

- A. We do not deserve to have our sins forgiven, so we must appeal to the loving mercy of our Heavenly Father, who extends His grace to us.
 - 1. It is grace the first and the 100th time.
 - 2. We don't deserve God's forgiveness at any time.
- B. There is not a hint of entitlement in the words of David.
 - 1. It is God's loving kindness and abundant tender mercy that allows the forgiveness of sins.
 - 2. David begs for his sins to be washed and to be thoroughly cleansed.
 - 3. Consider the 2 men praying in **Luke 18:9-14**. Which one was David more like?
- C. We should not approach God when we have sinned as if we are entitled to forgiveness.

II. Acknowledge Sin Entirely

- A. David does not give excuses for his sin. He owns up and takes responsibility for what he has done.
 - 1. "I know what I have done is wrong."
 - 2. "I cannot hide my sin from you, God."
 - 3. "My actions justify any punishment that might be given to me."

- B. We must acknowledge our sins and take full responsibility for it before God.
 1. We must realize the impact sin has on God.
 2. Asking for forgiveness does not negate the consequences of the sin.
 3. Comfort can be found in total confession before God. (**Proverbs 28:13**)

III. Announce God's Will

- A. Not saying that David was born already having sin on his soul. Plenty of verses show this simply isn't the case.
- B. David is trying to put into words how guilt ridden he is about his sin.
- C. David is hurting and distraught because he realizes that his sin denies God's will for him to be holy and righteous.
 1. God had a plan for David's life, just like He has a plan for our lives.
 2. God desires for us all to be righteous before Him! He desires to be in a union with you!
- D. That union can only take place if we are willing to pursue and obtain those things which are righteous.
 1. God expects for us to flee the worldly things and instead pursue Godly things. (**I Timothy 6:11,12**)
 2. To confess our sins and repent of them means that we acknowledge that God expects great things for us in this life and we give every effort to meet God's expectations for us.

IV. Ask for Restoration

- A. Sounds like verse 2 and it should because David understands just how big of a deal sin is and how badly he needs restoration.
- B. Our requests for restoration are sometimes limited to a quick "Lord, forgive me of my sins." and that is it.
 1. To David, the request for restoration to God was much more than that.
 2. **vv. 7-9**, David asks for renewal from the sin that he has committed.
 3. **vv.10-12**, He asks for a renewed spirit and a clean heart of hope and holiness.
- C. This request for restoration is not something to take lightly. We have sinned against God and we must beg to have something better than that.

V. Aspire to be Grateful

- A. You remember that last time you legit thought you were in trouble, like big trouble, and you pray asking God that if he'll just get you out of this mess that you'll straighten up and start living right? That's David at this point.
- B. "Lord, if you restore me I will..."
 1. "...teach transgressors Your ways." (**v.13**)
 2. "...sing of Your righteousness." (**vv.14,15**)
 3. "...give You anything you want!"
- C. God desires our contrite heart, and we must be willing to show God how grateful we are for grace by living for Him! Repentance should lead us to obedience. (**II Cor. 7:9-11**)

VI. Anticipate a Better Future

- A. God did not forgive David so he could go back to living in the same sin he was confessing.
 1. The forgiven person must break the cycle of sin.
 2. David is saying that he will now live for the pleasure of God and not himself.
- B. When we confess our sins, it is not just a "sorry... I'll try to do better next time." It is a proclamation that we look forward to a better future where we do not continue to make the same mistakes over and over again. God deserves better from us!
- C. The confessing of our sin is the first step in a better future for us!
 1. David longed to have his sins forgiven so he could feel whole and righteous again.
 2. Consider his feelings towards his sin in **Psalm 32:1-5**.
 3. Through the confessing of his sin, David could now live with a guilt free heart and he could continuously offer righteous sacrifices up before God in all that he did.
- D. If we desire a better future then it all begins by laying everything out before God, confessing our sins, and making a determination to live for God in all that we do!

Someone might look at this text and say, "Wow! Confessing sin is a really big deal! It is a time consuming and emotionally draining process!" If that is you right now, then this lesson has been a success because you grasp how big of a deal sin is. Sin is no joke and when we commit some sin, we must be ready to lay it all out before God in confession and repentance because our souls hang in the balance. The bright future of a wonderful relationship with God starts by making the right decision to confess, executed with purpose, pleading, and praise. If you have sin in your life, then make the decision to rid your soul of it and come clean before God and stand justified before Him this very day!