HAVE THE HUMILITY TO REVEAL YOUR SINS

By Nathan Combs

Ever since Adam and Eve hid in the bushes after eating the forbidden fruit, people have tried to conceal their sins. David impregnated the wife of a trusted soldier, and then tried to cover it up by secretly murdering him so he could take her into his harem. Judas secretly went to the Jewish leadership to betray his Lord and acted the part of a faithful disciple until the moment he approached Jesus in the garden with the temple guards. In considering these Biblical examples, the harm of papering over sin is clearly seen. But sin concealment is not just an ancient problem—we personally face it as well.

The reality is that all of us are dealing with sinful struggles. The apostle John bluntly tells Christians that “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 Jn. 1:8). It’s one thing to agree with this Scripture in principle, but it’s quite another to actually live like we believe it. When we take the time to actually look carefully at our own sinful attitudes and deeds, we probably don’t feel like sharing those things with other people! It’s much easier to keep our problems hidden, put on our clean Sunday clothes, smile artificially, and pretend like we have spotless lives.

James, the brother of Jesus, writes in James 5:16: “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” Have you obeyed this verse recently? Have you approached a strong Christian, opened up about a sin, and asked him to pray for you? There are many excuses we might offer, such as “I just don’t have strong relationships I can trust.” Although the verse certainly implies that we would approach a “righteous person” to intercede on our behalf, there is no human relationship so strong that it removes the painful sting of revealing sin. Regardless of how trustworthy another person is, confession is *inherently* uncomfortable. Consider Adam and Eve: they had every reason to trust their Creator, yet they did not immediately run to God and only divulged their sins when forced.

Rather than delaying confession until we can feel entirely comfortable with the situation (which will never happen), we need to embrace humility and get busy opening ourselves up. Just a chapter before James 5:16 is James 4:10: “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.” Interestingly, when God rebuked Job’s sinful three friends (Job 42:7-9), he didn’t tell them to directly pray to him for forgiveness, he told them to go to Job and have him pray for their souls. How humbling it must have been for them to ask the man they had bitterly argued with to intercede on their behalf! But then, humility was the point. Are we more interested in preserving an illusion of spotlessness or in allowing the Lord to heal us through obedience to his words?

*33 Arrow Ln., Nashua, NH 03060 • njcombs@gmail.com*