



TURNING FROM OUR WICKED WAYS...

We are all very familiar with 2 Chronicles 7:14 where GOD gives us HIS conditions for true revival: "If MY people, who are called by MY name, shall humble themselves, pray, seek MY face and turn from their wicked ways, *then* will I hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land." Verse 15 goes on to say: "Now MY eyes will be open and MY ears attentive to prayer offered in this place." We very often hear the call upon GOD's people to pray and to seek GOD's face, but often the "turn from their wicked ways" is omitted. It's like we don't have any wicked ways to turn from! But, 1 John 1:8 tells us that "if we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the Truth is not in us." YES! The true born again Christian is cleansed from the generational filthiness of sin inherited from Adam and is also covered with the righteousness of Christ! HALLELUJAH! However, unfortunately we still sin, and **unconfessed sin hinders our relationship with GOD AND OUR PRAYERS!**

As Believers, we are no longer enslaved to sin. Sin is no longer our Master. We have a new nature, and we love GOD, HIS Word, and we truly desire to learn, trust and obey! We hate sin and we do not want to sin against GOD. But, sometimes that old flesh still rises up and we give right in to it. In addition, satan is a roaring lion who seeks to tempt us to sin with his subtle schemes...and sometimes we succumb to his schemes AND IMMEDIATELY HATE IT! True Christians are very sensitive to sin and are not happy in habitual sin. Sin hinders our fellowship with GOD and others! Sin grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit, and it limits the extent of our being able to serve GOD. Isaiah 59:1-2 says: "Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor HIS ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your GOD: your sins have hidden HIS face from you, so that HE will not hear."

Therefore, Christians DO need to CONFESS and REPENT of SIN! 1 John 1:9 says that "If we confess our sins, GOD is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." As some have rightly said, Christians don't need to take a spiritual bath everyday because we were cleansed once for all by the blood of JESUS when we got saved. However, we do need our feet that walk in this dark, wicked world washed every day. We need to acknowledge our sin before GOD and agree with HIM that it is sin -- and that we have sinned against HIM. This is of utmost importance. It's the heart of David in Psalm 51 after being confronted by Nathan the prophet for his grievous sins regarding Bathsheba. Listen to what he writes:

"Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I myself know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." David knows he is guilty. He is not trying to justify his sin. He is asking God for grace and mercy for cleansing and forgiveness.

"Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge." David is acknowledging that what he did was SIN and evil in GOD's sight. He is making no excuses for his actions. He knows that bottom line HE HAS SINNED AGAINST GOD, and that GOD is completely justified to judge David however HE pleases.

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." David knows he was born with original sin and that his sin is no one's fault but his own. Oh, how we want to blame others for our sins of anger, unforgiveness, bitterness, abusive speech... But we have no one to blame but ourselves -- especially, as born again believers!

"Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom ⁷Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice." David longs for GOD to cleanse, forgive and wash away his sin. His bones are broken under the guilt of his sin. He wants freed from his guilt before GOD. "⁹Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities." He so wants to be cleansed by GOD! "¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew [revitalize] an upright, steadfast spirit within me." This sounds like a marvelous prayer for REVIVAL!

"¹¹Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. ¹²Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit. ¹³Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners will turn back to You." David knows that his sin has grieved the Holy Spirit and caused HIM to withdraw. David is a man after GOD's own heart and there is nothing worse for him than to not have a relationship with GOD. He saw GOD withdraw from King Saul. Saul always made excuses for his sin; he blamed everyone but himself. David doesn't want to end up like Saul. He desires to abide in the joy of true fellowship with GOD that he has experienced but that his sin has now quenched and grieved.

This is what true repentance looks like. AND to be effective in prayer, we Christians must confess our sin and repent (turn from our wicked ways). James 5:16 tells us that **the earnest, heartfelt, continued prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much in its working.** By GOD's grace, the Christian has been declared righteous before GOD because of the saving, redeeming blood of JESUS CHRIST. However, we also need to be righteous in daily practice for effective service to GOD! **SIN HINDERS OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE!** We need a daily spiritual cleansing for our prayers to accomplish much with GOD in heaven...that HE will hear from heaven, forgive sin, and heal our land.

AND OUR LAND NEEDS HEALING! Dare I say that Christians in America look very much like 2 Timothy 3:1-5: **Lovers of self and utterly self-centered; lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate greedy desire for wealth; proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters; blasphemous scoffers; disobedient to parents; ungrateful to GOD; unholy and profane before GOD; without natural human affection/callous; relentless; false accusers; troublemakers; loose in morals and conduct; uncontrolled and fierce; haters of good; betrayers; inflated with self-conceit; lovers of sensual pleasures and vain amusements more than and rather than lovers of GOD...and although they hold a form of true religion, they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it -- their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession (amplified version).** GOD will not hear and answer the prayers of those who insist on going their own way and refuse to repent and turn from the wicked ways.

So, let's make sure to daily pray: Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there by any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way. (Psalm 139:23-24)



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