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### Service Times

#### Sunday

Bible Class: 9:30 A.M.  
Worship: 10:30 A.M. & 5 P.M.

#### Wednesday

Bible Study: 7 P.M.

#### Preacher:

Russ Earl

#### AM Sermon:

The gods We Serve (**Exo 32:1-4**)

#### PM Sermon

3 Amazing Attributes about God

#### Sunday AM Bible Class:

Character Studies in the OT

#### Wednesday Bible Class:

Summer Series: Chuck Northrop

#### **In SEARCH of the Lord’s Way**

On Channel 6-2 Sundays @ 7:30 am

#### **The Truth in Love** on Channel 47

Sundays @ 8am

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# The Oologah Informer

## July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### God’s Plan of Salvation for His Lost Children

#### Part 2 of 2

By Wayne Jackson

### Confession

The word “confess” derives from a compound Greek term, homologeo. The roots are: homo, “same,” and lego, “to speak.” The term carries the idea of agreement, assent.

In the context of our discussion, it means this. When a Christian is convicted by the Scriptures of transgression, he must humbly agree with the divine assessment, and be willing to say so!

The apostle John wrote: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:9). If one refuses to concede his sin, what then?

There are three possible venues of confession: to God alone; to God and to other persons—who may have been victims of the sin, or privy to it; a general public acknowledgment when the sin is widely known.

Let us think about each of these for a moment.

First, when one has sinned a sin that is against God alone, or perhaps known only to the Omniscient One, the matter can be settled between the principals involved. For example, if one, in anger, mentally lashes out at the Lord (as Job did on occasion), he need merely, in his petition to the Father, ask for forgiveness.

It is not necessary to “blab” mental sins to the entire world, as a former President did, for instance, when he told the whole of society of his spiritual lapses of lust for some women.

As a minister I’ve had folks respond to the invitation, only to confess the most private infractions. Frequently I’ve had to ask: “Do others know of this?” When the reply is in the negative, I tell them that there is no need to “advertise” this circumstance. A general statement is then made to the congregation and prayer is offered for the agonizing soul.

Second, when our sin is known to others, we are obligated to confess the fault—at least to those who are privy to the situation. Altercations that are private should be settled between “him and thee alone” (Mt. 18:15).

Occasionally, though, it is the case that a brother sins against

another, but the transgressor does not have the courage to approach the offended party directly, acknowledging wrong and asking pardon. Rather, he will walk down the church aisle and make a generic confession: “I have done and said things against others that I shouldn’t have; I ask for your prayers.” That is not the way to remedy a personal sin against another.

Third, there is the matter of public confession. Sometimes one’s sin is so widely identified that nothing but a public confession will suffice to satisfy the matter.

Near the conclusion of his third missionary campaign, Paul came to the city of Ephesus. As a result of his teaching, a church was established. These saints were zealous initially, with a genuine love for the Lord (cf. Rev. 2:4). Some of them, though, became entangled again in their old habits—apparently reverting to “magical” practices (for which Ephesus was known).

According to Luke’s record, they were convicted of their error, and they came “confessing and declaring their deeds” (Acts 19:18). The sense of the passage seems to be this: These erring brethren openly acknowledged what had been widely known, i.e., their sinfulness in practicing magical crafts. Additionally, they brought their little scrolls, containing ritual inscriptions, and burned them “in the sight of all” (Acts 19:19). Lenski says that the implication of this language is that Paul was directing the procedure (1961, 799).

Some see the term “deeds” as a reference to the secret incantations of their sorcery practices (Bruce 1988, 359). McGarvey also takes the position that these brethren were merely exposing the magical formulas of their pre-Christian activities (n.d., 157).

We must respectfully disagree. This view does not appear to comport with the term “confessing,” which stands separate from the “declaring.” A Christian does not need to “confess” what he knows was forgiven at the time of his immersion (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Better is the view that these were new converts who continued to condone and/or practice these “deeds” after their primary obedience to the gospel (see: Alford n.d., 783).

That brings us to this question. How is it that some brethren fantasize that they can abandon the Lord’s service—for weeks on end—and then, ultimately smitten by conscience, silently slip back into a regular church routine, without so much as a word of confession that they have neglected the Christian responsibilities?

Those who have strayed from faithful duty must concede that wrong, and somehow make their renewed disposition know to the church.

They might respond to the public invitation at the conclusion of a service. They may ask the elders to announce their penitence to the congregation. Or they could request that a statement be published in the bulletin, etc. The manner of their acknowledgement is a matter of expediency; the necessity of it is a point of law.

“Time” per se does not transform apostasy into fidelity. One cannot hope that God will simply “forget” a breach of fidelity, and so ignore the lack of prescribed procedure involved in restoration.

We cannot trifle with the Lord—who can both “forget” our sins, and yet “remember” our failure to obey (see Jer. 14:10).

There is a passage in one of John’s epistles that is germane to this discussion. The apostle writes.

“If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request” (1 Jn. 5:16).

This text, among other things, suggests there are those for whom we may, and should petition God's forgiveness. By way of contrast, there are those for whom such efforts are futile. In the first instance, the brother is not persistently sinning (present tense) toward (pros) death (spiritual destruction).

On the other hand, there is sin toward death, i.e. unrestrained rebellion. The distinguishing difference obviously is this: In the former case the brother confesses his sin and turns therefrom (1 Jn. 1:9). In the other instance, the apostate pursues in his rebellion.

A case in point is found in the Corinthian correspondence. It is rather apparent that the brother in Corinth, who had so scandalized the church by his flagrant fornication (1 Cor. 5), had, at a later time, repented and openly acknowledged his wrong. And so the brethren were encouraged to forgive and comfort him (cf. 2 Cor. 2:6—7).

How can one pray for a brother's actual forgiveness, if he has no knowledge that the offender has conformed to God's law of pardon? Under normal circumstances, confession authenticates the sincerity of the penitent's heart.

In summary: When one's sins are strictly personal and private, he is not required to broadcast them. On the other hand, when a person's transgressions involve other people and are widely known, they must be resolved in a more public format. Silent meditation will not suffice.

### **Prayer**

Finally, the penitent is instructed to pray for forgiveness, which, ultimately, only God can grant. We ought, therefore, to pray for ourselves (Acts 8:22), and then request others to petition the Lord on our behalf (Jas. 5:16). We have been assured that when we sin, Christ, as our Advocate, will mediate for us, and that his blood will cleanse our wickedness (1 Jn. 1:7).

### **Conclusion**

Here is a sobering reality. Just as there are many who believe they have conformed to the divine plan of salvation in becoming a Christian—but actually have not; even so, there are members of the church who, perhaps unknowingly, have neglected God's plan of salvation for his lost children. Each Christian should examine his life—and make sure he is right with God.

Jackson, Wayne. "God's Plan of Salvation for His Lost Children." ChristianCourier.com. Access date: July 6th, 2017.  
<https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/832-gods-plan-of-salvation-for-his-lost-children>