**Once You Admit It, Will You Stop It?**

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There was a cartoon several years ago in the *Saturday Review of Literature* in which little George Washington had cut down the famous cherry tree. He made his admission that he did it -- after all, he “cannot tell a lie.” Also pictured was his exasperated father, who said, “All right, so you admit it! You always admit it! The question is, when are you going to stop doing it?”

The cartoon was amusing, but it makes a good point that deserves our attention. Once we admit that we have committed certain sins, will we stop? Perhaps you know of those who readily admit that they are a sinner, and in need of salvation. At the same time, these people will not take that next step, which is to turn from those sins and obey the Gospel (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). Many have said that one of the most difficult aspects of any problem is admitting that you have one. It seems like some people have “conquered” this fear of admitting their sin, but will do nothing beyond this. A friend of mine said when it gets to this point, the person is no longer confessing sin, but bragging! I agree.

In the Bible, we learn that God not only demands that men admit they are sinners, but also demands that men act! In Old Testament days, Solomon said, “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy” (Prov. 28:13). Notice please that God expects man to confess AND forsake the sin in order to have mercy. It is not enough to merely confess (admit?) the sin and then go on living in sin! In New Testament days, Christ said, “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:3). What does “repentance” mean? It means turning away from the way you used to live, and living in accordance with Christ’s will! An example of repentance is found in the book of Matthew. Christ spoke a parable concerning two sons who were told by their father to go work in the vineyard. One son said he would go, but did not. The other refused, but later “repented and went” (Matt. 21:29). Read Luke 15:11-21, and see another son who was in the same position. In repentance, we see one not only recognizing the guilt of his sin and confessing sin, but also stopping sinful behavior!

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he told them that he knew what he wrote in the first letter would make them sorry, but he rejoiced because that godly sorrow led them to repentance (II Cor. 7:9-10). Notice that when we sorrow over an act that we know is wrong, we still have not done what is right! Godly sorrow leads us to repentance, but we must still repent!

When one learns that he has sinned in the sight of God, he must not only admit/confess the sin, not only be sorry about the sin, but also turn from sin and do what is right! Only then can one be in a right relationship with God.

Dear friend, examine your life. Are there things you are doing which contradict the will of God? In what areas of life are you guilty of sin? In those cases, not only must you face up to the fact that you are guilty, but then also take the necessary steps to get out of that sin. If you’re outside of Christ, then waste no time in repenting of your sins, confessing Christ as the Son of God and being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-38, 8:36-38; Mk. 16:16). If you’ve done those things already, but have been caught up in various sins, then turn from your error in repentance, confess those things and pray for God’s forgiveness (Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:9). It is not enough to admit you have a problem. You must stop the sin and do what is right (Isa. 1:16-17)! God is longsuffering. Therefore, let us repent and live for Him (II Pet. 3:9; II Cor. 5:14-15).

*-- You are invited to visit with the Caneyville church of Christ. Times of services: Sun.: 10:00 am, 10:45 am, 5:00 pm; Wed.: 7:00 pm. Website: http://caneyvillechurchofchrist.com Tune in to our radio program on 99.9 FM at 1:00 pm and 1570 AM at 8:30 am, Mon-Fri. Questions? Call: (270) 589-4167*