

The Old Paths

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“Once You Admit It. Will You Stop It?”

Jarrod Jacobs

There was a cartoon several years ago in the *Saturday Review of Literature* in which little George Washington was standing with an axe in his hand. Before him lay the famous cherry tree we know so well. He had already made his admission that he did it -- after all, he “cannot tell a lie.” Also pictured was his father, who was standing there exasperated. His words were in the caption which read, “All right, so you admit it! You always admit it! The question is, when are you going to stop doing it?”

The story above is amusing, but it makes a good point that deserves our attention. Once we come to the point that we admit that we have committed a certain sin or sins, will we stop it? 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 live right by obeying the Gospel (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). How many people do we know who will admit (while they are smoking a cigarette, drinking their alcohol, etc.) that they are in error, and “it is a nasty habit,” but refuse to do anything about their sin? They have admitted their sin, but they have not stopped their sin.

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 the fear” of admitting their problem, but will do nothing beyond that. How can continuing in a sin that one recognizes and admits is sin, be beneficial to anyone? A friend of mine said when it gets to this point, the person is not confessing sin in his life anymore, but bragging! I agree.

In the Bible we learn that God not only demands that men admit they are sinners in His sight, but also demands that men do something about that sin! In Old Testament days, Solomon said, “*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*” (Prov. 28:13). Notice please that God expected the 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, “*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Lk. 13:3). What does “repentance” mean? It means turning away from the way you used to live, and living according to 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 boy said he would go, but did not. The other refused, but later “*repented and went*” (Matt. 21:29). This boy not only had to admit that he was wrong for disobeying his father, but also had to do what was right! 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 the sinful behavior!

When the apostle Paul wrote the second epistle 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! That 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 that he is in 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 your 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 cease that sin and do what is right, just as God told the Jews in the long ago (Isa. 1:16-17)! God is longsuffering. Therefore, let us repent and live for Him (II Pet. 3:9; II Cor. 5:14-15).

Why Is Jesus Coming Again?

Aric Russell

Acts 1:9-11 says, "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." The text we just read tells us that Jesus is going to return. We do not know when He is going to return. In fact, Jesus said in Mark 13:32, "But of that day an hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." If the Lord wanted us to know when He would return He would have told us. Therefore, we will not spend time speculating His return. Instead, let us spend some time thinking about why Jesus is coming again?

As we read and study the New Testament, we see that there are several things the Lord is going to do when He returns. One thing He is going to do is raise the dead. I Thessalonians 4:16 says, "For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."

When Jesus comes again He will also change the living. There will be some who will still be living when Jesus returns. I Corinthians 15:51-54 says, "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a mo-

ment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'"

Another reason why Jesus is coming again is to judge the entire human race. II Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil." The word "must" used in this passage tells us that all will be judged. There will be no hiding, there will be no calling in sick, and there will be no way out of this judgment. The Lord is coming again to judge us, whether good or evil. That good or evil will be the deciding factor on where we will spend eternity. Will it be with God in eternal paradise? Or, will it be with Satan and forever be in torment?

Jesus is also coming to destroy this earth. II Peter 3:10 says, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly

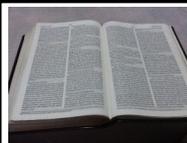
bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed." There are many who will argue that Jesus is coming again to build His kingdom on this earth and will reign in Jerusalem. However, we see that there will not be an earth for Jesus to come back to. It will all be burned up. In fact, Jesus will never set foot on this earth again. We are told that when He returns, He will come in the clouds (I Thess. 4:16-17).

Jesus Christ is certainly going to return. He has promised us that. Therefore, we must be ready to meet Him when He returns. Are you ready for the Day of Judgment? If you are not ready, the time to prepare is now. Make your life right with God and be ready to meet Him when He returns.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Are you praying daily for our work here at Caneyville? Are you constantly asking for God's blessings on our elders, deacons, preachers, Bible class teachers, our elderly, the widows, the spiritually weak, and every brother and sister in Christ? We have a great and powerful tool in prayer. Use it!

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