

One Another – Confess Sins To

Text : **James 5: 16** , **Joshua 7: 12-25**

INTRODUCTION :

**A. Our study of the “One Another” commands has a clearly defined goal :
To foster within us the relationship which God ordained in His church.**

1. Social pressure causes us to conform to the cultural norms of our era.
2. Christians are those who have been called out of the world’s system.
 - a. Jesus referred to His followers as being physically “**in**” the world, but not “**of**” it.
 - b. The word “church” (*ekklesia*) mean “those who are called out and separated.”
3. Each Christian wages a lifelong battle to overcome the influence of his surroundings.
4. The relationship between Christians in the church is specifically designed to facilitate our victory in this struggle.

**B. The sheer volume of commands makes it is evident that
our goal is in line with God’s desire for His followers.**

1. We’ve had 16 lessons on various aspects of our responsibilities to each other.
2. There will be two more lesson after this one, but there could be several more.
3. Which of these many “One Another” commands are we going to keep ?
 - a. Of course, God requires that we keep them all. (*The bible is not a buffet.*)
 - b. We have come to understand that it’s only as we learn to apply all of these into our corporate life that we become what God wants His church to be.

C. God’s church is a counter-culture wherever it exists on the earth.

1. No matter the country, Christian social values run contrary to the society around us.
2. It’s God’s intent that His people exist as a subculture that doesn’t conform to society
3. This was one of the strongest messages of the O.T. :
 - a. He separated Abram from his family and isolated him traveling among strangers.
 - b. He brought His people out of Egypt and separated them from all other cultures.
 - c. When God gave Israel a permanent home He instructed them to purge ALL others.

D. When the church was established, it’s members formed a separate community.

1. **Acts 2: 44** – And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common;
2. **Rom. 12: 2** – And do not be conformed to this world, (i.e. *Learn to live differently*)
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, ...

3. During the dark ages Christians got away from being a community and the restoration movement has not yet restored that community aspect of the faith.
 - a. We have concentrated on the doctrinal to the neglect of the practical.
 - b. But, both personally and collectively restoration is an ongoing process.

The “One Another” passage that we will study this morning is very practical and is very difficult for several reasons :

- 1) – It runs directly counter to human nature.
- 2) – It runs directly counter to almost every culture in this era.
- 3) – It requires that we have become adapt at other “One Another” passages.

This morning we will look at the command to :

James 5: 16 – ... , confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another ...

I. “Confess your sins to one another” is a command from God.

A. The word translated as “confess” (*exomologeō*) specifies a command.

1. It is in the “Imperative Mood” which indicates a direct command. (e.g. *Follow me!*)
2. It is in the “Present Active Indicative” tense which indicates a continuous action.
3. It’s meaning is clear : “to confess, to profess, acknowledge openly and joyfully”

B. To obey this command runs directly contrary to human nature.

1. Adam and Eve tried to hide their sin and blamed others. **Gen. 3**
2. Cain tried to hide his sin when he killed his brother. **Gen. 4**
3. The brothers of Joseph hid their sin against him. **Gen. 37**
4. All have seen small children try to hide their misdeeds. (*It’s within man’s nature.*)

C. Christians are also commanded to confess their sins to God.

1. The forgiveness of sins is directly linked to the forgiveness of sins.
I John 1: 9 – If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
2. Throughout the ages prayers for forgiveness have included the confession of sin.
Dan. 9: 3-5 So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, “Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.

D. Trying to hide one's sins is folly. (*God wants for YOU to acknowledge your sin.*)

1. God already knows every sin you've committed and why you did it.
 - a. **Psa. 139: 1-4** O LORD, You have searched me and known me. **2** You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. **3** You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. **4** Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O LORD, You know it all.
2. **I Cor. 4: 5** – Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then

E. Thus, men find it more difficult to confess their sins to each other than to God.

1. We all project an image and want others to perceive that as *“the real me.”*
2. We would never want anyone to hear all of our thoughts. (*to hear what God hears*)
3. In truth, all of us sin; none of us are as good as the image we project. .. **Rom 3:10, 23**

II. In Achan we have an example of true confession. (*Give the essence of the story.*)**A. Achan had committed a sin, but had hidden it from everyone. **Joshua 7****

1. No one had seen him commit the sin.
2. He had hidden the evidence where no one would see it except his family.
3. Achan thought he had gotten away with it.

Num. 32: 23 – But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.

B. The sin of Achan had consequences far beyond him and his family.

1. **Vs. 1, 11** ... God viewed Achan's sin as a national sin and it affect their relationship.
2. **Vs. 5** ... Achan's sin cost 36 other men their lives. *Resulted in widows, orphans, etc.*
3. All sin affects others and any sin in the church affects the entire family of God.
 - a. **“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.” I Cor. 5: 7**
 - b. When one or two negative people in a congregation deal indiscreetly with members of the community, it can ruin the reputation of the church for years.

C. God knew what had been done and who had done it.

1. He told Joshua to find the guilty party and to deal with him.
2. **I Cor. 5** ... The Lord's Apostle told the church to deal with the sin in their midst.

D. Vs. 19-21 ... When Achan was confronted with his sin he freely confessed it.

1. He gave an affirmative acknowledgement of his sin.
 - a. He did not say, “*If I have offended God in any way.*”
 - b. I did wrong. I sinned. I knew what I should have done and did not do it.
2. He did not make excuses. “*I saw it; I wanted it; I took it; I hid it; it’s there.*”
 - a. “*I had a terrible childhood ...*” “*I’m sorry for anything I may have done to ...*”
 - b. Self-justification is self-deception.
**Prov. 16: 2 – All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight,
 But the Lord weighs the motives.**

E. Confession of sin is associated with forgiveness, but not with the removal of consequences.

1. Some lament because Achan’s confession was exactly right, but he was still stoned.
 - a. Forgiveness never implies the removal of consequences.
 - b. 36 people died because of Achan’s sin; there had to be consequences.
2. Even in our civil court system people who confess to crimes still go to jail.

** In real life, George Washington would’ve been punished for cutting the cherry tree.*

III. Let’s look at just a few of the benefits of confession.**A. Confession to God is essential to forgiveness. I John 1: 7-10**

1. The scriptures clearly teach that God will not forgive that which we will not admit.
2. If a person will not admit having committed a sin, it is clear he hasn’t repented of it.

B. Confession unburdens the soul. (*Guilt is a heavy burden to bear.*)

1. You have heard the old saying, “*Confession is good for the soul.*”
2. This saying has its roots in the Psalms.

Psa. 32: 3-6 When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. ⁶ Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found;

3. The one who seeks to walk with God, cannot bear the weight of separation.

** Someone has said, “He who is alone with his sin is utterly alone.”*

C. Confession breaks the grip of pride.

1. It is the nature of man to want to be respected by his peers.
 - a. Pride is one of the basic sins against which all men struggle. (*Eve had pride*)
I John 2: 16 – For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.
 - b. This is the psychological foundation upon which “masking” is built.
2. Much of what people do and say is to support their pride, to pump up their ego.
 - a. Fundamental to a happy marriage is the ability to maintain the spouses self-image.
 - b. By nature we like to tell ourselves that “*I’m a good person.*” even when we’re not.
3. Regular confession breaks this cycle of pride and reinforcement of ego.
 - a. The Christian knows he is not good.
Eccl. 7: 20 – Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.
 - b. But he also knows, that by confession and prayer he can be continually cleansed.
I John 1: 6-10 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

C. Confession to each other creates accountability. (*Helps prevent future sins*)

1. As previously stated, it is harder for us to confess our sins to a brother than to God.
 - a. We will see him from time to time and know that he knows our struggle.
 - b. We must trust that he will not gossip about our struggles. (*3 preachers in boat ☺*)
2. If someone else knows about our struggle, they can reinforce us when we need it.
 - a. AA requires each member to have another member they can call when tempted.
 - b. When a person knows that you are struggling, they can check on your welfare.
3. When you are praying with someone about your struggles, they are not your father confessor. (*Not ask and may not pronounce forgiveness*)
 - a. You aren’t responsible to go to them every time you commit any sin and confess it.
 - b. As in **Gal 6: 1**, they are to help you bear your spiritual burden. **James 5:16** – pray
 - c. The relationship can be anything you want it to be, but everybody needs one.

D. Confessing our sins to each other encourages the weak not to give up.

1. When you think you're the only one struggling, it's easy to become discouraged.
 - a. Everyone comes to church looking all righteous.
 - b. When we're together in the assembly we are always doing religious things.
 - c. First thing you know you have it in your head that everyone is the same on Monday as they were on Sunday and you know that you're not.
2. When you begin to share in the struggles of others you realize they're messed up to.
 - a. You learn that they battle against Satan's temptations every day just like you.
 - b. You realize that other brethren lose battles from time to time, just like you.
3. When you realize that we're all in this together, it's much easier to hang in there.

E. Confessing our sins promotes unity and closeness in the congregation.

1. Shared struggles pull families, congregations and brethren closer together.
2. An atmosphere of dealing with sin prevents gossip.
 - a. Every congregation has a speculator who is suspicious and ready to share.
 - b. Gossip starts when information leaks out a little at a time.

CONCLUSION :**A. Thus, we've seen that God requires that we all admit to our sinfulness.**

1. We discuss our trespasses openly and honestly with God.
2. We discuss our sins and temptations amongst ourselves.

B. Our confession of sin is difference with each other than with God.

1. When we confess our sins to God it's seeking forgiveness.
2. When we confess our sins to each other it's to seek help to overcome them.
3. When we discuss sin with brethren it is to be done with a sober attitude.
 - a. Confession is not reliving the sin in one's memory.
(*Not swopping stories about the old times before Christ.*)
 - b. Confession is not bragging about past exploits.
(*S. Ball bragged he'd had 8 wives and 45 kids so should talk to him about women.*)

C. When we have the kind of “One Another” relationship God ordained, we'll feel comfortable to share our struggles with each other.

INVITATION : Do you have someone to whom you can go with your burdens ? **GOD**

Lesson Texts :

James 5: 16

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Joshua 7: 12-25

12 “Therefore the sons of Israel cannot stand before their enemies; they turn *their* backs before their enemies, for they have become accursed. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst. **13** Rise up! Consecrate the people and say, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, for thus the LORD, the God of Israel, has said, “There are things under the ban in your midst, O Israel. You cannot stand before your enemies until you have removed the things under the ban from your midst.”’ **14** ‘In the morning then you shall come near by your tribes. And it shall be that the tribe which the LORD takes *by lot* shall come near by families, and the family which the LORD takes shall come near by households, and the household which the LORD takes shall come near man by man. **15** ‘It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.’ ”

16 So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. **17** He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken. **18** He brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken. **19** Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me.” **20** So Achan answered Joshua and said, “Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: **21** when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it.”

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it. **23** They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the LORD. **24** Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. **25** Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.” And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.