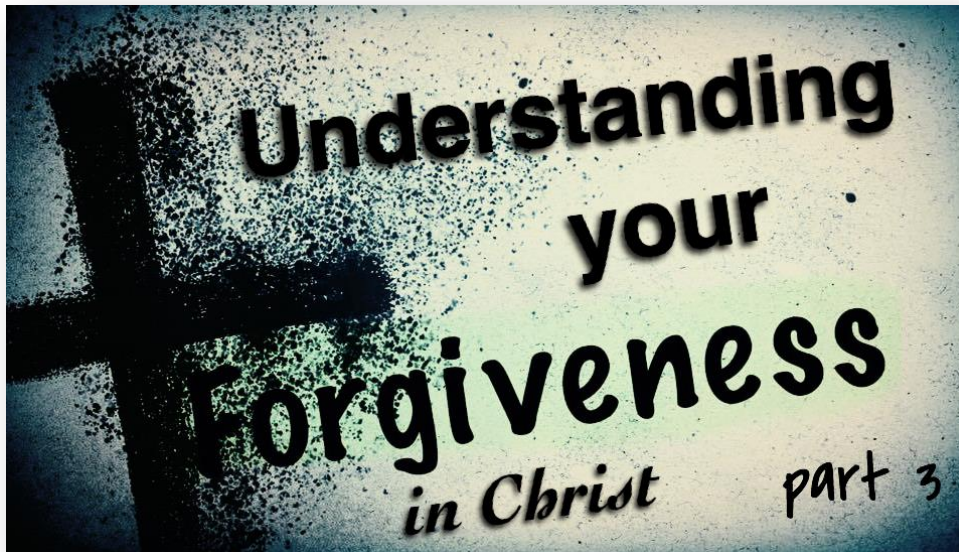


**Grace-school for the week of Nov 19-25, 2018**  
**"Understanding your forgiveness in Christ, part 3"**  
**by Gene Mitchell**



Look at what Paul said in 2 Cor 3:18 — ***"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."*** In this verse, Paul gives us an image of his experience with the Lord. Paul, by the Spirit of God, explains the reality of an inner transformation that takes place inside someone who has an open heart (*"unveiled face"*). The phrase *"beholding as in a mirror"*, describes the "reflective image" that you get when you look into a mirror. But I have a question. What if the mirror that you're looking into is cracked? Then the reflection that you would get from looking into it would be distorted— instead of seeing a reflection of yourself, you would see a distorted image of what you really look like. So in this case as it relates to what Paul's saying, what makes the mirror cracked? The crack in one's mirror comes from not correctly understanding God's unconditional love and His complete forgiveness that He has for us. It doesn't matter how sincere someone may be, without understanding who God really is— unconditional love— he'll be looking into a bad mirror. I didn't conjure up this illustration. Look at what Paul said in 1 Cor 13:12 — ***"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face."***

***Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."***

Notice the "*but then*", mentioned twice in that verse. The "*THEN*" comes when we correctly see and understand God's unconditional love and forgiveness that He demonstrated to us through Christ!

Last time that we were together, I showed you 5 valid reasons why one's sin confession is spiritually unhealthy. Why? Because it's not needed— God has already forgiven you through the once for all sacrifice of Jesus! If you need the teaching, you can obtain it [HERE](#) (The PDF of the teaching will download to your device). This week, I want to show you the unhealthy effects that a sin confession has in one's life.

### ***reasons why confessing sin is unhealthy, cont.***

**6. One's confession of sin places him back under the works of law.** Keep in mind that I'm referring to one confessing his sin to God and asking for His forgiveness. If we think that by the works of our confession, we can somehow add to what God has already done for us through Christ, well, that kind of thinking is just wrong and unhealthy. Why? Because it's not of grace, but by works, see [Rom 11:6](#). In Eph 2, Paul laid out for us the New Covenant standard that we should live by— "*by grace through faith*" ([v.8-9](#)). When one attempts to mix God's grace with his own works, it's like mixing water with poison— it's toxic for his spiritual growth. Anything that someone has to work for in order to get— like confessing one's sins to get forgiveness— is not according to the New Covenant (But it's seen many times in the Old Testament). God's forgiveness is according to His riches in glory, not the riches of our works, see [Eph 1:7](#). Look at what Paul said in Gal 5:1 — "***Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.***" The truth is that when believers are not standing fast in the liberty of God's grace in Christ, they are being entangled again with a yoke of slavery ("*bondage*"). This slavery-yoke describes one who thinks that he has to keep earning God's forgiveness by his works of sin confessions.

**7. One's confession of sin empowers it over his life.** Many think the exact opposite to this, because it seems to "unburden" their soul. In actuality, what this does is to keep his mind on his sin, failures, shortcomings, etc, rather than on Christ and His work of Redemption from the power of sin. Notice Paul's instructions of grace to us in Col 2:20 and 3:1-3 — **"(2:20) Therefore, if you died with Christ ... (3:1) ... then you were (also) raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. (2) Set your mind on (those) things above, not on things on the earth. (3) For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Paul summing up verses 2:20 and 3:1)."** Notice the instructions of "seek THOSE things" and "set your mind on (those) things". Then Paul gives us the result of this in v.5 — **"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth"**. The "THEREFORE" is there for a specific reason. As long as we keep our minds on "earthly things" like our members that keep leading us to sin, we can't be grace-empowered to "put to death" those members— meaning that sin will continue to dominate those members.

**The gospel says that God's forgiveness is based completely on what Jesus has already done for us. It's when we start understanding this, that we set our minds on those things and sin starts losing its power over our lives, see [John 8:11, 32 and 36!](#)**

**8. One's confession of sin gives him the attitude of "stinkin' thinkin'".** What I mean by "stinkin' thinkin'" is a developed sin-attitude. It's an attitude that leads him into the wrong direction; see what James said about this in [James 3:1-6](#)). The amazing truth is that God relates to us through Christ and what He's Redemptively done for us. Look at what Paul said in 1 Cor 15:34 — **"Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God."** Paul is saying to us, "Wake up to Righteousness"! If you tell someone to "Wake up" (like in the phrase, "You better wake up and smell the coffee!"), your letting them know that they aren't being alert to what's really going on. Paul is speaking to us in letting God's Righteousness— who we are in Christ as a result of what He's done for them— to govern our thinking. Notice the result of this seen in this verse, "and do not sin".

**Righteous-thinking produces Righteous-living, and it's impossible to have Righteous-thinking when one is so focused on sin or failure, that every time he messes up, he's wanting to ask God for forgiveness. So as a result of this, he can't experience consistent Righteous-living.**

You see how this works? This kind of stinkin' thinkin' produces one's shame. Look at the remainder of this verse — ***"... for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame."*** Righteousness is God's knowledge of you and that came because of His forgiveness! So why would anyone want to think something else?

**9. One's confession of sin keeps him in bondage to the weak and beggarly elements** Look at what Paul said in Gal 4:9 — ***"But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage?"*** Every minute someone spends his time dwelling on possible sin or failure that he may have committed, develops in him a **"sin-conscious"**, or a sin-awareness. In other words, he becomes more aware of sin and failure than he does of the Redemptive work of Christ and what God has done to him because of it. As a result from this kind of sin-awareness, he is going to have some major problems when it comes to a victorious life in Christ (He'll be in bondage to various fleshly vices and sin-habits). I remember a while back when I was dealing with some major issues in my own life, the Lord said to me:

***"Gene, a lot of times, people can't get over their problems, because they can't get over themselves."***

Then I saw the real reason why I seemed to not get over the personal issues that I was experiencing at the time— I couldn't get over me, because I was more focused on my sin and failures than I was of Him and what He did for me! Look at what we read in Heb 3:12 — ***"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God"***. The word *"beware"* is a lot like the word *"awake"* that we saw above in 1 Cor 15:34— *"Awake to Righteousness and do not sin"*. We are to be alert not to have an evil heart of unbelief (This, by no means, is saying that the believer has become *"unsaved"*. It's saying that he's believing the wrong things and therefore, experiencing the wrong outcomes in his life). This evil in his heart that causes

him to depart from the living God, is a sin-consciousness. Having this kind of a heart makes one "feel" like he's lost and all alone. And this is because this kind of an evil heart is more aware of sin and failure, than being aware of Redemption and reconciliation. This kind of heart of unbelief will keep one in bondage to the weakness of fear (**F**alse **E**vidences **A**ppearing **R**eal).

### ***conclusion of this lesson***

So then, why do believers spend so much time and energy on this death-dealing, non-Biblical practice of a sin confession? I'll leave you with 4 practical reasons in closing this lesson:

- 1) Believers do it, simply because that's what they've always done. (So let's renew our mind from this bad tradition and live free from it!)
- 2) Believers do it, because they think that their sin is greater than God's love and grace and word. (His love towards you is UNconditional and His grace is endless! So we can fully believe what He has said about us through Christ!)
- 3) Believers do it, because they are fearful of what "unconfessed" sin may cause in their lives. (Boy, do I remember thinking this in my own life! Thinking that the devil was going to get "one over on me", now, because of what I did— not to take away from the truth about a sin-wage, but I'll have to deal with that in another lesson.)
- 4) Believers do it, because they are fearful of judgment day coming and being uncertain about their forgiveness with the Lord. (People hope they've been forgiven, but worry that might not be. But no worries, take these words of Jesus personally to heart — **"My friend, don't worry! Your sins are forgiven."** (Matt 9:2 from the CEV) Thank you Jesus!

Now this is what our Thanksgiving is all about— Have a Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving everyone, knowing that in Christ, you are completely forgiven!!!