

Cleaning House

DECLUTTER YOUR SOUL

Craig Smith • April 18, 2021 • Discard

*He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
(Prov. 28:13)*

Sin is a big deal to God. It separates His children from His intended plans of grace in our individual lives. Why is agreeing with God about our sin the first step in allowing God to give us all the gifts He has intended for us?

- **Acknowledging our sin and error is called confession** – “I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin.” (Psalm 38:18)
- **Discarding our sin and error is called repentance** – “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance...” (Luke 3:8). *Repentance is often defined as simply turning around from the course that we are on. Have you had occasion to repent about something lately and move away from self-love and toward God-love?*

What repentance is...

- **A change of mind** – “When he came to his senses, he said... ‘I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.’” (Luke 15:17-18). *Why is the parable of the prodigal son the gold standard in understanding the work and attitude of God in bringing us out of sin and into a more complete relationship with our Father? What is surprising about this story in the context of the culture in which it happened?*
- **A change of heart** – “...return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love...” (Joel 2:12-13)

*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.
(Luke 18:14b). This verse captures what is known as the law of inversion in the spiritual life. How does self introspection, prayer and the practice of humility “clear the decks” in allowing us to become open vessels for God’s work on earth?*

What repentance does...

- **Reconciles us to God** – “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.” (Acts 20:21). *Our job is to repent and have faith....*

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9). God’s job is to purify us.

- **Reconciles us to others** – “...If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.” (Luke 17:3-4). *God expects us to “be holy” and be like Him. That involves a long-range attitude of forgiving others, especially the “household of faith.” How are you doing on keeping an attitude of forgiveness front and center in your life? Who do you need to forgive today?*

But while he was a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son and threw his arms around him and kissed him... "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found..."
(Luke 15:20-24)

God runs to us, he clothes us with His robe of righteousness, gives us the ring of His authority and gives us sandals by which we walk with Him. He takes sons and daughters that have lost their way and restores them to a place of honor and dignity. How does this make you feel?