

## You're Only Fooling Yourself

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darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:" I John 1:6

Many times folks fool even themselves into believing that they can talk to God, He is listening to them, answering them, and they are in full fellowship even when they are in sin. They are lying to themselves.

It is impossible for a believer to have close fellowship with God when there is sin in their life! God hates sin, and although people do not lose their salvation when they fall for sin's enticement, they certainly grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30).

That grieving will cost anyone a close relationship with God. The only remedy for that broken relationship is to turn from sin (Acts 8:22) and again "... walk in the light ..." (I John 7). One should then live in the manner in which God requires.

- When people claim to have no sin.

*"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I John 1:8 Also: vs. 10.*

Some consider themselves sin-free. My grandmother

claimed never to have sinned. She was a good person by man's standards, but when I approached her with the Bible truth that "... all have sinned ..." (Romans 3:23), she insisted that she was not a sinner.

I remember her even being insulted that I would even think such a thing about her. No matter how much I loved my grandmom, she was like the rest of us — a sinner! She was deceiving herself, and as far as I know, she was never saved because of that deception.

The only cure for my grandmom, and any other person in that state of not recognizing their sin, is to acknowledge their iniquities and admit them. Once we realize and confess it to Him, God is "... faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

However, that first step is the tough part: recognizing oneself as a sinner. Some know it at a young age, but other folks, such as my grandmom, can go 80 years and still not recognize their sinnership. One of the most

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### Get It Right — Immediately!

*Bill Brinkworth*

*"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt 5:23-24*

Although much of the Matthew 5:23-24 verses was about another time, the principle of getting right with fellow Christians still applies today. Getting along with others, even Christians, will always be a challenge.

As a church deaf interpreter, I stood before the deaf congregation at the front of the church. After hearing what the pastor said over my right shoulder, I relayed what God had laid on Pastor Fedena's heart to the deaf congregation in sign language.

Part of the sermon was about not holding a grudge against another Christian. Being angry at a

brother or sister in Christ will hinder the Holy Spirit from working in one's life and may keep one from being used by God. The pastor detailed some examples of how that sin hurts individuals and the church.

God began to deal with my heart about a grudge I was holding against a man in the church. The man had offended me, and the smoldering embers of bitterness were rekindled every time I looked at him.

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### You're Only Fooling Yourself

*Bill Brinkworth*

In starting the first of his three letters, John the Apostle bluntly covers two areas many are not completely honest with themselves about. Those areas are:

- When people claim to be in fellowship with God but are not!

*"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in*

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## Get It Right ...

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Trying to concentrate on delivering the message to the deaf and remembering my sin soon distracted me. The pastor's sermon became more personal and required a decision on my part. "If God reminds you of a person you have something against, go to him and get it right," the pastor emphasized.

As the preacher continued, he made the invitation even more immediate. "If that person is here, go, get it right now. Don't delay! Go to them and deal with your sin..."

"Gulp!" That was when the conviction became overwhelming. I silently argued with the Lord while still interpreting. "Lord, I can't do it now. I'm interpreting. I'll do it later..."

The conviction became stronger, and dealing with it immediately seemed inevitable. It was as if the preacher knew about the sin I had harbored in my heart and was speaking to me personally. He did not, but it certainly felt like it. More urges like "... now ... don't grieve the Holy Spirit ... go to that person now ... don't wait another second ..." pestered my thinking.

That was it. I could not take another second of the Holy Spirit's conviction. I signed to another nearby interpreter to take

over and interpret for me. After he had taken my position, I looked for the man with whom I was harboring bitterness. Wouldn't you know it, he was sitting on the other side of the church and towards the back.

I crossed the front of the church and went down the aisle to the back of the church. It seemed like all eyes were on me, but I had to get that sin right. I went to the man and leaned over to speak to him. Without getting into details and trying not to justify that my reasons were right, I apologized to him for getting angry at him and asked for his forgiveness. He must have been embarrassed as much as I, but fortunately, he accepted my apology, and the matter was closed.

I had previously apologized to the Lord, and now I had forgiven the man. The conviction subsided. I had done what the Lord told me to do. Peace returned.

No matter what the other person did or said, it is essential for us not to sin. If the offender sinned, it should not be a reason for us to do likewise. However, if we sin, it may require humbling ourselves and getting it right with a family member, child, parent, friend, or acquaintance. If their sin was greater, that is between them and the

Lord. Our concern should be to keep our slate clean from unconfessed sin.

Is there a person you may have something against? Perhaps it is a matter that happened a long time ago, but it still gnaws at your memory. Is that bitter feeling more important than grieving the Holy Spirit by harboring that sin?



If your conviction reminds you of an unsettled matter, now would be a good time to get that sin forgiven by God and right with that person. You may not have to cross a whole church congregation, but you may have to pick up a phone, write a letter, or even visit that person personally — TODAY!

*"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."*

*Mark 11:25-26*

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9*

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important steps for anyone's salvation is to first realize they are a sinner.

The most valuable and important thing everyone has is their soul. Making the decision to be close to God and to go to Heaven rests on their shoulders. That decision can only be made when one is completely honest with Him, and is willing to do what the Bible commands.

## When Anger Is Sinful

*J. Beaumont, 1871*

Anger is a sin:

- ★ When we are angry with the providence of God.
- ★ When we are angry with the laws of God.
- ★ When we are angry at the doctrines taught in the Word of God.
- ★ When we are angry at the good we see in others.
- ★ When we are angry with those who differ from us in religious sentiments.
- ★ When we are angry at reproof.
- ★ When we wish evil upon our reprover.

**"The sun must not set upon anger; much less will I let the sun set upon the anger of God towards me."**

— Donne

***"If* anger is not restrained, it is frequently more hurtful to us than the injury that provokes it."**