

You're Only Fooling Yourself

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

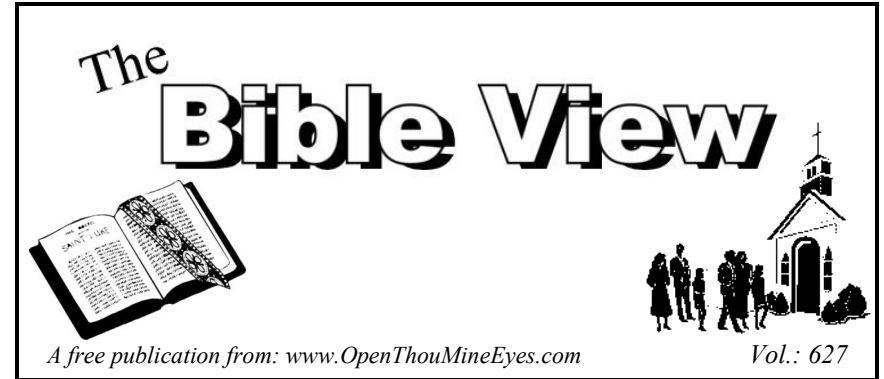
"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I John 1:8 Also: vs. 10.

There are those that consider themselves sin-free. My own grandmother claimed to never 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. The truth was, no matter how much I loved my grandmom, she was like the rest of us — a sinner! She was deceiving herself, and because of that deception, as far as I know, was never saved.

The only cure for my grandmom, and any other person in this state of not recognizing their sin, is to recognize their iniquities and admit them. Once we admit, and confess it to Him, God is "... faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us

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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." Mt 5:23-24 (Although much of the context of these verses is about another time, the principle of getting right with fellow Christians still applies today.)

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

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

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

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

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Get It Right ...

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Trying to concentrate on delivering the message to the deaf, and remembering my own sin, soon distracted me. Then the pastor's sermon became more personal and required a decision on my part. "If God is reminding you of a person you have something against, go to him and get it right." 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 him or her 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 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 in my mind, I apologized to him for getting angry at him and asked 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 most important for us not to sin. If the offender sinned, it should not be a reason for us to do likewise. However, if we do sin it may

require our 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 is reminding you of an unsettled matter, now would be a good time to get that sin forgiven by God and gotten 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 make a visit to 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." I John 1:9

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from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

However, that first step is the tough part; recognizing oneself as a sinner. For some they know it at a young age, but for other folks, such as my grandmom, they can go 80 years and still not recognize their sinnership. This is one of the most important steps for anyone's salvation: to first realize they are a sinner.

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

"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."

— Seneca