



HOAW Newsletter

"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us ALL our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." Colossians 2:13-14

February 2023

HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

Forgiveness & Confession

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Believers often ask the following questions or some variation of these questions.

- Why do Christians have to confess their sins?
- Didn't Christ pay the penalty for all our sins, past, present, and future?
- What happens if I forget to confess my sins?
- Is forgiveness only possible for sins I confess? **1 John 1:9** states, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*
- Is forgiveness conditional on our confession of sin?

- As a believer, fully forgiven, why do we need to confess our sin?
- If our sins, past, present, and future, were nailed to the cross and Jesus paid the penalty for our sin resulting in being declared righteous in the sight of God so that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ (**Romans 8:1**), why pray for forgiveness?

Let's take a look at what Scripture says about these concerns.

First of all, we have this great promise from God in **Colossians 2:13-14**. When Jesus was crucified, He paid the penalty for all our sins, *past, present, and future*.

"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having

forgiven us ALL our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." (See also **1 John 2:12** "your sins are forgiven")

Not only are all our sins forgiven, God remembers our sin no more!

According to **Isaiah 38:17**, He put all our sins behind His back. **Isaiah 43:25** says He blocks out our transgressions and remembers our sin no more. In **Romans 4:7-8** we are told that our sins ARE forgiven and will not be counted against us. In **Hebrews 8:12 and 10:15-17** we are assured that our sins ARE forgiven and He will remember them no more (see also **Jeremiah 31:34**). If we repent our sins will be blotted out (**Acts 3:19**).

How can this be?

Divine forgiveness has two parts; positional (or judicial) forgiveness

and relational (or *parental*) forgiveness.

Positional Forgiveness

Positional forgiveness (*Ephesians 1:7-8*) is given to us upon receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight..." ESV

One Bible scholar puts it this way...All our past, present, and future sins are *forgiven on a judicial basis*, meaning that we will not suffer eternal judgment for our sins. God has taken our sins and blotted them out because the penalty due for our sin was paid by Christ on the cross once and for all. *Positional forgiveness* is obtained by every believer in Christ. ***In our position as members of the body of Christ, we have been forgiven of every sin we have ever committed or ever will commit.*** The price paid by Christ on the cross has satisfied God's wrath against sin, and ***no further sacrifice or payment is necessary.*** When Jesus said, "It is finished," He meant it. Our positional forgiveness was obtained then and there."

Relational Forgiveness

Relational forgiveness (*1 John 1:9*) is an ongoing necessity because although forgiveness has been granted positionally ***our relationship with our heavenly Father is broken when we sin.***

One authority describes it this way. "If a son does something wrong to his father—falling short of his expectations or rules—the son has

hindered his fellowship with his father. He remains the son of his father (*positionally*), but the relationship suffers (*relationally*). Their fellowship will be hindered until the son admits to his father that he has done wrong.

It works the same way with God; ***our fellowship with Him is hindered until we confess our sin.*** When we confess our sin to God, the fellowship is restored. This is ***relational forgiveness.***"

Secondly, I believe there is a subtle difference between confession leading to conversion and confession after conversion. The word '*confess*' actually means 'to agree with.'

Confession AT Conversion

When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior through confession, we are agreeing with God that we are wrong, that we have sinned, and that Jesus died for our sins. We are saying that we chose to live our lives independent of God, on our own terms, and that our sin nailed Christ to the cross. But now, we submit to Him, and appropriate God's positional forgiveness through Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. By doing so, we recognize that from this day forward we are under new management, we are not our own, we were bought with a costly price. We invite Jesus into our life becoming adopted sons and citizens of the Kingdom of God.

This initial act ***establishes*** a Father/son relationship with our Creator. When we place our faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, all of our sins are forgiven.

Confession AFTER Conversion

Confession of sin after conversion is to ***restore*** a broken relationship with the Lord. Our sins past, present, and future have already been forgiven. But our relationship with the Father is broken and needs to be restored. His love for us is unconditional and remains regardless of our sin. However, our relationship with Him is impaired because of our disobedience. Our relationship needs to be ***repaired.***

So, confession of our sin is needed to restore and repair the relationship. ***Positional forgiveness*** has already been given at the cross.

In an article posted on **GotQuestions.org**, the writer states "Confession of sin will help to keep us from the discipline of the Lord. If we fail to confess sin, the discipline of the Lord is sure to come until we do confess it. Our sins are forgiven at salvation (***positional forgiveness***), but our daily fellowship with God needs to stay in good standing (***relational forgiveness***). Proper fellowship with God cannot happen with unconfessed sin in our lives. ***Therefore, we need to confess our sins to God as soon as we are aware that we have sinned, in order to maintain close fellowship with God.***"

So, to maintain a healthy and loving relationship with our heavenly Father, we need to confess our sin the moment we become aware of it. In doing so, we ***restore*** our fellowship with Him and avoid the discipline and consequences that come when we refuse to ask God's forgiveness. A confession of our sin might look like this...

Heavenly Father, I confess my sin of _____. I admit I have violated your standards for holiness. I recognize that our fellowship has been broken. I acknowledge that my sin resulted in Christ's suffering on the cross. Please forgive me and restore my relationship with You.

One final note...

The act of confession removes the sin from our life. But unless it is replaced with something else—Biblical truth for instance—there is a good chance it will return to torment us.

Removal and Replacement

In *Matthew, chapter 22*, the Pharisees confronted Jesus after hearing that He healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. He spoke to them about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, about a tree is known from its fruit, and the sign of Jonah. He then speaks to them about the return of an unclean spirit.

In *Matthew 12:43-45 (ESV)* we read, *"When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also, will it be with this evil generation."*

I believe His purposely exaggerated statements strongly suggests that **removal** alone through confession

may clean the corruption left by sin. However, if the 'emptying, sweeping, and putting the house in order' is not followed by **replacement** with the new furniture of biblical beliefs and values with a commitment to act on them, the Enemy with His minions may come back to oppress a follower of Christ. The latter situation may be much worse than the original situation.

Removal through confession (**1 John 1:9**) should be followed with **replacement** with Biblical truth with the intention of acting on that truth (**John 8:31-32**).

So, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

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