

Set Free: Confessing to Others

Having confessed to God our sins and struggles, the battle against sin and Satan is not over. The next great key in winning the battle against sin and Satan is to confess our sins to our brethren.

James 5:16 says, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (ESV). God did not say this for us to argue about when we must confess, where we must confess, and which sins we must confess. This is part of our battle plan against Satan. Confessing to each other helps us all.

In **Psalm 141:5**, as David prayed for God’s help to overcome wickedness, he said, “let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it” (ESV). What prerequisite do the righteous need in order to smite me with kindness? Don’t they have to know where I need smiting? How are they going to know that? I will either be caught or confess.

In addition to having those aware of my struggles who can keep an eye open with me and for me, confessing to others is just plain beneficial in my struggle against sin and Satan. Once I am honest with my brethren about where Satan most successfully attacks me, I no longer have to wear the mask of perfection. I no longer have to live with the feelings of hypocrisy. I no longer have to fight the battle alone. I know there are others who are fighting with me, stimulating me to love and good deeds (**Hebrews 10:24**). They now know exactly what they need to pray and where they need to encourage me.

“What will my brethren think of me if they find out I am still struggling against sin even though I have been a Christian for 1, 5, 10, 50 years?”

First, don’t be surprised that when some of us start opening up, we find we are actually members of a congregation with a bunch of sinners equally as afraid to confess as we are.

Second, there will, no doubt, be some hypocritical gossips who will betray our confidences and look down upon us from on high. Let us simply remember that Satan has us held captive with our sin and has them held captive with theirs. Pray for them that they will come to their senses, confess to God, to others, and seek refuge in God’s gospel.

Third, the one who truly matters knew our sins and loved us enough to die for us (**Romans 5:6-9**). Our sense of value and worth must not come from other people. It must come from the One who looked from heaven at our sins and came down to live among us to die for us.

When we trust in Jesus, we will open up with, confess to, and pray for one another. Then will we be healed by the Great Physician.

More on this to come.

—Edwin L. Crozier