

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

CONFESS YOUR SINS TO EACH OTHER

James 5:16 "Therefore confess your sins to each other . . . "

"It is none of your business!" "Don't stick your nose in where it doesn't belong!"
"He who is without guilt can cast the first stone!" "Am I my brother's keeper?"

The first two of these sayings are not from the Bible. The second two are. And then James said, "Therefore confess your sins to each other. . ." Which is correct? Are my sins any of your business? Are you sins my business?

As previous devotions have pointed out, in God's sight sin is a serious matter. From those devotions you are aware God's word says the consequences of sin is eternal and everlasting death. Both the old and new testaments of the Bible say this. Because of the serious consequences of sin, Jesus taught, "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over." (Matthew 18:15)

It is pretty obvious Jesus' teaching says when you are aware of a brother or sister's sin, you should make it your business to minister to them. "Go to them. . . point out their sin (fault). . ." You are to do this, not to humiliate that person. Rather, Jesus said, you are to do so to "win them over." This was Jesus way of saying through your calling their attention to their sin and they recognizing, repenting and asking God to forgive their sin you are God's instrument through which they seek His forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

If you read further in Matthew 18:16ff, if your initial ministry to your sinning brother or sister is not successful, then Jesus says you should enlist the help of fellow Christians and if necessary, the entire congregation. Yes, sin is a serious matter. Unforgiven sin condemns the impenitent person. Out of love for your brother's and sister's, in Christ you have opportunity to bring to their attention their sin but also God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ. You have the opportunity to, as Jesus says in Matthew 18, "win them over."

Prayer: Give me, O Lord, the courage, love and concern to help my sinning brother or sister to recognize their sin and to know God's desire to grant them forgiveness for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"As surely as I live," God said, "I would not see the sinner dead.
I want him turned from error's ways, Repentant, living endless days."

And so our Lord gave this command: "Go forth and preach in ev'ry land;
Bestow on all My pard'ning grace Who will repent and mend their ways.

"All those whose sins you thus remit I truly pardon and acquit,
And those whose sins you will retain Condemned and guilty will remain.

"What you will bind, that bound shall be; What you will loose, that shall be free.
To My dear Church the keys are giv'n To open, close the gates of heav'n."

The words which absolution give Are His who died that we might live;
The minister whom Christ has sent Is but His humble instrument.

When ministers lay on their hands, Absolved by Christ the sinner stands;
He who by grace the Word believes The purchase of His blood receives.

All praise to You, O Christ, shall be For absolution full and free,
In which You show Your richest grace; From false indulgence guard our race.

Praise God the Father and the Son And Holy Spirit, Three in One,
As was, is now, and so shall be World without end, eternally!
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