
Words of Truth

“Often We Sin... Appealing To God With A Repentant Heart”

By: Brian A. Yeager

The title of this article is something I read online. Here is the complete quote: “Forgiveness. **Often we sin and do things God forbids.** Prayer is an avenue of appealing to God with a repentant heart. Acts 8:22-24. Peter told Simon to pray and Simon asked him to pray for him as well. Prayer is effective in asking God to forgive sin. James 5:16. Not only do we pray for ourselves, but we also pray for our brethren. Doesn't this show the need to confess to one another? 1 John 5:15-16. John urges Christians to pray (“ask”) for others to be forgiven (the implication is they are repentant)” (<http://www.grandsalinechurchofchrist.com/Prayer.htm>; Jacob Hudgins). Then, on the same webpage, you can read this: “You must live faithfully (1 Corinthians 15:58; 1 John 1:7)” (<http://www.grandsalinechurchofchrist.com/salvation.htm>).

What is repentance? Is repentance, like what is stated above, one continuing to sin often? Is that what Jesus said to the man that had the infirmity of thirty and eight years (John 5:1-14)? Is that what Jesus taught the adulterous woman (John 8:1-11)? Doesn't repentance mean one will stop doing the sinful thing that person is repenting of (II Chronicles 7:14, Psalms 37:27, Proverbs 3:7, Proverbs 16:17, Isaiah 55:6-7, Jeremiah 7:1-5, Jeremiah 26:13, Ezekiel 14:6, Ezekiel 18:30, Ezekiel 33:14-16, Matthew 3:7-8, Matthew 21:28-32, Acts 3:19, Acts 26:18-20, Romans 2:4, II Corinthians 7:1, and Revelation 2:5)?

What would Jacob Hudgins' wife, if he is married, say about him committing adultery and thinking saying he is sorry would make it okay. Since his definition of faithfulness means sinning often, would she be okay with him committing adultery once a week? How about twice a week? Wouldn't he, based on the definition of the Grand Saline church of Christ website, be faithful to his wife if he cheated on her “often”? This congregation believes, as the preacher there (Jacob Hudgins) wrote concerning God: “He demands consistent faithfulness (Col 1:23)” (<http://www.grandsalinechurchofchrist.com/Areyoulistening.htm>). If Jacob is married, his wife would likely “demand consistent faithfulness”. Shouldn't she worry that Jacob's definition of faithfulness includes sinning often, doing forbidden things?

Why is it that people expect God to be more compassionate toward their unfaithfulness than a husband or wife would be? Our Lord is our husband (Isaiah 54:5-7, Jeremiah 3:14, and Ephesians 5:22-33). We are to love Him (Mark 12:28-33). We are to be faithful to Him (Revelation 2:10). Our love is shown through obedience (John 14:15-24 and I John 5:2-3). I would imagine that Jacob Hudgins would agree with all of those points. The website I have cited three times has plenty of evidence to suggest such. However, where Jacob is wrong, is in his inconsistent definitions, thinking, and applications (throughout the whole website). Jacob, like many, wants to be faithful to God and at the same time be okay with God while being a sinner. Our God is a jealous God (Exodus 34:14 and Nahum 1:2). God is not okay with us being faithful to Him some of the time (Joshua 24:19-20). God does not tell us to just ask for forgiveness and then go back to being a sinner. God demands we stop sinning.

Shall We Continue In Sin – God FORBID!

Consider these Scriptures: *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein... What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness... Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame... Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity”* (Romans 6:1-2, Romans 6:15-18, I Corinthians 15:34, and II Timothy 2:19).

If anyone can read the Scriptures above and think like Jacob Hudgins and the Grand Saline church of Christ, you are just plain dishonest. Lest we be deceived, understand that dishonesty is very much a part of doctrines like what Jacob teaches. He knows the importance of “true repentance (<http://www.grandsalinechurchofchrist.com/TrueRepentance.htm>). He just refuses to do it. Enough with exposing this man and that erring church of Christ he is a part of. I want to turn this study to us. Let’s talk about consistency and real application of the truth.

Holding Ourselves To The Standard Of Consistency

Is it possible that, just like the people I’ve mentioned in this article, that you or I say things that are very inconsistent with our behavior? Such is generally called hypocrisy (Matthew 23:1-33). To teach something and practice the opposite is inexcusable (Romans 2:1-29). Each of us needs to take a step back, on a regular basis, and honestly examine ourselves (II Corinthians 13:5). Do you “practice what WE preach” (I Timothy 4:16)? Do I, you, we, have the credibility to publish articles such as this one? If our house is not clean we by all means do not (Matthew 7:1-5)?

I am at a disadvantage at times as a teacher. I cannot know all that is going on in everyone’s life (I Timothy 5:24-25). I know my own life. I know what I am doing. I know what is going on in my house. What about yours? What do you see in me? What do you see in us? If someone were to read this article online, come and meet us here in El Paso, would they be able to charge any of us with hypocrisy? I think not. However, I can only know such to a degree. Brethren, I take my credibility seriously (Proverbs 22:1 and Ecclesiastes 7:1). I ask of you that you be faithful to God for His sake (I Timothy 2:3-4), for your sake, (Hebrews 5:8-9 and II Thessalonians 1:7-9), and for my sake (II Corinthians 3:1-2).

Conclusion

Churches of Christ all over the world have unfortunately taken the doctrinal position that sin is okay. Many confess, publicly, to sinning most of the time. It is almost a boastful claim you can see all over the World Wide Web. Let’s not join them in word or deed. Let us continue not to strive for, but to live in perfection (Matthew 5:48). Let us continue to be a congregation others can look to as the pillar and ground of the truth we must be (I Timothy 3:15). Hold yourself to God’s standards (II Timothy 1:13).