***The Technique of Confessing Sins, No. 7  
  
Techniques of the Christian Life  
  
TL05-01***

This is the Technique of Confessing Sins. This is part number seven. We as Christians are faced with the need of evaluating spiritual factors in our lives and in the lives of others. We have an example of that in ACT 17:11 in the case of the Christians in the city of Berea. There comes a time when you have to evaluate spiritual factors about yourself and about other people. That can be done in a way which is not judging but which is discernment--understanding information that God the Holy Spirit will give you. A spiritual Christian who has enough spiritual maturity will be able to do this without judging people. He will be able to act in the spirit of discernment. The source of all that discernment, of course, is the filling of the spirit, and of our knowledge of Bible doctrine.

A carnal Christian finds this a very difficult thing to do. A carnal Christian almost inevitably falls into the practice of judging people rather than discerning issues. Judging other Christians, we have learned, brings a triple discipline from God upon the attacker. I hope you have now been thoroughly and deeply enough impressed with this triple discipline to know that it is not worth it, and to avoid being caught up in this on the part of somebody else's problem that is unloaded in your presence. Beware being party to someone else's emotional release by the slander of other Christians. Remember that slander can be telling the truth, but with a desire to assassinate somebody's character or reputation or something else of that nature.

**Confession to God**

Confession of one's sin, we have found, is to God alone, and it is for the restoration of temporal fellowship. This way we secure the status of spirituality. This principle, we have already indicated, is referred to in Psalm 51. This is a psalm that refers to David's progression over the period of a year of his dealing with a personal unconfessed sin stemming from the act of adultery with Bathsheba. In Psalm 51:4, we have that very crucial statement where David is speaking to God, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight that You might be justified when You speak, and be clear (or be pure, be blameless when You judge)." David's sin here has been a problem to him for some time. He has not confessed it. His first procedure was to cover things up with a series of other sins, including murder. Finally he has come to the point where he's willing to say to God that what he did was wrong--the murder, the immorality--the whole bit. He indicates the reason that he says this by saying, "I'm ready to say this because in this way I also declare that you, God, are justified, and you are pure, or you are blameless, in the discipline which you impose upon me because of this."

**Confessing to Others**

Now on the human level, it is quite obvious that there are other people who were involved and injured here. There are some who misinterpret this passage of Scripture. David makes such a strong statement in verse 4, that it is against God that sin is always directed and therefore it is to God that the confession is to be made. This is so strong, and it goes so against the grain of what they want to do in confessing to other people and asking other people to forgive them, that they finally have come to the point where they say, "Well we must assume, and we certainly know, and it is beyond a question of a doubt," and other phrases like that, "that David went around and he confessed to all the people who were injured in the process." But you don't have it in this Scripture. That is an assumption which is imposed. Sometimes, some people do this because they come from a denominational background that has a creedal statement. In that creedal statement you discover a doctrinal position that says, "When we sin, we must confess to God and to those whom we have injured." Therefore, they are standing by their creedal statement and they are having to impose into Scripture what their creed says should be there, rather than drawing the creed out of the Scripture.

I want to stress that forgiveness for sins, in the sense of restoration to temporal fellowship, can only come from God the Father who is the ultimate object whom we offend with our sins. So confession for this restoration must be to God the father. Confessing to human beings is clearly not involved in restoring our fellowship with the Lord.

Now this is not to say that you may have injured somebody and you may want to go to that person and say, "I was out of line in what I said, and I want you to know that I'm sorry." That's perfectly legitimate for you to do. If we listen to James 5:16 tells us to do, we have already admitted to each other that we are all guilty of the inclination to sin. We are loaded with this propensity to sin. Consequently, there are none of us who are above it. So if you think that it is good human relations, or in the status of spirituality which you have achieved by confession of sin, God the Holy Spirit says, "I want you to go and let that person know that you understand that that was an injury that you did and that you regret it." The Spirit of God may lead you to do that. That's OK. You are not to think that it is wrong to apologize to people if the Spirit of God so leads you. However, do not think that that is part of restoration of temporal fellowship. That's the point. We already know that we are all bad because we have an old sin nature. When we do confess to God, that settles our fellowship. We may want to confess to other people for the smoothness of our human relationships. That's something else altogether.

We have no evidence that David confessed to anybody else except God. But even if he did, it was incidental to the forgiveness relative to his fellowship with the Lord. Those who promote the business of asking people to forgive offenses do so for psychological reasons and not biblical reasons.

**Asking for Forgiveness from Others**

I'd like to pursue some of the background of thinking that is in our society that directs this idea of going up to people and saying, "Will you forgive me for this and this and this--what I thought about you, or what I said about you, or that I said to you, or that I did?" The human soul cannot function under a condition of tension which stems from guilt complexes. These are brought about by acts of sin. This again is what David says in Psalm 51:3, "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." It has been before him for almost a year now. He is saying, "I have lived under an emotional knot on the inside of my soul for almost a year because this sin is before me. I have been willful in it. I have persisted to refuse to admit to thee that this was sin. I have mounted sin one upon another, and things have gotten worse, so that my sin is ever before me. So I go to bed at night, and I can't fall asleep because my mind is rolling around about this guilt I have. I go through the day and I don't feel like anything. I don't have any energy. I'm lifeless because this sin is chewing away at me, and I'm incapacitated in one way or another." This kind of tension eventually drives a person to where he's neurotic or even psychotic.

**Emotional Tension**

This is the problem: emotion tension. This is no joke. This is real and it does cause great problems. Now James 5:14-16, that passage which you will be asked about, "confessing your sins one to another." We have pointed out that the Greek word here for "confess" is different than that in 1 John 1:9. It is different in the sense, in this context, that it is calling attention to the fact that the context says that sometimes physical illness is the result of sins. It is therefore also sometimes the cause of mental illness--things we call psychosomatic illnesses. Sin creates psychosomatic illnesses. It is the psychosomatic character that has some symptoms that are the result of a guilt complex or something that's eating away on the mind. If they release that from the mind, the physical symptoms will also go with it. Therefore, mental illness can result because of complex tensions within the soul, as can physical illness. That's the point in James 5:16, that we are to admit to one another, acknowledge that there is within us this propensity to sin, and that we should recognize this about one another. Therefore we should be considerate enough to pray for one another that we would not fail to confess sins in order to keep the tensions unraveled within our souls. If you don't do this, hardness builds upon the soul. You begin to lose physical vitality. You go into a series of physical illnesses and sicknesses, and the next thing, eventually, is into physical death itself. This context in James is telling us that sin unresolved has physical as well as mental effects.

**Modern Society**

Now here's what happens in our society. The Bible says that things like homosexuality and drunkenness are sin, but psychiatry says, "No, we can't call that sin. We call it sickness and diseases. However, the Bible says these things come from a condition within the soul, the old sin nature. So psychiatry in our day operates on a certain false premise, and that is that we must remove the sense of responsibility for what we are. Just think of all the bad things you are. Just think of all the undesirable things you are. If you can't think of one, ask the person next to you, as they have several that they can share with you about yourself immediately. When you think about those things, pretty soon you'll get to be tied up in knots on the inside, because you feel guilty about these failures, about these weaknesses, about these SINS in your life. You feel guilty about these sins.

**Modern Psychiatry**

What psychiatry says that we must do is to remove the impression that your volition had something to do with these conditions for which you feel guilty. We have to remove the sense of responsibility. Your alcoholism and your sexual perversion are not factors for which you are responsible. These are things that are the way you are constructed. The way people put it is, "Well, I can't help it. That's just the way I am. Just the way I am." You may have used this too. "That's just the way I am." Or, you've got this attitude that society is at fault. "They made me that way." Consequently, we have a lot of people with neuroses and psychoses and depressions, all of which psychiatry says is the fault of society or just the way you happen to be.

The leading psychiatrists today, including people who head the psychiatric associations, have for some time been seriously questioning the basis of psychiatry, and this basic premise of the whole institution that people are not responsible for what they do--that people are reacting to a false sense of guilt. Consequently, they feel that psychiatry has largely failed in its treatment of people with mental problems. People who have been helped make up a certain percentage who, after spending literally hundreds of hours on a psychiatrist's couch and thousands of dollars in money, will be helped, but they make up the same percentage of people who get over their problems without the psychiatrist's help--without all the hours spent in probing the soul, and without all the money wasted in that way. Group therapy is a variation of it. Instead of just one person, you get together. You can express yourself--bear your souls--to one another. Group therapy is a form of public confession. Therefore, it is out of line because it violates the principle of the privacy of your priesthood and of your confession to God. Group therapy creates a great deal of harm.

**Freud**

Secular psychiatry recognizes that this problem has existed, and they got this from Freud, from Sigmund Freud, the father of modern psychiatry. They recognize this principle of irresponsibility for our actions. Because they recognize this problem, modern psychiatry has been moving off in a different direction from this concept of Freud. They have found that they have achieved their most beneficial results for people when they have impressed people that they are responsible for what they do. Do you have a problem? You created it. You are responsible for the problem. Consequently, the way we're going to get over your guilt for the problem is to admit it; to confess it; to own up to the wrongdoing; and, to make restitution where necessary. This comes very close to the biblical position of how to be released from the tension of guilt that arises when we do what is wrong. We know what to do. We know what is right. There comes a point when our world takes the course which is willfully evil. That's what David did. Immediately there's a flick within the soul, and immediately a system of emotional conflicts is set up, and we go from there. Either we release it, or the rubber band gets tighter and tighter and tighter with mounting conflicts within us and with other people.

Therefore, it is becoming evident that most people who are in mental institutions (apart from those who have organic problems, like those who have perhaps brain damage, and so on), that these people are there just because they have not been able to release the emotional tension to have a sense of forgiveness for their behavior which their conscience condemns. Many psychiatrists are now recognizing that their treatment has not worked, and as a matter of fact, that some of the treatment has even compounded the problems that these people are suffering from. Some improvements have been gained by simply leading people to the admission that what they did was wrong. But this is not entirely the answer because the same thing is gained by shock treatments, for example. Or, improvement is gained by going to a really hot charismatic meeting and getting a sense of release and of a cleansing.

**Responsibility**

But it all comes back to Mr. Freud, the father of modern psychiatry, and to this concept that people are not responsible for their problems and their wrongdoings. Modern psychiatry is trying to resolve that dilemma because they see it doesn't work. Wrongdoing--is it a sickness, like catching measles? Freud would say, "Yes, that's what it is." Now what are you going to do when your little child comes home all covered with red blotches? Are you going to berate him, spank him, for catching measles? Didn't you tell him that morning to stay away from those measles-laden kids at school? And he disobeyed you and came home with a case of measles? No, you wouldn't think of punishing him. Why? Because he's sick. It is beyond his will. He didn't have a choice in the matter. So what is he doing? He's suffering from something that he has no control over.

Psychiatry then applies this concept to the criminal. He's labeled as doing what is beyond his control. What he does is the result of something in his background, and psychiatry then places its effort upon probing into your background to see what it is that causes you to do the things you do; what society has done to you; or, what your parents did to you. So these people are labeled as mentally ill. Therefore we must treat them sympathetically. We must make allowances for them. Freud's bequest to us is the era of permissiveness and of irresponsibility and problems which people think have been engendered by other people and not by themselves. A whole world of problems has arisen in our society because we justify this idea of irresponsibility.

Parents are confronted with this. I have seen some sad cases of parents who read the books on how to rear children (and you know some of them), and they caution you that if you do something to hurt his little psyche, he will be warped and twisted as he grows up, and you will cause great psychological problems for him. So, what happens? People are afraid to touch the kid. He can get away with anything. They raise a terror. The authority of various institutions is gone. If students don't like how a college is being run, they rise up; create a riot; take over the institution; and, explain to the administration how they intend to sit upon the councils that make the rules and the regulations, and they're going to have a voice in their school. The authority of the institution is rejected because of the irresponsible pattern that has been justified.

There's a little poem that summarizes what Freud justified. This girl wrote the poem in which she said, "I went to my psychiatrist to be psychoanalyzed, to find out why he I killed the cat and blacked my husband's eyes. He laid me on a downy couch to see what he could find. And here is what he dredged up from my subconscious mind. When I was one, my mommy hid my dolly in a trunk, and so it follows naturally that I am always drunk. When I was two, I saw my father kiss the maid one day. That is why I suffer now from kleptomania. At three, I had a feeling of ambivalence toward my brothers, and so it follows naturally I poisoned all my lovers. But I'm happy now. I've learned the lesson this has taught, that everything I do that's wrong is someone else's fault."

That is our ode of praise to Sigmund Freud and the psychiatric profession. You don't have ground for much hope. If somebody tells you to go to a psychiatrist to get your problems resolved you are following a will of the wisp hope. This whole approach is trying to correct the disease from the outside, which is the way you do correct measles. However, in these psychological matters, you have to go internally into the mind, into the soul, into the old sin nature for the correction.

So the scriptural approach is this: responsibility for wrongdoing; real guilt; recognition that you are really guilty of breaking God's rules; confession of that guilt; receiving your forgiveness; and, then emotional tension is released. I could give you any number of other ways. If you are a receptive and an open Christian, you might believe me if I told you several different ways to receive release from your guilt. I might tell, "Now, if you have done something wrong, you must first of all put five dollars in the offering box as you leave; you must sprinkle yourself with three fingers dipped in cold coke; and, you must also find a cat with black hair and take five hairs and sleep with them under your pillow. And when you wake up in the morning, your soul will be cleansed." If you really believe that you're going to be giving black cats a lot of trouble; you're going to help the offering; and, you're going to do all these other things. Providing you believe it, you'll wake up and be released.

My point is that I'm coming to some misconceptions given you as to how to release these conflicts. They are in conflict with the Word of God. This idea of "I sin; I'm responsible; I have real guilt; I confess; and, I am forgiven," this is taboo with psychiatry. This is why a psychiatrist hates religion in his patients. He gets rid of that. That's the first thing he works on--to get rid of your religious inclinations.

**The Id**

I'll give you a briefing on the theory that Freud came up with. Incidentally, don't forget that Freud said about himself that he was a completely godless Jew, and he described himself as a hopeless Pagan. Freud looked upon religion as something that evolved for man to deal with certain problems that he had within himself. First of all, he said that there is within a human being a thing that Freud called the Id. Id stands for the most primitive drives and desires within the human soul. He saw human beings were torn apart internally, and they are. He wondered, why is this? He decided that what, first of all, was the problem was that man has certain primitive wants, impulses, and drives which cry for expression. He called that the Id. He summarized this in two directions--sex, and aggression, as being at the core of what constituted the Id. Incidentally, the Bible calls this the old sin nature.

**The Superego**

The next thing Freud said that was in man was a thing he called the superego. I'm trying to show you some concepts of Freud that have been picked up by Christian counselors to tell you to do things to release the tensions of your guilt for sin, which were picked up inadvertently from Freud. What they're telling you to do is psychological in orientation, and not scriptural. Freud said there is a superego. This is roughly equivalent to the conscience. This superego is blank when you're born. Then it's built up in you by society. It is built up by your parents, by your church, by your school, and so on. This is why one of the hippie leaders, Jerry Rubin, said, "Our parents are our first oppressors." What he meant was that our superegos are developed first of all by our parents, and they give us a lot of wrong ideas as to what is right and what is wrong. In other words, what is right and what is wrong is built up by these various areas of society. Freud said that these primitive instincts of man created such conflicts in early man's history, that man realized that he had to organize himself in some way so that he could survive and live with himself. Therefore, the superego was developed by society in order to set up rules and regulations on what was acceptable and what was not acceptable. The superego was to put a restraint on the Id.

**Ego**

There was a third factor, and that Freud called the ego. This is the conscious part of man. This is the awareness of yourself. The ego acts as the umpire trying to resolve the conflict that exists between the Id and the superego. The Id is trying to express its primitive desire. The superego is acting as a repression. The result is that these two, in conflict with one another, create a sense of guilt in the ego. So all guilt feelings, Freud said, are the result that you are fighting against doing what comes naturally. And these guilts, Freud said, are false guilts. You shouldn't feel guilty over the fact that if somebody enrages you, you want to poke his eyes out. You shouldn't feel guilty over your immoral actions and so on. There isn't any kind of sin that you are guilty of because you do what comes naturally.

**Christian Psychiatry**

This idea has been picked up even by so-called Christian psychiatrists. On one occasion, somebody said, "I just talked to a lady. She goes to this Christian psychiatrist in this area. She had explained the problems that she had. The Christian psychiatrist said, "You have a repression of a deep-seated natural desire." The lady was single--unmarried. He said to her, "You have a sexual repression," and the person said to me, "What do you think is the advice this Christian psychiatrist gave her?" Right out of the textbook. He said, "What you need to do is have an affair. Do it discreetly, but have an affair. It will resolve the conflict between your Id and superego."

This is the therapy which the psychiatrist is applying. This is it. You need to understand this--this conflict between Id and superego, and the conscious ego being able to live with itself. That's what it's all about--the ego trying to release these pent up feelings, and to come to the feeling where the things that the Id is doing, and that you are indulging that Id in doing, are not really so bad. This is a fast solution because it ignores the fact that there is real guilt. Even if you tell yourself that you have no grounds for feeling guilty, the real guilt still eats away at the soul. So you do not solve the problem. It takes John 3:16 in salvation, or it takes 1 John 1:9 for a Christian to resolve this problem.

So, if happiness was to be achieved on Freud's theory, then our day should be one of the happiest of all eras because we should have a real mental paradise. However, what we have is unparalleled permissiveness. We have widespread rebellion against authority and responsibility. Therefore, the most immoral people in our society should be the most stable. However, in truth, our day is filled with the worst mental problems and the worst emotional problems that have probably ever been on the face of the earth--perhaps, this side of the flood.

So, psychiatry today is moving away from this concept of Freud. Psychiatry is saying we have to tell people that they should no longer concentrate on the Id. This is what Freud did--he hit the Id. Now psychiatrists say from now on, when people come to us for help, we're going to hit the superego. We're going to tell them. "You listen to what inside of you says what's right and what's wrong, and you resolve what you find. When your superego says that's wrong, you correct it." Now, how are you going to correct it? Well, they have studied people who were considered to be hopeless cases (in psychiatric terms). They have found marvelous results multiplied over many times by simply telling people, "You're responsible for what you did. That was a wrong thing to do. You confess it, and go make it right with the person that you injured. Return what you stole. Fix things up." The result is that when people have accepted that kind of responsibility for what they did, listening to that conscience portion of them, it has brought some very gratifying results. However, it does not resolve the problem in the long run. The sense of sin is still there, and the lack of peace (while there may be a certain release emotionally). There's a lack of peace and of completeness until the person is born again.

**James 5:16**

We have pointed out that the issue of confession that we have in James 5:16 meant to acknowledge among ourselves that we Christians all have this drive to sin. In Psalm 51:5, we have the same admission made, for David says, "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." He is recognizing what he's capable of doing. The point is to recognize that it is God's great grace which produces divine good in us, and we as vehicles are not good. This is a principle as taught in Romans 7:18, Luke 18:19, and 1 Corinthians 15:10. Godliness is to be pursued, but to be a godly person means to keep your sins confessed, and to be functioning on the Word of God under the filling of the Holy Spirit.

So James is admonishing or counseling us for the need to pray for one another so that these calluses do not build up, and we do not suffer the consequences. This is not naming your sins to other Christians. This is what the psychiatrist is coming up. Now we have certain prominent Christian leaders who are taking this psychological device that modern psychiatry has come to, in order to resolve the problems of people's mental ills. It is imposing this upon Christians and urging Christians to confess and to seek forgiveness from people in order to secure a clear conscience.

This week I listened to a radio program. It was an interview by a teacher in a theological seminary who is a psychologist, a Christian education professor. This lady called in and asked about advice relative to a problem she had with her husband. This man gave her a couple of ideas, and then he said one of the most fantastic horrendous things that anybody could advise another person to do. He said, "Well, maybe after all is said and done, what you need is to find yourself another lady, a friend who can be a confidant to you. You can bear your soul to her about your husband, and you can weep with her and you can pray with her. And that poor lady thanked him for the advice. God help her if she's finding some sweet confidant Christian friend to share her bosom to about her no good husband so that they can weep together and pray together.

Now, that is purely emotional regurgitation that has been offered as a solution. This is an invitation to slander her own husband. There is nothing that cheapens a women more than slandering her own husband, and bringing some other person into that triple compounded discipline for listening to this kind of slander. If this lady needs counsel, she has a pastor-teacher to whom she may go and get some advice. The counseling that he will give her has to be counseling which has come well ahead of time or it is not going to be too helpful. If the counseling has to come at the point of crises, there is so much that need to be said, that it's very hard to help the person. So counseling should come before the problem.

What does this lady need to do? If she needs to cry with anybody, she should be crying with God. If she needs to bear her soul to anybody, she should be bearing it to the Lord. 1 Peter 3:1 tells us concerning the wife who has a husband problem, "In the same manner, ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if they obey not the Word they also may without the Word be won by the behavior of the wives." This verse is telling her do the very opposite. If your husband will not respond to the Word of God, then you close your mouth, and he should be won by your prayers and by the demonstration of your life, and by your subjection to him that he would be won without your harassing and nagging him, or your words to anybody else. This is a shallow cheap women who would talk about her husband to anybody else. It is fantastic that there are people in high institutions which hold public hearing. People are up against a few channels of information that are open to people. This lady got information and there's nobody on the radio to say, "Wait a minute. That is Freud," and that is a device of psychological proportions.

Another very popular leader, in order to have your conscience clear, advises people to go and ask for forgiveness of their sins. I'd like to read to you just a couple of bits of advice on the scoop sheet that is given out on that. This person (and he's very big) was asked about going and confessing your sins to other people, that such great stress is laid upon. What about the case here of a husband who is having an affair. The time comes when he's brought under the conviction of the Lord. He makes confession to the Lord, and discontinues the sin. Now what confession does he make to his wife? Well he said, "What you do is reword it." I kid you not. "You go to her and you say, 'I have been selfish. Will you forgive me?'" He said, "That's basically what the sin was--selfishness. 'Will you forgive me?'"

Now here's this poor wife. She's going to say, "You want me to forgive you? You were selfish? How were you selfish?"

"I can't tell you how I was selfish."

"You can't tell me how you are selfish?"

Here's this poor girl who never had any problems. Now she's lying in bed wondering, "How was he selfish that he wants me to forgive him?" You can see the monumental problems arising because of this notion out of Freudian psychology on the way you release yourself. The person said, "You will not have emotional release until you look a person eyeball to eyeball, and say, 'Will you forgive me?' And they say, 'Yes I will forgive you.'"

A lady recently attended one of these institutes, and she went home rushing away in order to make her confession to some friends at work. And she said, "I went up to this lady and I confessed to her that I had been wrong in my attitude, and I said, 'Will you forgive me?'" Now, it would not have been wrong for her to say, "I was out of line in my attitude and I want you know I'm sorry. Have a good lunch." Then you could go about your business. No, she had to say, "Will you forgive me?" And the lady said, "No, I won't." She said, "But you must. I really regret what I did. Will you forgive me now?" "No, I won't." She said, "I asked her three times. She wouldn't forgive me. And then she walked off." I said, "Happy hunting." Now enjoy your emotional tension tie up, or go back to 1 John 1:9.

Here's the kind of thing you have. In the scoop sheet which is put out, questions are asked that people bring up. One of them is, "What if the person I wronged has died." Here's the answer: "There are situations in which the only ones who were involved in an offense have died. Many who have faced this problem have discovered a full freedom from guilt by confessing the offense to God in the presence of a mature minister, and hearing him affirm God's forgiveness which is assured in Scripture (1 John 1:9)." Next week we are going to appoint some father confessors for some of you people who've got some of your friends that you've offended and who no longer are around, and you want to get free of your tensions.

Here's another question from their scoop sheet: "What if they won't forgive me?" "If you have been sincere in your repentance, and if you have identified the basic offense, and if your request for forgiveness has reflected genuine humility, it is indeed rare to have him not forgive you. If such a case should occur, you must prove to him by a changed life and attitude that you really were sincere. Allow the Holy Spirit to convict him through your good works toward him (Romans 12:20-21, 1 Peter 2:12)." Again, what is the basis of my fellowship with God? It's proving myself to another human being. This is not based on Scripture. This is based on psychological gimmickry such as psychiatry operates on today--the Id, the superego, and the ego.

One more: "What if I don't feel sorry for what I've done?" "It is quite natural to expect this response, especially when we feel the other person is partly at fault. We have a tendency to magnify his fault and to minimize ours. Therefore, our first requirement is to honestly list the things he has done and to fully forgive him. If we do not feel inclined to do this, we should cover the next step first (which is): Review in detail the wrongs you have done. Our mind and emotions are related in such a way that we cannot say, 'I will feel sorry,' and expect sorrow to arise. But if we would take time to rethink all of the details of the wrongs we have committed, and their many consequences, then the emotions of sorrow would be a natural byproduct. A very healthy preparation to asking forgiveness is to relive your offenses, but to look at them through the eyes and emotions of the person you have offended."

What are you told to do? Go through every sordid little tidbit of it; work yourself through it; and, rework your mentality over every bit of it until you really feel sorry for it. Where in 1 John 1:9 is the element of sorrow? This is big stuff. Thousands and thousands and thousands of people fill an auditorium in order to hear this kind of psychological gobbledygook. If you are going to follow this pattern, you're going to create a lot of conflicts and a lot of grief for yourself and other people. I have noticed that these people cover themselves when they say "reword the sin," and also "the area of confession no wider than the area of offense." What they are saying in effect is that they don't really want you to openly confess the sin. Those are things of shame. You shouldn't talk about them. But what they are telling you is to go through a gimmickry procedure, just as the psychiatrist does, in order to give you the illusion that you have been forgiven. The only way we are forgiven is when we confess to God the father.

A spiritual Christian is not really interested in somebody coming up and confessing to him. I couldn't care less for somebody to come up and tell me something that you have said or done that you think is an offense to me, and ask for my forgiveness, or apologize. It makes no difference to me. I know I'm not going to hold it against you. I'm going to be like the little Irishman when he was kicked by a jackass. I'm going to consider the source and let it go with that. But I'm not going to get hung up in it. So, I don't care what you've done to offend. You're forgiven. You got it. I'm giving you a blanket dispensation. You don't need to come to me--spare me the details of apologizing and confessing and everything else. I couldn't care less. When you grow up a little spiritually, you'll find there are so many important things in your spiritual life and your walk with the Lord, that you couldn't care less either.

So, don't use other people to put screws down in them in order to achieve something for yourself that is contrary to the Word of God. I would stress again that there may be a place, if the Lord leads you, to tell people that you are sorry for what you said or what you did. They know it. You know that. If you think he heals the breach, then there is a place for you to go ahead and do that. However, don't associate that with your fellowship with the Lord. Also, be sure that it is God the Holy Spirit who is leading you to do it, and not Mr. Freud, the fraud.

Matthew 5:23-24 give us basically this principle. It says, "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave there your gift before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift." This is good manners, good public relations within the local church. You're operating in some area of the Lord's work. You're working together. You think there's an area of friction that you can straighten out. Go to the person; talk to him; and try to straighten it out. If he's willing, well and good. If he's not, keep moving. Don't eat your heart out because all you have to do is to confess to God. "Against thee and thee only have I sinned."

We will tie this up here with another principle in Matthew 18:15-18: "Moreover, if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he shall hear you, you have gained your brother." This is a practical demonstration. This is tied to the concept of 1 Corinthians 6:5-7. Verse 16 says, "But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established (so that among yourselves as brethren, this misconduct is really clearly established, and it's not hearsay). Again if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a tax collector."

This is, again, not confessing wrongs to one another. It is trying to settle points of friction between believers. The Holy Spirit may sometimes lead you to tell a person you are sorry for what you did. But basically, we do not follow the Freudian concept. I don't care how big the man is; how popular and how widespread his influence; and, how much public exposure he has, and therefore impressing people with the fact that he knows what he's talking about. Do not be trapped by this business of going around confessing what you have thought about somebody; what you have said about somebody; and, forever running around to be sure that nobody has anything against you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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