**Lesson 9 Sabbath, March 4, 2023**

**If We Confess**

***MEMORY TEXT: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).***

“Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another.”—*Steps to Christ,* p. 37.

**Suggested Readings: *Steps to Christ,* pp. 23-35, 37-41;  Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 635-650. (At the bottom of this page)**

***Sunday February 26***

**1. SAME METHOD IN NEW AND IN OLD**

**a. Since God does not change (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8), what must we realize about His desire regarding the salvation of every soul He has created? Psalm 78:38; Ezekiel 18:32; 2 Peter 3:9.**

**Malachi 3:6**For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

**Hebrews 13:8** Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

**Psalm 78:38**But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

**Ezekiel 18:32**For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

**2 Peter 3:9**The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

“[God] does not want any to perish, but longs to see all coming to repentance. . . . The sword of justice fell upon [Christ] that they might go free. He died that they might live.”—*God’s Amazing Grace,* p. 326.

**b. At the dedication of the temple built by Solomon, what great Old Testament passage declares God’s willingness to forgive? 2 Chronicles 7:12–14. How is this echoed in the New Testament? 1 John 1:9; 2:1.**

**2 Chronicles 7:12-14**And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. **13**If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; **14**If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

**1 John 1:9**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**1 John 2:1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

“Sin of a private character is to be confessed to Christ, the only mediator between God and man. . . . Every sin is an offense against God, and is to be confessed to Him through Christ. Every open sin should be as openly confessed. Wrong done to a fellow-being should be made right with the one who has been offended. If any who are seeking health have been guilty of evil-speaking, if they have sowed discord in the home, the neighborhood, or the church, and have stirred up alienation and dissension, if by any wrong practice they have led others into sin, these things should be confessed before God and before those who have been offended.”—*Gospel Workers,* pp. 216, 217.

***Monday February 27***

**2. THE FIRST STEP IN RECEIVING FORGIVENESS**

**a. As the work of the Holy Spirit is to bring conviction on the heart (John 16:8), what is to be our first response? Psalm 86:5.**

**John 16:8** And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

**Psalm 86:5** For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

“Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.”—*Steps to Christ,* p. 24.

“That repentance which is produced by the influence of divine grace upon the heart will lead to confession and forsaking of sin. Such were the fruits which the apostle declared had been seen in the lives of the Corinthian believers.”—*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 324.

**b. Looking at the example on the day of Pentecost, what happened as a result of the conscience awakening to conviction of sin? Acts 2:36, 37.**

**Acts 2:36**Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

“It was by the confession and forsaking of sin, by earnest prayer and consecration of themselves to God, that the early disciples prepared for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The same work, only in greater degree, must be done now.”—*Testimonies to Ministers,* p. 507.

**c. How can we describe the result of conviction that leads to a change in life? Acts 2:38.**

**Acts 2:38**Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“Before [the Israelites] could find true peace they must be led to see and confess the very sin of which they had been guilty.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* p. 614.

“True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as only to be brought before God, they may be wrongs that should be confessed before individuals who have suffered injury through them, or they may be of a general kind that should be made known in the congregation of the people. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty.”—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 639.

***Tuesday February 28***

**3. AN EXAMPLE OF FALSE REPENTANCE**

**a. Did Judas repent of betraying Christ to the chief priests (Matthew 26:14–16, 47–49)? Why or why not? Matthew 27:3, 4.**

**Matthew 26:14-16**  Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, **15**And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. **16**And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

**Matthew 26:47-49** And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. **48**Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. **49**And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

**Matthew 27:3-4** Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, **4**Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

“Judas now cast himself at the feet of Jesus, acknowledging Him to be the Son of God, and entreating Him to deliver Himself. The Saviour did not reproach His betrayer. He knew that Judas did not repent; his confession was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a looking for of judgment, but he felt no deep, heartbreaking grief that he had betrayed the spotless Son of God, and denied the Holy One of Israel. Yet Jesus spoke no word of condemnation. He looked pityingly upon Judas, and said, For this hour came I into the world.”—*The Desire of Ages,* p. 722.

“When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances he would not have done this or that for which he is reproved.”—*Steps to Christ,* p. 40.

“By faith and prayer all may meet the requirements of the gospel. No man can be forced to transgress. His own consent must be first gained; the soul must purpose the sinful act before passion can dominate over reason or iniquity triumph over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin.”—*Testimonies for the Church,* vol. 5, p. 177.

**b. Explain whether or not this was a type of repentance that leads to eternal life. Matthew 27:5; 2 Corinthians 7:8–11.**

**Matthew 27:5**And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

**2 Corinthians 7:8-11** For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. **9**Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. **10**For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. **11**For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

“Many are in self-deception, and enter into plans with which the Lord has nothing to do. But the only safe course to be pursued is to obey the word of the Lord. Instead of doing this, many propose to do wonderful things. They find it easier to plan some great thing for the future than to empty themselves of self, surrender to God heart, mind, and will, and submit to be molded by that power that can create and destroy. Let the youth critically examine their motives, by prayer and searching of the Scriptures, and see if their own will and inclinations do not lead away from God’s requirements.”—*The Youth’s Instructor,* March 23, 1893.

***Wednesday March 1***

**4. AN EXAMPLE OF TRUE REPENTANCE (PSALM 51)**

**a. What happens when we do not acknowledge our sins before God and instead keep silent about it? Psalm 32:3, 4.**

**Psalm 32:3-4**When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. **4**For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

**b. After Nathan the prophet was direct in revealing the sin of David (2 Samuel 12:1–12), how did the king respond? 2 Samuel 12:13.**

**2 Samuel 12:1-12**And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. **2**The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: **3**But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. **4**And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. **5**And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: **6**And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. **7**And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; **8**And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. **9**Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. **10**Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. **11**Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. **12**For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

**2 Samuel 12:13**And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

“The prophet’s rebuke touched the heart of David; conscience was aroused; his guilt appeared in all its enormity. His soul was bowed in penitence before God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* p. 722.

“David’s repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his crime. No desire to escape the judgments threatened, inspired his prayer. But he saw the enormity of his transgression against God; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. David did not in despair give over the struggle. In the promises of God to repentant sinners he saw the evidence of his pardon and acceptance.”—*Ibid.,* p.725.

**c. How did this occur also in the heart of Simon of Bethany? Luke 7:40–48. What is the only way peace and reconciliation can be obtained? Psalm 32:5; Jeremiah 3:13; 1 John 1:9.**

**Luke 7:40-48**And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. **41**There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. **42**And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? **43**Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. **44**And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. **45**Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. **46**My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. **47**Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. **48**And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

**Psalm 32:5** I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

**Jeremiah 3:13** Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord.

**1 John 1:9**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

“As did Nathan with David, Christ concealed His home thrust under the veil of a parable. He threw upon His host the burden of pronouncing sentence upon himself. Simon had led into sin the woman he now despised. She had been deeply wronged by him. By the two debtors of the parable, Simon and the woman were represented. Jesus did not design to teach that different degrees of obligation should be felt by the two persons, for each owed a debt of gratitude that never could be repaid. But Simon felt himself more righteous than Mary, and Jesus desired him to see how great his guilt really was. He would show him that his sin was greater than hers, as much greater as a debt of five hundred pence exceeds a debt of fifty pence.

“Simon now began to see himself in a new light. . . . Shame seized upon him, and he realized that he was in the presence of One superior to himself. . . .

“Simon was touched by the kindness of Jesus in not openly rebuking him before the guests. . . . Patient admonition convinced him of his error. He saw the magnitude of the debt which he owed his Lord. His pride was humbled, he repented, and the proud Pharisee became a lowly, self-sacrificing disciple.”—*The Desire of Ages,* pp. 566-568.

***Thursday March 2***

**5. THE GIFT OF FORGIVENESS**

**a. If we are deeply involved in transgression, how can we be led to deep, genuine sorrow for our sins? Acts 5:30, 31; Isaiah 55:6, 7; Hebrews 4:16.**

**Acts 5:30-31**The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. **31**Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

**Isaiah 55:6, 7**Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: **7** Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

**Hebrews 4:16**Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

“A repentance such as this, is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high and has given gifts unto men.”—*Steps to Christ,* p. 25.

“If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? ‘Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.’ Jeremiah 13:23. There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are.”—*Ibid.,* p.31.

**b. How thorough can we expect this work of God to be done for us and in us? Hebrews 12:12; Philippians 1:6.**

**Hebrews 12:12**  Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

**Philippians 1:6**Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

“Repentance, as well as forgiveness, is the gift of God through Christ. It is through the influence of the Holy Spirit that we are convicted of sin, and feel our need of pardon. None but the contrite are forgiven; but it is the grace of God that makes the heart penitent. He is acquainted with all our weaknesses and infirmities, and He will help us.”—*Selected Messages,* bk. 1, p. 353.

**c. What will be the result of this type of genuine confession? Romans 8:1.**

**Romans 8:1**  There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

***Friday March 3***

**PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS**

**1. What can we personally learn from the prayer of Solomon at the temple dedication?**

**2. What steps do we need to take seriously if we want to be involved in the finishing of God’s work under the power of the Latter Rain?**

**3. Why is there such a need to confess our sins to God? How responsible are we really in the act of sinning?**

**4. How careful do we need to be in showing someone that they are guilty?**

**5. How is it possible for a sinner to repent?**

**Suggested Readings: *Steps to Christ,* pp. 23-35, 37-41**

How shall a man be just with God? How shall the sinner be made righteous? It is only through Christ that we can be brought into harmony with God, with holiness; but how are we to come to Christ? Many are asking the same question as did the multitude on the Day of Pentecost, when, convicted of sin, they cried out, “What shall we do?” The first word of Peter’s answer was, “Repent.” [Acts 2:37, 38](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/act%202%3A37%2C%2038%C2%A62). At another time, shortly after, he said, “Repent, ... and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” [Acts 3:19](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/act%203%3A19%C2%A62). **(SC 23.1)**

Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life. **(SC 23.2) 2 I**

There are many who fail to understand the true nature of repentance. Multitudes sorrow that they have sinned and even make an outward reformation because they fear that their wrongdoing will bring suffering upon themselves. But this is not repentance in the Bible sense. They lament the suffering rather than the sin. Such was the grief of Esau when he saw that the birthright was lost to him forever. Balaam, terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, acknowledged his guilt lest he should lose his life; but there was no genuine repentance for sin, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil. Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, exclaimed, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” [Matthew 27:4](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/mat%2027%3A4%C2%A62). **(SC 23.3)**

The confession was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were to result to him filled him with terror, but there was no deep, heartbreaking grief in his soul, that he had betrayed the spotless Son of God and denied the Holy One of Israel. Pharaoh, when suffering under the judgments of God, acknowledged his sin in order to escape further punishment, but returned to his defiance of Heaven as soon as the plagues were stayed. These all lamented the results of sin, but did not sorrow for the sin itself. **(SC 24.1)**

But when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened, and the sinner will discern something of the depth and sacredness of God’s holy law, the foundation of His government in heaven and on earth. The “Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” illumines the secret chambers of the soul, and the hidden things of darkness are made manifest. [John 1:9](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/jhn%201%3A9%C2%A62). Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven. **(SC 24.2)**

The prayer of David after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin. His repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his guilt; no desire to escape the judgment threatened, inspired his prayer. David saw the enormity of his transgression; he saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart. He longed for the joy of holiness—to be restored to harmony and communion with God. This was the language of his soul: **(SC 24.3)**

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,

whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord

imputeth not iniquity,

And in whose spirit there is no guile.” [Psalm 32:1, 2](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/psa%2032%3A1%2C%202%C2%A62). **(SC 25.1)**

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to

Thy loving-kindness:

According unto the multitude of Thy tender

mercies blot out my transgressions....

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my

sin is ever before me....

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow....

Create in me a clean heart, O God;

And renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from Thy presence;

And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;

And uphold me with Thy free spirit....

Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, Thou

God of my salvation:

And my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.” [Psalm 51:1-14](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/psa%2051%3A1-14%C2%A62). **(SC 25.2) 4 I**

A repentance such as this, is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high and has given gifts unto men. **(SC 25.3)**

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” [Proverbs 28:13](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/pro%2028%3A13%C2%A62). **(SC 37.1)**

The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy. **(SC 37.2)**

The apostle says, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” [James 5:16](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/jas%205%3A16%C2%A62). Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. The case is brought before the only true Mediator, our great High Priest, who “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,” and who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” and is able to cleanse from every stain of iniquity. [Hebrews 4:15](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/heb%204%3A15%C2%A62). **(SC 37.3)**

Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance which is not to be repented of, and have not with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit confessed our sins, abhorring our iniquity, we have never truly sought for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought, we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we do not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. Explicit instruction is given concerning this matter. Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. The psalmist says, “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” [Psalm 34:18](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/psa%2034%3A18%C2%A62). **(SC 37.4)**

True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty. **(SC 38.1)**

In the days of Samuel the Israelites wandered from God. They were suffering the consequences of sin; for they had lost their faith in God, lost their discernment of His power and wisdom to rule the nation, lost their confidence in His ability to defend and vindicate His cause. They turned from the great Ruler of the universe and desired to be governed as were the nations around them. Before they found peace they made this definite confession: “We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.” [1 Samuel 12:19](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/1sa%2012%3A19%C2%A62). The very sin of which they were convicted had to be confessed. Their ingratitude oppressed their souls and severed them from God. **(SC 38.2)**

Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” [Isaiah 1:16, 17](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/isa%201%3A16%2C%2017%C2%A62). “If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.” [Ezekiel 33:15](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/ezk%2033%3A15%C2%A62). Paul says, speaking of the work of repentance: “Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.” [2 Corinthians 7:11](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/2co%207%3A11%C2%A62). **(SC 39.1)**

When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances he would not have done this or that for which he is reproved. **(SC 40.1)**

After Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was how to excuse their sin and escape the dreaded sentence of death. When the Lord inquired concerning their sin, Adam replied, laying the guilt partly upon God and partly upon his companion: “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” [Genesis 3:12](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/gen%203%3A12%C2%A62). The woman put the blame upon the serpent, saying, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” [Genesis 3:13](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/gen%203%3A13%C2%A62). [Genesis 3:12, 13](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/gen%203%3A12%2C%2013%C2%A62). Why did You make the serpent? Why did You suffer him to come into Eden? These were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin, thus charging God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit and will not be acceptable to God. True repentance will lead a man to bear his guilt himself and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy. Like the poor publican, not lifting up so much as his eyes unto heaven, he will cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner,”([Luke 18:13](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/luk%2018%3A13%C2%A62)) and those who do acknowledge their guilt will be justified, for Jesus will plead His blood in behalf of the repentant soul. **(SC 40.2)**

The examples in God’s word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin or attempt at self-justification. Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in its darkest hue, not attempting to lessen his guilt. He says, “Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.” [Acts 26:10, 11](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/act%2026%3A10%2C%2011%C2%A62). He does not hesitate to declare that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” [1 Timothy 1:15](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/1ti%201%3A15%C2%A62). **(SC 41.1)**

The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” [1 John 1:9](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/1jn%201%3A9%C2%A62). **(SC 41.2)**

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” [Proverbs 28:13](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/pro%2028%3A13%C2%A62). **(5T 635.1)**

The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy. This is a precious promise, given to fallen man to encourage him to trust in the God of love and to seek for eternal life in His kingdom. **(5T 635.2)**

We read that Daniel, the prophet of God, was a man “greatly beloved” of heaven. He held a high position in the courts of Babylon and served and honored God alike in prosperity and trial, and yet he humbled himself and confessed his sin and the sin of his people. With deep sorrow of heart he acknowledged: “We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto Thy servants the prophets, which spake in Thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither Thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against Thee.” [Daniel 9:5-7](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/dan%209%3A5-7%C2%A62). **(5T 635.3)**

Daniel did not seek to excuse himself or his people before God; but in humility and contrition of soul he confessed the full extent and demerit of their transgressions, and vindicated God’s dealings as just toward a nation that had set at nought His requirements and would not profit by His entreaties. **(5T 636.1)**

There is great need today of just such sincere, heartfelt repentance and confession. Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance which is not to be repented of, and have not confessed our sin with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit, abhorring our iniquity, we have never sought truly for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we may not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our proud hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. There is explicit instruction given concerning this matter. Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flippant and careless way or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is mingled with tears and sorrow, that is the outpouring of the inmost soul, finds its way to the God of infinite pity. Says the psalmist: “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” [Psalm 34:18](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/psa%2034%3A18%C2%A62). **(5T 636.2)**

There are too many confessions like that of Pharaoh when he was suffering the judgments of God. He acknowledged his sin in order to escape further punishment, but returned to his defiance of heaven as soon as the plagues were stayed. Balaam’s confession was of a similar character. Terrified by the angel standing in his pathway with drawn sword, he acknowledged his guilt, lest he should lose his life. There was no genuine repentance for sin, no contrition, no conversion of purpose, no abhorrence of evil, and no worth or virtue in his confession. Judas Iscariot, after betraying his Lord, returned to the priests, exclaiming: “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” [Matthew 27:4](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/mat%2027%3A4%C2%A62). But his confession was not of such a character as would commend him to the mercy of God. It was forced from his guilty soul by an awful sense of condemnation and a fearful looking for of judgment. The consequences that were to result to him drew forth this acknowledgment of his great sin. There was no deep, heartbreaking grief in his soul that he had delivered the Son of God to be mocked, scourged, and crucified; that he had betrayed the Holy One of Israel into the hands of wicked and unscrupulous men. His confession was only prompted by a selfish and darkened heart. **(5T 637.1)**

After Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was how to excuse their sin before God and escape the dreaded sentence of death. When the Lord inquired concerning their sin, Adam replied, laying the guilt partly upon God and partly upon his companion: “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” [Genesis 3:12](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/gen%203%3A12%C2%A62). The woman put the blame upon the serpent, saying: “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”([Genesis 3:13](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/gen%203%3A13%C2%A62)) “Why did You make the serpent? Why did You suffer him to come into Eden?” These were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin, thus charging God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit and will not be acceptable before God. True repentance will lead a man to bear his guilt himself and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy. Like the poor publican, not lifting up so much as his eyes unto heaven, he will smite upon his breast, and cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner;”([Luke 18:13](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/luk%2018%3A13%C2%A62)) and those who do acknowledge their guilt will be justified; for Jesus will plead His blood in behalf of the repentant soul. **(5T 637.2)**

It is no degradation for man to bow down before his Maker and confess his sins, and plead for forgiveness through the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour. It is noble to acknowledge your wrong before Him whom you have wounded by transgression and rebellion. It lifts you up before men and angels; for “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” [Luke 18:14](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/luk%2018%3A14%C2%A62). But he who kneels before fallen man and opens in confession the secret thoughts and imaginations of his heart is dishonoring himself by debasing his manhood and degrading every noble instinct of his soul. In unfolding the sins of his life to a priest corrupted with wine and licentiousness his standard of character is lowered, and he is defiled in consequence. God is degraded in his thought to the likeness of sinful humanity, for the priest stands as a representative of God. It is this degrading confession of man to fallen man that accounts for much of the increasing evil which is defiling the world and fitting it for final destruction. **(5T 638.1)**

Says the apostle: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” [James 5:16](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/jas%205%3A16%C2%A62). This scripture has been interpreted to sustain the practice of going to the priest for absolution; but it has no such application. Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God because the brother whom you wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. The case is not brought before the priest at all, but before the only true mediator, our great High Priest, who “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,” and who is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities” [Hebrews 4:15](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/heb%204%3A15%C2%A62). and is able to cleanse from every stain of iniquity. **(5T 639.1)**

When David sinned against Uriah and his wife, he pleaded before God for forgiveness. He declares: “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.” [Psalm 51:4](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/psa%2051%3A4%C2%A62). All wrong done to others reaches back from the injured one to God. Therefore David seeks for pardon, not from a priest, but from the Creator of man. He prays: “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.” [Psalm 51:1](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/psa%2051%3A1%C2%A62). **(5T 639.2)**

True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as only to be brought before God, they may be wrongs that should be confessed before individuals who have suffered injury through them, or they may be of a general kind that should be made known in the congregation of the people. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty. **(5T 639.3)**

When Israel was oppressed by the Ammonites, the chosen people made a plea before God that illustrates the definite character of true confession: “And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against Thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? ... Yet ye have forsaken Me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned: do Thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto Thee; deliver us only, we pray Thee, this day.” Then they began to act in harmony with their confessions and prayers. “They put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord.” And the Lord’s great heart of love was grieved, “*was grieved* for the misery of Israel.” [Judges 10:10-16](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/jdg%2010%3A10-16%C2%A62). **(5T 640.1)**

Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. Says Paul, speaking of the work of repentance: “Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.” [2 Corinthians 7:11](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/2co%207%3A11%C2%A62). **(5T 640.2)**

In the days of Samuel the Israelites wandered from God. They were suffering the consequences of sin, for they had lost their faith in God, lost their discernment of His power and wisdom to rule the nation, lost their confidence in His ability to defend and vindicate His cause. They turned from the great Ruler of the universe and desired to be governed as were the nations around them. Before they found peace they made this definite confession: “We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.” [1 Samuel 12:19](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/1sa%2012%3A19%C2%A62). The very sin of which they were convicted had to be confessed. Their ingratitude oppressed their souls and severed them from God. **(5T 640.3)**

When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrong-doer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances, he would not have done this or that for which he is reproved. But the examples in God’s word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin or attempt at self-justification. **(5T 641.1)**

Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in its darkest hue, not attempting to lessen his guilt. He says: “Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them off in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.” [Acts 26:10, 11](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/act%2026%3A10%2C%2011%C2%A62). He does not hesitate to declare that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” [1 Timothy 1:15](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/1ti%201%3A15%C2%A62). **(5T 641.2)**

The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” [1 John 1:9](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/1jn%201%3A9%C2%A62). **(5T 641.3)**

I have heard of the good work that has been going on among you, and it rejoices my heart. Since coming to Battle Creek my mind has been much exercised in regard to the church here. During the week of prayer the Lord wrought for us, and in all our institutions there has continued to be a steady, well-balanced interest. **(5T 642.1)**

Meetings have been held in the college with marked success. There have been several conversions among the students from the world. These conversions were the more striking because the individuals had had no religious experience before coming to the college, and some of them were determined not to put themselves in the channel of light by attending the meetings. But they did attend, were convicted by the Spirit of the Lord, and were soundly converted. They say they were never so happy in their lives as now. Several have gone home to spend the holidays. Their parents are not professors of religion, and their faith will be severely tested. But good letters come back, stating that they are taking up their new responsibilities and trying to show to their friends that the new faith they have received has not made them fanatics or extremists, but well-balanced Christians, better in every way than before their conversion; that they possess the principles of pure faith and love to God and their neighbor, and manifest them by a well-ordered life and a godly conversation. This good work in the college has been a source of great rejoicing to us all. **(5T 642.2)**

We have had morning meetings for the helpers at the sanitarium for three weeks, at half past five. I have spoken on these occasions with good results; I have also spoken to the patients several times. **(5T 642.3)**

We have had meetings with the workers in the Review office at noon. Here the Lord is manifestly at work. Men who have professed the truth for years and yet have never seemed to have any warmth of soul have been visited by the Spirit of the Lord, and you should hear their heartfelt testimonies bearing witness to the precious love of God in their souls. Some of them say they were never converted before. **(5T 642.4)**

Meetings have been held at the Tabernacle twice each day for two weeks, and the message presented has taken hold of hearts. The testimonies borne have the right ring. I am thankful to the Lord for this good work. We have also had some special meetings at the Tabernacle. This church being large, after we had called the people forward for prayers Sabbath afternoon, the last Sabbath of the old year, we invited those who felt that they must make confession, to go into one of the vestries, and here a special opportunity was given them. I had spoken upon [the last chapter of Malachi](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/mal%203%3A0%C2%A62): “Will a man rob God?” “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” [Malachi 3:8, 10](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/mal%203%3A8%2C%2010%C2%A62). Many confessions were made upon this point. **(5T 643.1)**

Some had not dealt honestly with their neighbors, and they confessed these sins and have since made restitution. During the following week some of those who had not been dealing justly with God, and consequently had been separating themselves from Him, began to restore that which they had withheld. One brother had not paid tithes for two years. He gave his note to the secretary of the conference for the tithe he had withheld and the interest on it, amounting to $571.50. I thank the Lord that he had the courage to do this. Another gave his note for $300. Another man who had backslidden from God so far that but little hope was cherished that he would ever turn his feet into the path of righteousness again, gave his note for $1,000. It was proposed that these long-withheld tithes and offerings be devoted to the Central European Mission; so with these and the Christmas donations, nearly $6,000 has come into the treasury from this church to be applied to the missionary cause. **(5T 643.2)**

The soul that lives by faith on Christ desires no other nor greater good than to know and to do the will of God. It is God’s will that faith in Christ shall be made perfect by works; He connects the salvation and eternal life of those who believe, with these works, and through them provides for the light of truth to go to all countries and peoples. This is the fruit of the working of God’s Spirit. **(5T 644.1)**

The truth has taken hold of hearts. It is not a fitful impulse, but a true turning unto the Lord, and the perverse will of men is brought into subjection to the will of God. To rob God in tithes and offerings is a violation of the plain injunction of Jehovah and works the deepest injury to those who do it; for it deprives them of the blessing of God, which is promised to those who deal honestly with Him. **(5T 644.2)**

We have found in our experience that if Satan cannot keep souls bound in the ice of indifference, he will try to push them into the fire of fanaticism. When the Spirit of the Lord comes among His people, the enemy seizes the opportunity to work also, seeking to mold the work of God through the peculiar, unsanctified traits of different ones who are connected with that work. Thus there is always danger that unwise moves will be made. Many carry on a work of their own devising, a work which God has not prompted. **(5T 644.3)**

But, as far as the work has gone here in Battle Creek, there has been no fanaticism. We have felt the need of guarding it on every hand with the greatest care; for if the enemy can push individuals to extremes, he is well pleased. He can thus do greater harm than if there had been no religious awakening. We know that there has never yet been a religious effort made in which Satan has not tried his best to intrude himself, and in these last days he will do this as never before. He sees that his time is short, and he will work with all deceivableness of unrighteousness to mingle errors and incorrect views with the work of God and push men into false positions. **(5T 644.4)**

In many of our religious awakenings mistakes have been made in regard to confession. While confession is good for the soul, there is need of moving wisely. **(5T 645.1)**

I have been shown that many, many confessions should never be spoken in the hearing of mortals; for the result is that which the limited judgment of finite beings does not anticipate. Seeds of evil are scattered in the minds and hearts of those who hear, and when they are under temptation, these seeds will spring up and bear fruit, and the same sad experience will be repeated. For, think the tempted ones, these sins cannot be so very grievous; for did not those who have made confession, Christians of long standing, do these very things? Thus the open confession in the church of these secret sins will prove a savor of death rather than of life. **(5T 645.2)**

There should be no reckless, wholesale movements in this matter, for the cause of God may be made disreputable in the eyes of unbelievers. If they hear confessions of base conduct made by those who profess to be followers of Christ, a reproach is brought upon His cause. If Satan could by any means spread the impression that Seventh-day Adventists are the offscouring of all things, he would be glad to do it. God forbid that he should have occasion! God will be better glorified if we confess the secret, inbred corruption of the heart to Jesus alone than if we open its recesses to finite, erring man, who cannot judge righteously unless his heart is constantly imbued with the Spirit of God. God knows the heart, even every secret of the soul; then do not pour into human ears the story which God alone should hear. **(5T 645.3)**

There are confessions of a nature that should be brought before a select few and acknowledged by the sinner in deepest humility. The matter must not be conducted in such a way that vice shall be construed into virtue and the sinner made proud of his evil doings. If there are things of a disgraceful nature that should come before the church, let them be brought before a few proper persons selected to hear them, and do not put the cause of Christ to open shame by publishing abroad the hypocrisy that has existed in the church. It would cast reflections upon those who had tried to be Christlike in character. These things should be considered. **(5T 645.4)**

Then there are confessions that the Lord has bidden us make to one another. If you have wronged your brother by word or deed you are first to be reconciled to him before your worship will be acceptable to heaven. Confess to those whom you have injured, and make restitution, bringing forth fruit meet for repentance. If anyone has feelings of bitterness, wrath, or malice toward a brother, let him go to him personally, confess his sin, and seek forgiveness. **(5T 646.1)**

From Christ’s manner of dealing with the erring we may learn profitable lessons which are equally applicable to this work of confession. He bids us go to the one who has fallen into temptation, and labor with him alone. If it is not possible to help him, because of the darkness of his mind and his separation from God, we are to try again with two or three others. If the wrong is not righted, then, and only then, we are to tell it to the church. It is far better if wrongs can be righted and injuries healed without bringing the matter before the whole church. The church is not to be made the receptacle for the outpouring of every complaint or confession. **(5T 646.2)**

I recognize, on the other hand, the danger of yielding to the temptation to conceal sin or to compromise with it, and thus act the hypocrite. Be sure that the confession fully covers the influence of the wrong committed, that no duty to God, to your neighbor, or to the church is left undone, and then you may lay hold upon Christ with confidence, expecting His blessing. But the question of how and to whom sins should be confessed is one that demands careful, prayerful study. We must consider it from all points, weighing it before God and seeking divine illumination. We should inquire whether to confess publicly the sins of which we have been guilty will do good or harm. Will it show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of the darkness into His marvelous light? Will it help to purify the minds of the people, or will the open relation of the deceptions practiced in denying the truth have an after influence to contaminate other minds and destroy confidence in us? **(5T 646.3)**

Men have not the wisdom from God and the constant enlightenment from the Source of all power that would make it safe for them to follow impulses or impressions. In my experience I have seen this done to the destruction, not only of those who acted upon this principle, but of many others who came under their influence. The wildest extravagance was the result of this impulsive work. A declension in faith followed, and unbelief and skepticism became strong in proportion to the extreme in religious excitement. The work that is not wrought in God comes to nought as soon as the excitement is over. **(5T 647.1)**

There is power and permanency in what the Lord does, whether He works by human instrumentality or otherwise. The progress and perfection of the work of grace in the heart are not dependent upon excitement or extravagant demonstration. Hearts that are under the influence of the Spirit of God will be in sweet harmony with His will. I have been shown that when the Lord works by His Holy Spirit, there will be nothing in its operations which will degrade the Lord’s people before the world, but it will exalt them. The religion of Christ does not make those who profess it coarse and rough. The subjects of grace are not unteachable, but ever willing to learn of Jesus and to counsel with one another. **(5T 647.2)**

What we learn of the Great Teacher of truth will be enduring; it will not savor of self-sufficiency, but will lead to humility and meekness; and the work that we do will be wholesome, pure, and ennobling, because wrought in God. Those who thus work will show in their home life, and in their association with men, that they have the mind of Christ. Grace and truth will reign in their hearts, inspiring and purifying their motives, and controlling their outward actions. **(5T 647.3)**

I hope that none will obtain the idea that they are earning the favor of God by confession of sins or that there is special virtue in confessing to human beings. There must be in the experience that faith that works by love and purifies the soul. The love of Christ will subdue the carnal propensities. The truth not only bears within itself the evidence of its heavenly origin, but proves that by the grace of God’s Spirit it is effectual in the purification of the soul. The Lord would have us come to Him daily with all our troubles and confessions of sin, and He can give us rest in wearing His yoke and bearing His burden. His Holy Spirit, with its gracious influences, will fill the soul, and every thought will be brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. **(5T 648.1)**

Now I am fearful that by some error on your part the blessing of God which has come to you in ----- will be turned into a curse; that some false idea will obtain, so that you will be in a worse condition in a few months than you were before this work of revival. If you do not keep your souls guarded you will appear in the worst possible light to unbelievers. God would not be glorified with this fitful kind of service. Be careful not to carry matters to extremes and bring lasting reproach upon the precious cause of God. The failure that many make is that after they have been blessed of God they do not, in the humility of Christ, seek to be a blessing to others. Now that words of eternal life have been sown in your hearts, I entreat you to walk humbly with God, do the works of Christ, and bring forth much fruit unto righteousness. I do hope and pray that you will act like sons and daughters of the Most High and not become extremists or do anything that shall grieve the Spirit of God. **(5T 648.2)**

Do not look to men nor hang your hopes upon them, feeling that they are infallible; but look to Jesus constantly. Say nothing that would cast a reproach upon our faith. Confess your secret sins alone before your God. Acknowledge your heart wanderings to Him who knows perfectly how to treat your case. If you have wronged your neighbor, acknowledge to him your sin and show fruit of the same by making restitution. Then claim the blessing. Come to God just as you are, and let Him heal all your infirmities. Press your case to the throne of grace; let the work be thorough. Be sincere in dealing with God and your own soul. If you come to Him with a heart truly contrite, He will give you the victory. Then you may bear a sweet testimony of freedom, showing forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. He will not misapprehend or misjudge you. Your fellow men cannot absolve you from sin or cleanse you from iniquity. Jesus is the only one who can give you peace. He loved you and gave Himself for you. His great heart of love is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities?” [Hebrews 4:15](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/heb%204%3A15%C2%A62). What sins are too great for Him to pardon? what soul too dark and sin-oppressed for Him to save? He is gracious, not looking for merit in us, but of His own boundless goodness healing our backslidings and loving us freely, while we are yet sinners. He is “slow to anger, and of great kindness;”([Jonah 4:2](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/jnh%204%3A2%C2%A62)) “long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” [2 Peter 3:9](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/2pe%203%3A9%C2%A62). **(5T 649.1)**

Do not seek to get wound up to a high pitch of excitement; but go to work for others, and patiently instruct them. You will be inclined now to conjecture that everyone has a load of evil to confess, and you will be in danger of making this the point of attack. You will want to bring everyone over the same ground that you have been over, and you will feel that nothing can be done until all have gone through the same work of confession. You will not be disposed to take up the labor of helping others with the Spirit of God resting upon you, your own hearts softened and subdued by the deep-wrought work of cleansing. You will be in great danger of marring the work of God by exercising your own spirit. If you work for souls with humble, trustful dependence upon God, if the radiance of His Spirit is reflected from you in a Christlike character, if sympathy, kindness, forbearance, and love are abiding principles in your life, you will be a blessing to all around you. You will not criticize others or manifest a harsh, denunciatory spirit toward them; you will not feel that their ideas must be made to meet your standard; but the love of Jesus and the peaceable fruits of righteousness will be revealed in you. **(5T 649.2)**

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.... And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.” [Galatians 5:22-26](https://3ams.com/Bible/BCViewData1/gal%205%3A22-26%C2%A62). **(5T 650.1)**

The enemy will seek to intrude himself even amid your religious exercises. Every avenue will need to be faithfully guarded lest selfishness and pride become interwoven with your work. If self has really been crucified, with the affections and lusts, the fruit will appear in good works to the glory of God. I entreat you, in the fear of God, not to let your works degenerate. Be consistent, symmetrical Christians. When the heart has given its affections to Christ, old things have passed away, and all things have become new. **(5T 650.2)**

Our religion must be intelligent. The wisdom from above must strengthen, establish, and settle us. We must go on and on, forward and upward, from light to still greater light, and God will still reveal His glory to us as He doth not unto the world. **(5T 650.3)**