

We live in a society of people looking for acceptance by their family, friends or maybe their peers. It is amazing how much energy goes into the pursuit of this acceptance. This longing for significance is what fuels things like the fashion industry. It is what causes people to walk into a shop and pay the most outrageous price for a garment that has cost a few dollars to produce. It is what drives us to succeed, to seek that all-important promotion, to ascend the ladder of ambition. However, it is interesting to note how few people are interested in their acceptance before God. This is the motivation behind the writing of Psalm 32 by King David.

He had found himself in unfamiliar territory when he found himself looking at a beautiful woman and before he knew it he had committed adultery and followed it up with murder. For a year he tried to function as if everything was fine but it didn't work out as he had hoped. The breakthrough came via the prophet Nathan which brought David to the place of confession. Four things are worth noting from this psalm:

## 1. The blessing of acceptance v1-2

David opens the psalm with a series of beatitudes. We are blessed when our transgressions are forgiven. The word transgression means to cross the line separating obedience from disobedience. When David crossed the line he went through a process that every one of us experience when we sin. In 2 Samuel 11:2-4 we read that David saw a woman bathing. We read that David inquired about the woman, which is a polite way of saying he coveted her for himself. Lastly we read that he took her and lay with her. This is exactly what happens to us when we step across the line and transgress. David was declaring his relief at knowing God's forgiveness. His sins were covered which is another way of saying his sin was no longer counted against him. Sin is an archery term which means to miss the mark. Iniquity means to be twisted which is exactly what happens to our character when we step across the line.

## 2. The cost of unforgiveness v3-4

For a year David worked hard to try and pretend his life was on track, when in reality it was a disaster, because sin is always costly and is invariably much more costly than what was first anticipated. Charles Spurgeon puts it so well when he said; "God does not permit his children to sin successfully." John Donne wrote; "Sin is a serpent, and he who covers sin only keeps it warm, that it may sting more fiercely, and disperse the harm and venom more effectively."

### PRaise the Lord for:

- A great response to our first Philippines edition with 10,000 papers distributed very quickly
- A great response to our Australian Easter edition of the paper
- The various unexpected financial gifts that continue to come into the ministry

The problem with unconfessed sin is that it haunts our minds and our bodies. I am sure that many of the illnesses that affect so many people can be tracked back to them carrying a burden they were never meant to carry – the burden of unconfessed sin, the burden of guilt. This is why when someone comes into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus they will often describe

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their first response as if a great weight was lifted off their shoulders. That weight is the weight of unconfessed sin and its associated guilt.

This was the problem David faced and it played havoc with his spiritual, physical and emotional health. He had become a physical wreck underlined by the expression that his bones were growing old and groaning all the day long. Then we see that his vitality was turned into the drought of summer. When we are carrying unconfessed sin it saps our spiritual and physical vitality and we end up with lives that are cracked and marred. This is why God will chasten us to get us back into a right relationship with Him, because being out of fellowship with God is not only costly but hard.

### **3. The way of deliverance v5-7**

The way of deliverance is not complex. Firstly we need to be honest with ourselves, because unless we are we can't be honest with God, even though He already knows the truth. Then we need to confess our sin or sins specifically to God. Then we need to accept God's forgiveness, which includes forgiving ourselves, and move on. Once we do this the way is open to again enjoy fellowship with God. David began to once again know a communion with God through prayer and praise. It was as if he was trumpeting the chorus: *I'm forgiven!* This forgiveness is then marked by a trust in God for His ongoing victory in our walk with God, and for His care and protection.

There is something that we should note here in amongst all this elation at being forgiven. Forgiveness does not necessarily deliver us from the consequences of our sin. David's life after his sin with Bathsheba was marred by family upheaval and intrigue. I am sure there were times when David asked the question: "Was my sin really worth all the trouble and heartache that has come as a consequence of it?" I think we can all answer that one fairly quickly.

### **4. The joy of obedience v8-12**

There were 3 things that happened as a result of David rejoicing in being right with God. He could know God's instruction. One sure way to know if someone is in tune with God is if they are teachable or not. The Christian out of fellowship with God is often marked by an arrogance that is difficult to deal with. Then the obedient Christian can know God's guidance and will gladly follow. They are not like the mule who was marked by stubbornness. Then last but certainly not least the obedient Christian will revel in the mercy of God. When we do we will be glad and shout for joy in the Lord.

If you have been drifting in the wilderness of unforgiveness then God is saying to you to come back into a right relationship with Him, come back into the joy of the Lord today!

{ CARL CARMODY }  
{ EDITOR CHALLENGE }

#### **PRAYER needed for:**

- Upcoming promotion and development trip to South Australia for Carl
- Wisdom and discernment for our production team as they navigate local and overseas editions
- Our project in the Philippines as we approach various ministries for their support regarding Bibles and discipleship material

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