Coming Home June 14, 2015

The One Another Vulnerabilities, Part Two

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Coffee and Question: Do you agree or disagree with this statement and why?



Feedback



There are three one another vulnerabilities that we want to consider today.

**confess your sins to each other** ([James 5:16](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/James%205.16))

**forgiv[e] each other** ([Ephesians 4:32](http://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph.%204.32))

love each other deeply (1 Peter 4:8)

I believe practicing these one another vulnerabilities is how we build profound connection with God and each other.

**Confess your sins to each other.**

**Read James 5:16.**

When a person does something wrong there are a number of possible responses they can make. \* Some create a story that minimizes their responsibility or even absolves them.

 \* Others try to cover up or hide what they’ve done.

Here in James 5:16 God tells us to take responsibility when we do wrong.

I believe we can only put into practice James 5:16 **“if”** and **“when”** we’ve put into practice

1 John 1:9: *If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*  **(Leave verse on screen)**

Both the James 5 and I John 1 passages speak of confessing sin.

What is different between them is “who” hears the confession.

In 1 John 1:9 who is the confession of sin made to?

Who is the person identified as “he?”

The ‘he’ being referred to is God.

What we are told about God in this passage has great implication for us understanding how important the confession of sin is. Let’s back up and read from verse 5.

What kind of person can be in relationship with God, who is light and has no darkness in him?

v.7 - only a person who walks in the light.

Is it possible for a person who lives in darkness to be in fellowship with God?

v.6 - no. And if a person claims that they do, they lie.

Knowing that God’s piercing gaze sees everything, how can a person live in relationship with him. Verse 9 is the key.

The word confess is ‘homologeo.’

It means to speak the same thing; to agree with.

To confess our sins is to declare openly to God, that we agree with his assessment of the sin in our life. No excuses. No blaming. No covering up. No hiding.

When we confess our sin to God he is then able to apply the sacrifice of Jesus to our life.

Not only does God forgive, he also purifies us from the corruption in us that has been caused by sin.

To confess our sin and to receive and believe in Jesus is the only way, a person not only can safely walk with God, but do so with great enjoyment.

The word confess in James 5:16 is the word ‘exomologeo.’

It means to publicly speak in an open and transparent way.

The same word is used in Acts 19:18: *Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly.*

As it was with 1 John 1:9, the context of James 5:16 is of great significance for understanding what the verse teaches and how it is to be lived.

The issue being addressed in James 5 is prayer for a person who is sick.

Read verses 14-15.

Do we get sick every time we sin?

If that was the case, none of us would ever be healthy.

So what is the correlation between sin and physical health?

There are several things the Bible tells us.

\* We get sick because we live in a fallen world.

Daniel 8:27

2 Timothy 4:20

\* Sometimes God allows illness in a person’s life in order to glorify himself.

Do you remember the question asked by the disciples of Jesus about the man born blind?

John 9:2: *Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*

Jesus answered: *Neither this man nor his parents sinned. This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.*

It was the same with Lazarus. John 11:1-5.

\* Sometimes God permits illness in order to grow our dependence upon him.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

\* And sometimes illness is the direct cause of sin committed.

Psalm 107:17-20.

James 5 teaches that when illness is the result of specific sin committed, the open confession of that sin to God in the presence of other believers, followed by those believers praying in faith for the healing of their sick brother or sister, results in, forgiveness... and physical healing.

Sin works in hidden-ness.

Grace works in openness.

James 5 instructs that the elders of a church are to be called on to pray over a sick person.

But they are not the only ones who can pray for sick people.

The usage of the word ‘therefore’ in verse 16, teaches that hearing sin confessed and praying for another’s healing is something to be done... by all believers.

This one another command makes us vulnerable because in putting the command into practice, we choose to live in the light - before God and before one another.

And living in the light means...nothing hidden; no secrets.

**Forgive each other.**

**Read Ephesians 4:32.**

Travel the globe and you will encounter many nations and people groups where conflict rages because of a long standing refusal to forgive. It’s the same in many homes and families. It even happens in churches among people who profess allegiance to Jesus.

There is something in the human nature that want others to pay for the wrong they’ve done.

When someone chooses to forgive, they release their demand for vindication and agree to live with and carry the consequence of the wrong done to them.

This is why forgiveness is a costly act.

People mistakenly conclude that forgiveness lets a person off.

What forgiveness actually does is (1) place the offender in the hands of God for him to deal with them justly, and in doing so, (2) forgiveness releases the offendee from the offender and the wrong committed.

Forgiveness allows a person to move forward; it sets them free from the trap of bitterness.

In Ephesians 4:32, the phrase “forgiving each other,” is one of three phrases, which are inseparably linked and together explain all that is involved in the choice to forgive.

“Be kind and compassionate” is the first phrase.

It explains how we forgive.

Forgiveness is a choice to express kindness and compassion to someone who is undeserving.

“Just as in Christ God forgave you” is the third phrase.

It explains why we forgive.

We forgive because we’ve been forgiven.

Peter once asked Jesus a question: *How many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me?* Peter’s question was a good one. It is important that we set boundaries. We are not to be door mats. Peter wanting to be generous, proposed an answer, but put it to Jesus as a question: *Up to seven times?*

Jesus’ answer was unexpected. *I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.*

And without any further elaboration, Jesus immediately told an incredible story that was actually the explanation for his answer.

Matthew 18:23-35.

What was Jesus’ key point?

No offense committed against us by a fellow believer will ever come close to the enormity of the offense we have committed against God. And because God has forgiven us, he expects us to forgive one another.

A person can get stuck on the wrong done to them.

According to Jesus the way out of that trap, is for that person to remember how great is the forgiveness... God has extended to them.

As he wrapped up the story Jesus’ concluding thoughts are sobering. *This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.*

Fallen human nature holds on to offense. The demonic encourages such a response because it gives them a place from which to wreak havoc.

If you are in Jesus, you have a new nature and you have the Spirit of God to help you.

You have both the ability and the power to forgive as you’ve been forgiven.

And when you and I do so, we open our hearts to a greater measure of God’s grace.

The kind of community we are and the relationships we build with one another are an echo of how God has dealt with and treated us. This is why we forgive just as in Christ God forgave us.

The vulnerability of this command... is in letting go.

It will feel risky to trust God to deal justly with those who’ve wronged us.

But the reward in doing so... is great.

For this is how we experience the assurance that we’ve been born of the Spirit and belong to Jesus.

**Love each other deeply.**

Read 1 Peter 4:8.

This is the second time in this letter that Peter moved by the Spirit has written this command.

Look at 1 Peter 1:22.

The emphasis is not just that we are to love one another, but that we are to love one another deeply...and from the heart.

We are to love one another like this because as verse 23 says, *“[We’ve] been born again.... through the living and enduring word of God.”*

Here is this emphasis that is often repeated in the NT - followers of Jesus have a new nature which explains why they live and love differently.

But there is something that potentially could stand in the way of us loving and forgiving one another as we’ve been loved and forgiven: *“...a multitude of sins.”*

While we who follow Jesus are being transformed day by day, and while we are learning to put off the clothing of the old nature and put on the clothing of the new, the reality is... until we draw our last breath.... we are and will be a work in progress.

We have old habits of sin - that can still manifest in our talking, acting and reacting.

We are at different stages in our spiritual growth - some more mature, some less.

There are days when you and I are filled to overflowing with the Spirit; and days when we are bone dry. Every day each of us faces different life circumstances.

There are and there will be situations and conversations when old sin habits cause us to act towards others or to speak with others in a wrong way that causes friction and hurt.

What do we do when we are the one in the wrong?

We confess our sin and ask for forgiveness - to God and the person we hurt.

And what do we do when we are the one wronged?

1 Peter 4:8 teaches us that we are to choose to “cover over.”

“Cover over” is the word “kalupto” and it means to cover over in the sense of removing from sight. The fact that this is what God’s word teaches us to do regarding the sins of offense that are committed against us is astounding. Let me explain.

It is not uncommon for people who don’t know Jesus, to focus in on; to dwell on; to go over and over the wrong done and said to them. And as they do, their wound and anger grows like a festering sore.

But those who walk with Jesus are told to cover over.

Do you realize that we are told to do with each other is what God does with us when it comes to our sins. Psalm 103:12: *As far as the east is from the west, so far has he* ***removed*** *our transgressions from us.*

God removes our sins. He covers them so that they are no longer of consequence.

And what God has done for us, is what he calls us to do with one another.

You see the vulnerability in this command, don’t you.

Loving one another deeply from the heart, especially when we are all works in progress, is a risky thing. We will hurt others and others will hurt us.

But in choosing to cover over, we choose the way of love; and when and as we do so, we give both room and liberty for the Spirit of grace to distinguish our lives and this church.

For some of you here this morning, the Spirit of God has impressed upon you that he is pleased how you are living out these commands.

Your example is a model for those who are younger in the faith.

You inspire many to pursue after Jesus like you do.

So keep on. Don’t let your guard down. Keep nurturing your new nature.

For some of you here this morning, the Spirit of God has challenged you regarding one of these one another commands.

He wants you to put off acting or responding with old habits that used to be a part of your life before you met and began to follow Jesus.

Will you say yes to Jesus?

Will you ask his Spirit to help you put off the old and put on the new?

Our closing song is entitled “Jesus Loves Me” by Chris Tomlin.

Knowing that we are dearly loved by our God inspires us to obey him.

As we speak out in this song, the truth of God’s great love, respond to the Lord.

**Affirm** your love for him. **Commit** yourself afresh to him.

**Agree** with God and lay down sin committed. **Receive** his forgiveness.

**Speak** to people that you may have hurt by your words or actions.

Make things right.

**Choose to cover over** the sins others have committed against you.

**Remove** them from your heart and mind.

Leave nothing that stands between you and your God or between you and a brother or sister in Jesus.

**The Blessing**

1 John 3

*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God...*

*This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another...*

*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters...*

*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth...*

*This then is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence...*