

Pillar Passages – 1 John 1:9 (confession)
Jed Brown
Dec 28, 2021

In my previous video on 1 John 1:9, I promised to return to the question of forgiveness—confession that is. And the question of; after our confessed my sins to God, do I need to confess them to another human being? When should I do that and how.

Let me first get to the how and that will lead us to the who and the when.

So first, as we saw in the previous video, confession of sins should be—number 1—complete. What I mean by this, is very important, it should be biblical not graphic. What God requires of us is our confession of sins should follow the Bible and should use biblical language to give a complete rendering of what we did. But God does not require of us to give a graphic retelling of every step, every gory step of the sin.

#1 – confess of sin should be complete

#2 – it should be a-sap (ASAP) as soon a possible after the sin. David speaks—after Nathan confronted him—and speaks of this in Psalm 51 that as he held on to his sin (and in Psalm 32) that as he held on to his sin his body—his soul—wasted away within him. We don't want that, so confession of sin needs to be ASAP—as soon as possible.

Now, having said that, there are two ditches to this. One is taking too long. But the other is going with too much abandon. In some situations, you may need to you may need to involve another—a wise brother; usually an elder—to guide you in your confession. Or a wise sister to guide you in your confession, because of the consequences—the ramifications that will come about because of the confession of your sin.

Some people do this too quickly. Some people—because of the grace of God—have learned of it and they pursue confession with wide abandon. They need to be slowed down and to talk about it, exercise some wise strategy—not for deception but just to do it right. Secondly, it needs to be done ASAP with those two caveats.

Then #3 it needs to be performed to the parties harmed in accord with their harm and in accord with their knowledge of the harm and in accord with the consequences of their harm. The consequences that harmed them. Again, you see why bringing in someone else here could easily be needed, because there is some complexity here.

For instance, if I were to—God forbid—but if I were to embezzle a hundred thousand dollars from my employer, you can see how all three of these would come into play. However, if a man has a lustful passing thought that he immediately puts down, one wonders how any of these apply here—other than to God.

So, these will differ according to the sin and according to the ramifications of the sin But confession is important. Confession must be done with a faith that one day all things will be made visible. One day, all sins will be laid open, laid bare, before the whole world. There is the operation of faith and hope in that I'm going to lay bare my sins now, instead of them being laid bare then. I am going to seek the mercy of God. I'm going to lay myself—as David did—in the hands of God and entrust myself to Him. That is really what the confession of sin is for; is first to lay myself in the hands of God. But then at the same time that, I do it ... to heal. To heal the horizontal relationships that have been harmed. And, as we said in the previous video, to make a substantive, authentic, and spirit-filled step toward new life—towards a new way of living. That new step cannot be done without confession.