

Free Yourself from Sin – Part 1

Introduction:

1. Conflict is a part of life. There is no way to avoid it. It is inevitable.
2. Biblically, how do we resolve conflict? We have already learned the first two steps to take when we find ourselves in a dispute.
 - First, we must answer the question, “Is this worth fighting over?”
 - Second, we must examine ourselves and see how we may have contributed to the conflict.
3. Once we begin to see how our own wrongs have contributed to a problem, we must seek to free ourselves from sin, if we are to have any hope of resolving the conflict.
4. This process involves three basic steps:
 - Repentance – Confession – Personal Change
5. Through this three-step process, God has provided a way to obtain forgiveness, clean up the past, and change undesirable patterns of behavior.

Repentance

1. Repentance is the first step in gaining freedom from sin.
2. We must understand that repentance is not:
 - Feeling uncomfortable
 - A mere apology
 - Feeling bad (It isn't simply remorse.)
3. According to 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, there is a godly sorrow and a worldly sorrow.
4. Worldly sorrow means feeling sad because you got caught doing something wrong, or because you must suffer the unpleasant consequences of your actions such as financial loss, a broken marriage, a damaged reputation, etc.
 - Any normal person will feel regretful when faced with those consequences.
 - Before long, however, worldly sorrow dies away, and most people begin to behave just as they did before. Instead of changing their thinking and conduct, they simply try harder not to get caught again. This only leads to further grief.
5. Godly sorrow involves:
 - A change of mind about our sin (We admit we've been deceived and we acknowledge the truth.) 2 Timothy 2:25-26
 - A renouncing of sin (A change in thinking leads to outward changes.)
 - A turning to God (You sorrow because you have offended God – a personal offence against God Himself.)
6. True repentance leads to deliverance from sinful habit patterns. 2 Corinthians 7:10; cf. Acts 26:20

Confession

1. The second step in dealing with sin is confession. This is one of the most liberating acts in life.
2. Unfortunately, many people do not experience the freedom that comes through confession because they have never learned to confess their wrongs to others honestly and unconditionally.
 - “I’m sorry if I hurt you,” “Let’s just forget the past,” “I suppose I could have done a better job,” “I guess it’s not **all** your fault.”
 - These are token statements that don’t encourage genuine forgiveness and reconciliation.
3. The Bible provides clear and specific guidelines for an effective confession.

First, address everyone involved.

- We should confess our sins to every person who has been directly affected by our wrongdoing.
- Of course, all sins should first be admitted to yourself and to God.
- If our sins involved an action such as slandering, stealing, lying, etc., it must be confessed to those who have been affected. If only one person was affected, then only go to that one person. If it was a group of people, go to each one privately, or to the group as a whole, if appropriate.
- We should address every person who has felt the impact of our wrongdoing. **Illustration:** Prodigal Son in Luke 15:18-21

Second, avoid “if,” “but,” and “maybe.”

- The easiest way to ruin a confession is to use words that shift the blame to others or that attempt to minimize or excuse our guilt. We water it down. For example, “I’m sorry if I’ve done something to upset you.”
- The word “if” implies that we don’t know whether we did wrong or not.

Third, admit specifically.

- The more precise you are when making a confession, the more likely you are to receive a positive response. “I’m so sorry for hurting your feelings... I’m sorry for losing my temper and saying... I had no business acting that way or saying that...”
- Specific admissions help to convince others that you are honestly facing up to what you have done, which makes it easier for them to forgive you.

Fourth, apologize.

- Make it a point to apologize for what you have done. This is an expression of sorrow or regret for hurting another person’s feelings or interests.
- It will show that you understand how the other person felt as a result of your words or actions.

Fifth, accept the consequences.

- If you will not accept the consequences of your actions, the person you have wronged may assume that you are simply trying to be released from your responsibilities. Luke 15:19, 19:8

Sixth, alter your behavior.

- Explain to the person you offended how you will alter your behavior in the future.

Seventh, ask for forgiveness.

- If you follow the first six steps, most people will readily forgive you.
- If they do not express forgiveness, you may ask, "Will you please forgive me?"
- This lets them know the next move has shifted to them.