

Session # 11

The Threat to Spirituality -- An Unresolved Past

Introduction

- A. We are all products of our past! We have all been taught truth, and we have all been taught error -- often by well meaning people.
- B. It is not easy to evaluate our past correctly. We tend to protect our parents, pastors, and teachers from any thought of blame. And, it is often very painful to recall and relive those times when we were hurt, blamed, or failed.
- C. Resolving the past is so very important -- because -- all sin is rooted in error. The reason I John 1:9 does not work for many people -- is that they are confessing only the act of sin and not to root of that sin in error.
- D. We must always keep in mind that the enemy is a liar, that he delights in teaching us error (which he does to every believer) and that along with the error is always deception -- so we do not recognize what is going on!

I. The Biblical Principles that Teach Us to Resolve Our Past.

- A. The principle illustrated in confession.

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

Comment: To confess is "to say the same thing" as God about our deviation from the truth. We must name the error and act for what it truly is, confess fully, forsake the error/act, and refuse all further temptation. It may help to take any ground you have given away from the enemy.

- B. The principle illustrated in forgiveness.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. Mark 11:25 (See also Matt 6:12,14; 18:22-35; Eph. 4:32)

Comment: Unwillingness to forgive simply means we are not willing to submit to the truth and obey God. It means we would rather maintain our grudge. We forfeit so much of the blessing of God when we refuse to forgive.

- C. The principle illustrated in reconciliation.

Therefore (talking about relationships), if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Matt 5:23,24 (See also Matt 18:15)

Comment: We are seriously limited in our walk with God if we are not on good terms with one another. We must make things right the best we can.

D. The principle illustrated in personal cleansing.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.  
II Cor. 7:1 (See also Eph. 4:22-31; Col. 3:5-9)

Comment: The words "filthiness of the flesh and spirit" covers a multitude of sins, all is due to the acceptance and practice of error in the past. The result of such acceptance and practice is bondage! Such sins as overeating, greed, pornography, voyeurism, lust of every kind, as well as grudges, bitterness, pride, self-righteousness, and fear are included -- to name only a few. These sins will not be broken until the root of error in one's life is found and dealt with. If you are honest the fault may be with another.

II. Examples of Those Who Failed to Reconcile Their Past.

A. The example of Eli.

For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.  
I Sam 2:12,13

Comment: Eli, in not correcting his sons, forced God to judge his family. This did not have to happen. He could have disciplined his sons when it started.

B. The example of King Saul.

And he (Saul) said to David, Thou art more righteous than I ... And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king .... I Sam 24:17,20 (See also 26:21-25)

Comment: In spite of knowing he had lost the kingdom Saul tried to kill David and put Jonathan on the throne. His refusal to act on the truth brought him into spiritual bondage, control of Satan, and caused his family to be destroyed. He could have obeyed God and lived in freedom and honor.

C. The example of Ananias and Sapphira.

But Peter said, Ananias, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Acts 5:1-3

Comment: The word "Why" is the key. Ananias and his wife did not have to do what they did. They could have resisted the temptation or confessed what they had done. They chose, however, to cover the past -- and died in dishonor.

III. Illustrations of Those Who Reconciled Their Past.

A. The example of King David.

And David said ... I have sinned against the Lord. I Sam 12:13 (See also Ps 32)

B. The example of Peter.

Jesus saith to Peter, Lovest (agapao) thou me more than these? ... Peter answered Thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee.

Instructions: Use the Reconcile the Past sheet, put the blame where it belongs, confess the error and act as sin, forgive and maintain it, make restitution if needed, resist the temptation and Satan's accusations to give in.

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