



# The Good News

August 21st, 2022

Volume 22, Issue 30

## *What do I do when I sin?*

By Michael McCleary

**W**hat do you do when you discover you have sinned? Do you drop everything and ask God's forgiveness? Do you wait until the end of the day and ask forgiveness for all the sins of the day all at once? Do you not even bother praying because it just isn't that big of a deal to you?

What should we do when we sin? The Bible tells us what we are to do when we sin, but it all starts with our attitude toward sin.

**Our attitude:** It isn't godly or righteous to say to ourselves, "Well, I can sin now, and then I can pray for forgiveness afterward and everything will be fine." **Heb. 10:26** tells us that if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, "*there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*". If I choose to give myself to sin thinking that God will just forgive me afterward, will God really forgive me? I obviously didn't fight the temptation. If this is my attitude, then I likely did not have godly sorrow afterward, therefore I will not be truly penitent. We learn in **Rom. 12:9** that we are to abhor that which is evil, which means that we will be fighting against sin. In **Gal. 5:13** we learn that we are not to use liberty as an occasion to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Just because we can pray to God for forgiveness does not mean that we can just do what we want and then "just ask forgiveness" for it.

**Sorrow and Repentance:** In **II Cor. 7:9-10**, Paul had made the Corinthians ashamed of the sins they had committed, and they were sorrowful and repented of their sins. Notice it wasn't just that they were sorry and continued in their

sins. Their sorrow brought about the determination to change their conduct so that they would no longer commit those sins. I can tell God that I am sorry I did something, but if I do not have the determination to not commit the sin again, for what am I sorry? Am I sorry that I committed sin, or am I sorry that God doesn't approve of something that I have every intention of doing again? Godly sorrow works in us to bring about repentance. Repentance means to change. This change isn't something that is subjective, as in "Well, I tried a little harder", but rather is absolute in that I show by my actions that I have repented. John challenges the "brood of vipers" to "*bear fruits worthy of repentance*" in **Luke 3:7-8**. If I am truly sorry for something, I will no longer do it, and my conduct will show this change of heart and mind.

**Be baptized** (Acts 22:16, Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16, I Pet. 3:21) or **Ask forgiveness:** If we sin after we have become a Christian, we must ask God's forgiveness. If we believed that the grace of God continually cleanses us from all sin ("continual cleansing"), then there would be no need to ask God's forgiveness, nor would there be a commandment for it. Yet, in **I John 1:9** we learn if we confess our sins, being truly sorrowful and penitent, God will forgive us. We learn then that, while God does know we sin, we are required to confess it to God.

We must constantly seek to be well-pleasing to God. Following the instructions given to us by God for when we sin will help us achieve that goal...but better yet, let's strive to not sin at all. (**I John 2:1**)