

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us

There is no person who does not need the grace of God's forgiveness. We all sin from time to time, and to say otherwise is to deceive ourselves (1 Jn. 1:8). But forgiveness is what the gospel of Christ is about. Jesus Himself summarized the gospel when He told His apostles they were to preach "repentance and forgiveness of sins" (Lk. 24:47) in His name. Whatever secondary benefits may be found in Christ, the forgiveness of our sins is at the center of our hope in Christ.

And yet, there are times when we feel distant from God. We feel that our sins may be too great or too frequent to be forgiven. At such times, we need to remember that *if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us*. This is the point of the passage in 1 Jn. 1:9 where the apostle assures us of God's willingness to forgive and cleanse us: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The story of the Prodigal Son in Lk. 15:11-32 is a wonderful illustration of God's steadfast love. Like the father in the story, who eagerly received back his wayward son when he returned home penitently, God is our spiritual Father, and He waits eagerly to reaffirm His love for us when we honestly confess our sins and turn to Him for forgiveness.

As the Prodigal Son made his way back home, his father saw him while he was still a long way off "and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him . . . [And] the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate'" (Lk. 15:20-23).

As we make our way through the various activities of the coming week, let's be mindful of God's forgiving nature. He is not a reluctant forgiver who must be begged to pardon us against His will, but rather a Father who finds joy in the restoration of His children. Let's not only be encouraged by this thought, but also learn to be more thankful for our forgiveness. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3). The God whom we worship is a God of mercy and of comfort!

Monday: 1 John 1:9

Key Idea: God will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Questions for Family Growth: Upon what condition does this verse say God will forgive us? Does this apply to those who have never obeyed the initial requirements of the gospel? In this verse, do you see a difference between "forgive us our sins" and "cleanse us from all unrighteousness"?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 30:18,19.

Tuesday: 2 Peter 3:9

Key Idea: God does not will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Questions for Family Growth: What does it mean that God is “longsuffering” (NKJV)? Where does the responsibility lie if a person ends up perishing eternally because of sin? For His part, what is God’s will in this matter? What point is made in **Deut. 30:19** and **Ezek. 18:32; 33:11**.

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 30:20**.

Wednesday: John 3:16,17

Key Idea: God gave His Son that we might be forgiven of our sins.

Questions for Family Growth: What moved God to give His only begotten Son to die for our sins? Who are those who will have eternal life? Did God send His Son to condemn the world or to save it? Why, then, will some be condemned?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 30:21-23**.

Thursday: Luke 15:11-32

Key Idea: God is eager to forgive us and restore us to His fellowship and friendship.

Questions for Family Growth: If God is represented by the father in this story, what does this tell us about the way God thinks of us when we depart from Him? If we are living in sin, what would we have to do to come back home to God? How will God treat us after we come back?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 30:24-28**.

Friday: 2 Thessalonians 2:16,17

Key Idea: God will comfort our hearts and establish us in good works.

Questions for Family Growth: What does **v.16** say God and His Son have done for us? What are some ways God can comfort our hearts and establish us, thus giving us hope? In **v.17**, what will God establish us in?

Wisdom for the Day: **Proverbs 30:29-31**.

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