

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ

8 18 26 V2n16 IN MORAL and SPIRITUAL MID-NIGHT— WHAT SHOULD WE CHRISTIANS BE DOING?

THE WHOLE WORLD, INCLUDING AMERICA, LIES IN SPIRITUAL DARKNESS... AND, TRAGICALLY, IN THE MIDST OF AMERICA, MULTITUDES OF professing CHRISTIANS ARE ALSO GOING WITH THE FLOW INTO DEEPENING DARKNESS.

WHAT CAN, WHAT SHOULD BIBLE-BELIEVING, CHRIST-HONORING CHRISTIANS BE DOING?

Question: WILL we receive and act upon the reality that the WORD OF JESUS to Christians is that all must needs be focused upon us being/becoming righteous, holy, pure, loving, forgiving... and BOLD with the Gospel? (Revelation 2-3)

SPIRITUAL MID-NIGHT IS ALL AROUND US—

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

***** 2 Corinthians 13:5 reads:** "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the following Scriptures and questions can lead us as Christians to identify and confess sins

which often grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. **The Scriptures are set forth in the spirit of the cry of the Psalmist:**

"Search me, O God and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23-24)."

They are designed to lead us Christians to act upon 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Biblically when I confess a sin or sins, I should mean this:

"My sin is wrong, against God, and got to go!" "O LORD, I was wrong ... I repent ... I THANK YOU, FOR FORGIVENESS, WHICH WAS WON AT CALVARY — THANK YOU JESUS!"

SUCH GODLY ACTIONS will give us a new song! We will freely tell others of Jesus! (Psalm 51:1-13) And we will be used to bring the lost to Christ! (Psalm 40:1-3)

1. Matthew 6:12, 14-15 – "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors ... for if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." Is there anyone against whom you hold a grudge?

Anyone you haven't forgiven? Anyone you hate? Anyone you do not love? Are there any misunderstandings that you are unwilling to forget? Is there any person against whom you are harboring bitterness, resentment, or jealousy?

Anyone you dislike to hear praised or well-spoken of? Do you allow anything to justify a wrong attitude toward another?

2. Matthew 6:33 – "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness ..." Is there anything in which you have failed to put God first? Have your decisions been made after your own wisdom and desires rather than by seeking and following God's will? Do any of the following in any way interfere with your surrender and service to God: Ambition, pleasures, loved ones, friendships, desire for recognition, money, or your own plans?

3. Mark 16:15 – "... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Have you failed to witness consistently for the Lord Jesus Christ? Has your life failed to show the Lord Jesus to lost people? Have your lips been sealed and you have failed to give the Gospel to others?

4. John 13:35 – "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Are you secretly pleased over the misfortunes of another? Are you secretly annoyed over the accomplishments or advancements of another? Are you guilty of any contention or strife? Do you quarrel, argue or engage in heated discussions? Are you a partaker in any division or party spirit? Are there people whom you deliberately slight?

5. Acts 20:35 – " ... ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Have you robbed God by withholding His due of time, talents, and money?

6. 1 Cor. 4:2 – "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Are you irresponsible so that you cannot be trusted with responsibilities in the Lord's work? Are you allowing your emotions to be stirred for things of the Lord but doing nothing about it?

7. 1 Cor. 6:19-20 – "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Are you in any way careless with your body? Do you fail to care for it as the temple of the Holy Spirit? Are you guilty of intemperance in eating? Do you have any habits which are defiling to the body?

8. 1 Cor. 10:31– "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Do you take the slightest credit for anything good about you, rather than give all the glory to God? Do you talk of what you have done rather than of what Christ has done? Are your statements mainly about "I"? Are your

feelings easily hurt? Have you made a pretense of being something you are not?

9. Eph. 3:20 – "... Him that is able to do exceeding, abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Are you self-conscious rather than Christ-conscious? Do you allow feelings of inferiority to keep you from attempting challenging goals in serving God?

10. Eph. 4:28 – "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good that he may have to give to him that needeth." Do you underpay? Do you do very little in your work? Have you been careless in the payment of your debts? Have you sought to evade payment of your debts? Do you waste time? Do you waste time for others?

11. Eph. 4:31– "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice." Do you complain? Do you find fault? Do you have a critical attitude toward any person? Are you irritable or cranky? Do you ever carry hidden anger? Do you get angry? Do you become impatient with others? Are you ever harsh or unkind?

12. Eph. 5:16 – "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Do you watch/listen to unedifying radio, TV programs, videos,

DVDs, movies, etc? Do you read unworthy magazines? Do you partake in worldly amusements? Do you find it necessary to seek satisfaction from any questionable source? Are you doing certain things that indicate you are not satisfied with the Lord Jesus Christ?

13. Eph. 5:20 – "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Have you neglected to thank Him for all things, the seemingly bad as well as the good? Have you virtually called God a liar by doubting His Word? Is your spiritual temperature based on your feelings instead of the facts of God's Word?

14. Phil. 1:21– "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Are you taken up with the cares of this life? Is your conversation primarily about "things" rather than the Lord and His word? Does anything mean more to you than living for and pleasing Christ?

15. Phil. 2:14 – "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Do you ever by word or deed seek to hurt someone? Do you gossip? Do you speak unkindly concerning people when they are not present? Are you prejudiced against others because of their race, social status, or beliefs?

16. Phil. 4:4 – "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." Do you carry any bitterness toward God? Have you complained

against Him in any way? Have you been dissatisfied with His provision for you? Is there in your heart any unwillingness to obey God fully? Do you have any reservations as to what you would or would not do concerning anything that might be His will? Have you disobeyed any direct leading from the Holy Spirit?

17. Col. 3:9 – "Lie not to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." Do you engage in empty and unprofitable conversation? Do you ever lie? Do you ever exaggerate? Cheat? Steal? Do you overcharge?

18. 11 Tim. 2:22 – "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, -- with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Do you have any personal habits that are not pure? Do you allow impure thoughts about the opposite sex to stay in your mind? Do you read that which is impure or suggests unholy things? Do you indulge in any unclean entertainment? Are you guilty of the lustful look?

19. Heb. 10:25 – "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together ..." Do you whisper or think about other things while God's Word is being read or preached? Are you irregular in attendance at worship services? Do you neglect to attend or participate in prayer meetings? Have you neglected private prayer? Have you neglected God's Word? Do you find the Bible and prayer uninteresting? Have you neglected thanksgiving at meals? Have you neglected daily family devotions?

20. James 1:27 – "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this ... to keep ... unspotted from the world." Have you allowed yourself to become "spotted" by the world? Do you spend

beyond what is pleasing to God on anything? Do you neglect to pray about things that you buy? Are your deeds displeasing to God?

21. James 4:6 – "... God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Do you feel that you are doing quite well as a Christian? That you are not so bad? That you are good enough? Are you stubborn? Do you insist on having your own way? Do you insist on your "rights"?

22. James 4:11 – "Speak not evil one of another, brethren, ..." Have you dishonored Him and hindered His work by criticizing His servants? Have you failed to pray regularly for your pastor or other spiritual leaders? Do you find it hard to be corrected? Is there rebellion toward one who wants to restore you? Are you more concerned about what people will think than about what will be pleasing to God?

Conclusion: *[GENUINE CONFESSION of sin, or sins— they are wrong, against God, not the fault of anyone else, and they 'gotta go']*

IF WE ARE honest in admitting, confessing, AND repenting of our sins— then let us REJOICE in God's forgiveness right now. RECEIVE and rest in His promise to forgive and remove your sins "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12).

Remember: (1) Every sin is against God; so, we confess our sins to Him and make things right with Him.

(2) If our sin is also against another person, we must make things right with that person.

(3) If my sin is against a group, make it right with the group.

[SAY to God, a business associate, a classmate, a member of your family, a fellow Christian, a Sunday School class, or anyone else against whom you have sinned,

"I was wrong when I said or did _____ - Please forgive me!"

PROPER RESPONSE: "Yes, I do forgive you!"

BOTTOM LINE: In a world of deepening darkness, I am not called upon the curse the darkness, debate the darkness, or to point my finger at others in darkness.

I AM CALLED UPON TO CONFESS AND REPENT OF MY OWN SIN;
AND TO GO FORTH SERVING CHRIST IN HOLINESS AND LOVE!

WE must walk in these paths! (Various sources used in developing this article)

ABUNDANT GRACE TO YOU AND YOURS!

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SUNDAY SERVICES for AUGUST 23, 30

[1] Sunday School at 9:30am: Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes.

[2] WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!

AUGUST 23 — EVENING WORSHIP, 5:00PM

EVERY SATURDAY * 8:00 AM — Men's Bible Study!** (*Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!*) *AUGUST 22 - Romans, Chapter 12:2ff*

NEXT LADIES' BIBLE STUDY IS SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 @ 10:00 AM ** [Study: Acts]

Young Adults! Tuesdays at 7:15pm at Jaden and Rhī's home!

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ 6:30pm, MEN'S Prayer Service //
YOUNG FAMILIES SERVICE

LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD by MAIL or by ONLINE:
BY MAIL (checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO:
Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066 / TO
GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:

<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>