

ADMITTING SIN

One of the hardest things that unbelievers can do is to honestly and sincerely admit to God that they are sinners. Scripture demands this. Scripture demands that we admit without reservation that we are sinners and that we should therefore be separated from his presence forever. Unbelievers are in rebellion against God, either consciously or unconsciously, and they deserve not grace but judgment.

Now I understand that this is hard, but it's true. This truth is derived from Scripture. Sin is an everyday experience and the number one problem of mankind. What is more, they recognize that the Bible everywhere insists upon this fact. In fact, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:10). John is speaking to the believer in this verse. Even believers sin. And if they deny that fact, they make God a liar. And if they make God a liar, that fact, and that fact alone, proves that they are deceived, and God's word was never in them in the first place.

Admitting sin is also the burden of the first chapters of Paul's letter to the Romans, where we find the doctrine of the universality of man's sin. According to Paul in these chapters there are three types of people:

The first type is what we would call hedonist, those whose basis for life is materialism. Paul discusses them in Romans 1:18-32. Hedonists have determined to live for their own enjoyment and for whatever pleasure they can find. His path is leading him away from God. He has no real beauty in his life. He has no real joy in his life. His desires are never satisfied. He is very discontent. He should be full, but he is empty. He thinks himself wise. Yet his mind is darkened. He goes through life empty and void of the real meaning of life. Nothing in this material world will ever bring him peace.

The second type of person, the type discussed in Romans 2:1-16, is what we would call a moral man. In Paul's day, this would be the professor of ethics. He has high standards and rules that he lives by. Some have referred to these standards and rules as the Golden Rule Law. But there is something sadly wrong here.

First, most of these rules do not measure up to Scripture. Second, these rules lead to the thinking that says, well I am not as bad as other people and I think that counts for something in God's eye. This moral man is in serious trouble because he doesn't see himself as a sinner in the way that Scripture sees him. It is true that he has a high ethical standard (and that is good), but he has not trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. Dr. James Boice said, "... all of us are condemned by whatever standard we erect, for none of us is able to live up to even the lowest standards of morality. We are all sinners, and deep within we know it."

The third type of person, the type discussed in Romans 2:17-29, is the man who would admit most, if not all of what Paul has been saying from the beginning. This is the man

hiding behind religion. He says, I have been confirmed, I have been baptized, I serve on several committees, and I have given large sums of money to the church. Did you note all that this man said? Honestly now, what is this man trusting in? Does it sound like to you that he is trusting in Christ for his salvation?

This person I think is the hardest person to deal with. This person has not honestly searched the Scripture himself to find out if what he believes lines up with the teachings of Scripture or not. To be religious and admit that you are in error is no doubt one of the greatest difficulties that man can face. But there is too much at stake to be wrong.

For your own help and your own maturity, please read all of the above Scriptures. Before reading, however, ask God to give you understanding. You may need to read them more than one time – I would suggest that you read them many times.

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