

BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD Lesson 6 Chapter 8 October 27, 2009

George Muller in his Autobiography says this: "We must maintain an upright heart and a good conscience and not knowingly and habitually indulge in the things which are contrary to the mind of God. All my confidence in God and all my leaning on Him in the hour of trial will be gone if I have a guilty conscience and yet continue in sin."

Repentance and humility before God and man are our topics today. As our text says, An unrepentant attitude toward sin and the "stubborn resistance to the Spirit's conviction....disrupts the harmony of our walk with Him."

Look at page 79 in our text – second paragraph "we cannot be Christians " through "ongoing sanctification." And page 80 – the second and third paragraphs "people new in the faith" through "reflecting His glory."

What do you think of this – what is she saying?

Page 81 "Our self absorbed culture" through "humility, or grace."

Jean Twenge in her book *The Narcissism Epidemic* discusses the drive in the US since the 1970's to increase the self esteem of school children and the resulting dramatic increase in narcissism since the 1980's, particularly in college students, but also cutting across our entire culture. The belief that high self-esteem – even a drastically inflated view of ourselves is necessary to achieve success in any field has become cultural bedrock. This is despite the fact that it is provably untrue (as well as sinful.)

Let's look at some passages in scripture and see what we find:

James 4:6 – 10 : "6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up."

2Timothy 2:22: "22 Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

What are we called to do in these passages?

Look at page 82, third paragraph "most of us" through "specifically identified sins." What is this saying? How do we "specifically identify" our own sins?

Being a Christian means to agree with everything God says about sin. Sin in general and our own sinfulness as an individual. It means – as Luther put it – a life of repentance.

Repentance and confession of our sin means confession of specific, definite named sins and sinful attitudes, not sweeping generalities like Pride, but examples named before God.

Page 83 second paragraph under Cleansing Forgiveness, beginning with “confessing our sin” through “sincere confession.”

How difficult is each of these steps, and how important are they?

Q3 on page 85 says “If we are to walk worthy of our high calling in Christ, why must we resist the temptation to downplay the doctrine of sin? Give examples of some areas where we need to remain alert to this temptation.

Look at Application 2 on page 86. Sin dominates our minds, our wills, our emotions and affections and subjects us to misery. How difficult is it for us to grasp these things? Why do you think this is true?

These are very counter-cultural ideas, the Lord calls us to personal humility and to confession of sin, He calls us to be cleansed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The first steps of this are found in not resisting the conviction of the same Spirit.

George Muller says “The believer should not shrink from situations...in which his faith may be tried, but he should cheerfully embrace them as opportunities to see the hand of God stretched out in help and deliverance.” Nowhere is this more true than in our own individual battles against sin. God is fully trustworthy and faithful to forgive sin and to cleanse us – the Christian’s deepest joy is in this working of the Lord in our hearts.

Let’s praise God by praying from Psalm 138, remembering that our own greatest enemies are the world, the flesh and the devil:

NIV Psalm 138:1 *Of David. I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; before the "gods" I will sing your praise.*

2 I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

3 When I called, you answered me; you made me bold and stouthearted.

4 May all the kings of the earth praise you, O LORD, when they hear the words of your mouth.

5 May they sing of the ways of the LORD, for the glory of the LORD is great.

6 Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.

8 The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever-- do not abandon the works of your hands.

