

What Does Humility Have To Do With Renewal? Renewal, part 3

This continues our series on renewal, read the first 2, [Renewal, part 1](#) and [Renewal, part 2](#) if you haven't already.

None of us are innocent, not one of us is without sin.

Romans 3: ²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.

Sin hurts us and those around us, in many ways. The more I follow Christ the more obvious my sins are and the more pain it brings. How can I declare my love for God in the morning and in the afternoon willingly do something that I know He disapproves of? What kind of godly man am I?

Jeremiah 17:

⁹ "The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"

I am just a man, but it makes me want to hate myself. Am I alone with these feelings?

What's really helped me is a greater understanding of Romans 7 and knowing that it is my flesh that I hate and I can have some compassion for my soul.

Romans 7: ¹⁴ So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. ¹⁵ I don't really understand myself,

for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. ¹⁶ But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

¹⁸ And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. ¹⁹ I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. ²⁰ But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. ²² I love God's law with all my heart. ²³ But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. ²⁴ Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? ²⁵ Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Every time I read this it astounds me. Knowing how God used His servant Paul to do the good works he did and then to read about his private struggles is incredible to me and refreshing. The more I struggle with my sin and examine my actions and thoughts in light of my faith, the more understanding and compassion I have for others. It truly humbles me.

1 John 1: ⁵ *This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him*

at all. ⁶ So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. ⁷ But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.

⁸ If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.

Sin is a terrible thing and it is the human condition. How do we go about approaching our perfect and Holy Father after engaging in a sinful event? Let's look at some examples in the Good Book that we can all use to help get us back on the right path and have communion with Him when we find ourselves hiding in the garden.

⁹ But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

James 4: ⁷ So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

James 5: ^{16a} Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

Repentance (changing your mind) and confessing is certainly where it starts, but it is not always easy, is it? Unless my heart is soft, I will not confess.

2 Samuel 12: ¹³ Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "Yes, but the Lord has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin.

David's heart was not soft after having Bathsheba's husband Uriah killed, that was until the Words of God pierced his heart through his friend and prophet Nathan. I think Psalm 32 sheds some light on what king David experienced:

Psalm 32:

*³ When I refused to confess my sin,
my body wasted away,
and I groaned all day long.*

*⁴ Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me.
My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.*

I can totally relate to this, can you? Do you have a close friend that you can confess to? You are blessed if you do. If you don't, pray that God will bring someone to you. A small group is good but cannot do what a single, close friend can do. Meeting with a single, similar gender, godly friend on a regular basis is invaluable, I cannot recommend it enough. There is a reason Jesus told His disciples to stay in the same house for the duration when visiting a town. I think that it was to build deep, lasting relationships. It is the deep relationships that we truly learn how to love others and we grow from them.

We read in 2 Samuel 12: 13 above that David confessed to his friend, but as we continue in Psalm 32 we find that he confesses to God:

*⁵ Finally, I confessed all my sins to you
and stopped trying to hide my guilt.
I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord."
And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.*

Whew, isn't it great to get that burden off your chest? You can just feel his excitement through the text, can't you? Why does it take so long for us to come to Him sometimes? (Read Jeremiah 17 above)

I believe the key to resuming a strained or broken relationship with God is humility. Since all sin is primarily related to pride it only makes sense that humility is required to return to the Lord:

James 4: ^{6b}

*As the Scriptures say,
"God opposes the proud
but favors the humble."*

And notice that I did not say sacrifices:

Psalms 51:

¹⁶ *You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.*

¹⁷ *The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.*

When is the last time you wept over your sins? When is the last time you wept at all?

James 4: ⁹ *Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.*

I've written before that weeping is a natural, God-given outpouring of emotions that is a real blessing. We were designed to be emotional and weeping is a part of it. Some of my most precious moments with the Lord have been when I've

wept before Him. Sometimes out of joy, other times I've been overwhelmed by His Spirit and other times after humbling myself before Him because of my sin. We see all types of weeping throughout the Scriptures by all God's leading men and women, from Joseph to Jesus. I am certain that if one hasn't cried in recent years or especially as an adult that their heart has hardened. You may not agree with me on this because our culture has been teaching for so long now that "boys don't cry" or "if I'm to be tough I shouldn't cry", but I am convinced that if laughter is common among all human beings so should the shedding of tears. Let's learn at least this much from our Teacher:

Matthew 18: ³ Then he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.

John 11: ³⁵ Then Jesus wept.

The most valuable lesson I've learned about keeping humble is to maintain my relationship with God daily by reading His Word and praying to Him. I pray to Him as I would my earthly father only I am more intimate with God than I am with my Dad who lives in Pennsylvania. I can tell my Dad that I love him, but I do not tell him about my feelings and what I am thinking. This daily relationship with God is what keeps my heart soft and malleable. I am determined to know Him more and am passionate about getting even closer. I also fellowship 4-5 times a week with other godly people. These habits are my way of staying on His path and they keep me from straying very far from Him.

You can get as close to God as you desire, there is nothing holding you back but yourself. If you are discontent about your relationship with God then you might want to consider changing your habits in an effort to know Him more.

Luke 10: ³⁸ As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

⁴¹ But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! ⁴² There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

What is keeping you from getting to know Him more?

"Thank you, Jesus, for making my relationship with God possible. Help me to get to know you more. I love that I can come to you when I've messed something up or have sinned against you. You take away my guilt and renew my soul. Your love for me is so great and your patience is unending, you amaze me. Please continue to work on me. Keep me humble and willing to obey you. I will praise your name and rejoice in you. In Jesus' precious name, amen."

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