

You Do Not Sin?

by Sebastian R Fama

One of the most common reasons people give for not going to confession is that they do not sin. The sentiment seems to be, if I refrain from killing people or robbing banks, I am okay. But as Christians we are continually called to a higher standard. When we compare ourselves to a serial killer, we all look pretty good. But Christians are supposed to be Christ like. How do you suppose you measure up when you compare yourself to Him? As the apostle John said: "If we say, we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9).

We tend to excuse the sins we are most comfortable with. But that is a dangerous game. Have you ever gossiped? Jesus said that we would be judged by every careless word we utter: "for by your words you will be justified, **and by your words you will be condemned**" (Matthew 12:36-37). Surely gossip would qualify as idle talk. Paul even lists it among the wicked and evil acts he mentions in Romans 1:28-30.

Have you ever been unforgiving? Jesus had something to say about that too: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, **neither will your Father forgive your trespasses**" (Matthew 6:14-15). Do you ever use God's name in a frivolous manner (OMG etc. ...). You are going to want to confess that as it is a serious offence (Deuteronomy 5:11)?

How about the sin of pride? Not acknowledging your sins is prideful. Thinking you are better than others is prideful. And as James notes: "**God opposes the proud**, but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6-7). And **without grace there is no salvation** (Ephesians 2:8)!

Have you ever been judgmental? Jesus said: "**For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged**" (Matthew 7:2). It is true that we can judge evil actions to be evil (Matthew 18:15-18), but we cannot judge someone else's culpability before God. Only He can do that (1 Corinthians 4:2-5).

It is important that we identify and seek forgiveness for these and other serious sins. A failure to do so could result in a loss of salvation (Romans 6:23). Also, **we need to be free of serious sin if we are to receive communion in a worthy manner** (1 Corinthians 11:27-29). We must not fear the confessional for it is a great gift. St. Faustina said: "Satan defeats only the proud and the cowardly. Because the humble are strong" (*Notebook 1*, 450).

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