



Put Your Past Where It Belongs

Lesson 3

“Be killing sin, or sin will be killing you.” – John Owen

Our past sins can **PARALYZE** us in the present or become **EXCUSES** in the future.



Why Is Putting the Past Where It Belongs Important?

- **EVERYONE** has a past.
- Some personalities are **MORE** prone to this struggle.
- Many **FAIL** to practice daily confession and repentance.
- Satan uses your past to **RUIN** your present and more sin in the future.

“The great tempter of men has two lies with which he plies us at two different stages. Before we have fallen, he tells us that one fall does not matter; it is a trifle; we can easily recover ourselves. After we have fallen he tells us that it is hopeless; we are given over to sin; and need not attempt to rise.” - James Stalker

*You must deal with your **PAST** before you can experience freedom in the future!*

Dealing with Past Sins

1. One Sin Doesn't **MATTER**...or Does It?

- Even one sin can cause you to **LOSE** something that can never be recovered.

“If there is one darling sin that you would spare, Christ and your soul will never agree. There can be no peace between you and Christ while there is peace between you and sin.” – Charles Spurgeon

- One sin usually leads to **MORE** sin.

King David / 2Samuel 11:1 *“Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel...But David stayed at Jerusalem.”*

King David's Downward Spiral: Laziness > Boredom > Lust > Adultery > Murder!

The sin beneath the sins was a selfish sense of **ENTITLEMENT**.

2. Many Sins **MEANS** It's Time to Give Up...or Does It?

- Your past can be **FORGIVEN** but consequences may remain.

1. Christ has **CANCELLED** your sin debt in full: Past, present, and future!

Colossians 2:13-15; 1 John 1:7; 2:12; Hebrews 10:10

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” Romans 5:1

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1

2. Don't **CONFUSE** no condemnation with no consequences of sin.

- You personally can be **CHANGED** despite consequences.

Ephesians 2:4-6; Titus 3:5-7; 1 John 1:7, 9-10

“...although there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation, yet there is no sin so great that it shall bring damnation to them that repent, which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.”
 – London Baptist Confession

Put the Past Behind You Where It Belongs.

1. IDENTIFY the Cause of Your Present Guilt.

- True guilt is **CONVICTION** from God to draw you near for His cleansing. *Isaiah 1:18-19; 1 John 1:9-10*
- False guilt is **CONDEMNATION** from the devil to drive us away as unworthy. *Revelation 12:10-11*
- True or false: *Living with guilt is **DEADLY!*** *Psalm 32:1-4; John 3:2--21*

2. DEAL with Your Past Once and for All.

- True guilt calls for **CONFESSION** and **REPENTANCE**. *1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 32:5*
 1. **AGREE** with God that the choice you made was sin.
 2. **ACKNOWLEDGE** your responsibility to repent and make restitution.
 3. **ASK** God and others to forgive you and begin the cleansing process - *change from the inside out.*
 Asking others for forgiveness: *Ephesians 4:30; Matthew 5:23-25; 6:14-15*
 4. **ACCEPT** God’s forgiveness in Christ and choose to sin no more.
- False guilt leads to **CONDEMNATION** and **REGRET**. *Romans 8:1; John 8:10-11*
 1. Refuse to confess the same sin **TWICE**, *unless you commit it twice!*
 2. Refuse to question **GOD’S** sincerity in forgiving you freely in Christ.
 3. Refuse to be **OVERLY** introspective about confessing, repenting, and being forgiven in Christ.
 4. Refuse to bring it up again to *God, to others, or to yourself* in a **NEGATIVE** way.

| PEOPLE SURE of FORGIVENESS EXPERIENCE... | PEOPLE UNSURE of FORGIVENESS EXPERIENCE... |
|--|--|
| Peace: <i>Romans 5:1</i> | Worry |
| Joy: <i>1 John 1:3-4; Psalm 32:11</i> | Fear |
| Confidence: <i>2 Timothy 1:12; Psalm 32:7</i> | Doubt |
| Acceptance: <i>2 Timothy 1:7; Romans 8:15</i> | Rejection: <i>Real and Imagined</i> |
| Serving Others: <i>John 4:28-29; Acts 16:14-15; Luke 19:8-9</i> | Self-pity |
| Mercy: <i>John 8:10-11; Psalm 32:10</i> | Misery |
| Being Victorious: <i>1 John 1:5-2:1-2</i> | Being victims |
| Overcomers: <i>Revelation 3:14-22</i> | Over-burdened |
| Grace: <i>Ephesians 1:7-8; Romans 5:2</i> | Guilt: <i>True and False</i> |

3. ALLOW Your Past to Bring Glory to God in the Present.

Your Past Can Become...

A **REMINDER** to yourself to praise God in the present and a **WARNING** to others to live for God.
Psalm 103:1-5; 32:1-11

Take Responsibility by Truly Confessing Your Sin

Many people have never experienced the freedom of repentance and forgiveness. Why? It's often because they never learned how to make a sincere, believable, and biblical confession.

Instead, they say things like: *"I'm sorry if I hurt you."* *"Maybe I was wrong."* *"Let's just forget the past."* *"I know I shouldn't have yelled at you, but you made me so mad."*

These statements seldom open the door to genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. If you really want to make peace, receive God's grace by humbly and thoroughly admitting your wrongs (Matthew 7:3-5; 1 John 1:8-9; Proverbs 28:13).

Eight A's of a Biblical Confession.

1. **ADDRESS** everyone involved. *All those whom you affected.*
2. **AVOID** "if," "but," and "maybe." *Do not try to excuse your wrongs.*
3. **ADMIT** specifically. *Both attitudes and actions.*
4. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the hurt. *Express sorrow for hurting someone.*
5. **ACCEPT** the consequences. *Such as making restitution.*
6. **AMEND** your behavior. *Turn from the sin to righteousness.*
7. **ASK** to be forgiven and released. *From the Lord and others you've wronged.*
8. **ALLOW** time. *People often need time to process.*

Sincerity and honesty are essential elements of a biblical confession. Therefore, using the Eight A's as a "Pharisaical Checklist" will usually do more harm than good. To avoid this trap, pray earnestly that God will help you to search your own heart, clearly see your own sinful attitudes and actions, and confess them with heartfelt sincerity.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." 1 John 1:9-10

"He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." Proverbs 28:13

"Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge." Psalm 51:1-4

*"I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD";
And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah." Psalm 32:5*