



The Caller

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Confidence Comer John F. Board

In this week's *Confidence Corner* we want to examine whether the practice of the Christian praying for the forgiveness of sins is proper. You might think, "Well, John, that's an easy one; the answer is 'yes.'" If that is what you would think in re-

sponse to the question, then know you are indeed correct. But stay with me here... because I want to show how false doctrine (religious error) confuses the clear teaching of Scripture.

Many in the religious world believe what John Calvin popularized. A part of the false teaching of Calvinism is the unconditional eternal security of the saints. False teachers who hold to this doctrine are faced with a dilemma. Since they hold that all of a man's sins (past, present, and future) were taken care of at one time in the cross of Jesus, they feel it would be inconsistent to pray for forgiveness today. And like all false teaching, an examination of plain Bible teaching brings to light the error.

The New Testament is filled with examples of Christians asking for forgiveness or being instructed to do so. Just a few of such passages include: 1 John 1:9; Acts 8:9-24; James 5:16; and 1 John 2:1. With such clear Bible teaching, how could Calvinists claim to teach there is no need for Christians to pray for the forgiveness of sins?

It appears what may be the issue is confusion between what the Bible does teach...Christ's atonement for all sin and how this applies to individuals today. The Bible clearly teaches that the atonement for all sin was made once for all at the Cross (Romans 3:25-26; Hebrews 9:14-15 and 10:14). But as seen above Scripture also teaches the Christian who is walking in the light, to ask for forgiveness when we fall prey to sin.

The once for all atonement for sin is biblical but how does such apply to me today as a Christian? Scripture instructs us on the individual application of God's grace towards us as sinners. The application involves each individual's initial response to the Gospel Plan of Salvation as well as their asking for the forgiveness of sin through prayer upon their repentance from sins committed after their baptism.

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Guest Article

MercEmail
A Weekly Devotional
by Steve Higginbotham

Slipping Into Heaven

by Steve Higginbotham October 16, 2018

Have you ever talked with someone who seemed to believe he was saved by "grease" and not "grace?" In other words, if he ever makes it to Heaven, he pictures himself barely making it, just slipping in before the gates are closed behind him on his coat tail. Such a view misrepresents how God saves men. No one will ever "slip" into Heaven, and the reason is that we are saved by "grace" and not by "grease." Those who enter Heaven will be granted an "abundant entrance" (2 Peter 1:11), and won't just slip through the gates as they close.

Instead of thinking of our entrance into Heaven being like a test on which we must score a certain percentage, think of it as a pass/fail test. We've either been saved by the blood of Christ or not. We're either his or we aren't. We're either walking in the light or we're walking in darkness. We're either faithful or we're unfaithful.

So what about you? Are you saved (Ephesians 1:7)? Are you in him (Ephesians 1:11)? Are you walking in the light (1 John 1:7)? If the answers to those questions are, "Yes," you won't barely "slip" into heaven, you'll be granted an abundant entrance and will get to hear the Lord say, "Well done" (Matthew 25:21)!

By Steve Higginbotham, 2016. Permission is granted to copy these articles.

Sunday's Sermons:

A.M. — *Trick Questions*
Luke 20:1-8

P.M. — *The Law Removed*
Colossians 2:14

Faithfulness

If, as we looked at in our *Confidence Corner*, Scripture teaches that the Christian is not eternally secure but rather can sin after baptism and must therefore repent and pray, then we have shown that a Christian's continuing salvation is dependent upon their continued faithfulness. This should concern us greatly regarding the nominal church member. Please understand that faithfulness involves much more than attendance to the various gatherings of the church, but indeed a good marker or indicator of our faithfulness is often our attendance.

It is absolutely imperative that we as Christians encourage one another to love and good works (Hebrew 10:24). One way we are commanded to do so is through our attendance at the assemblies of the church (Hebrews 10:25). When ignoring this admonition has become habitual, even more, serious steps to save the soul of an individual is required (Matthew 18:15ff).

It is not simply hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, and baptism that saves one but also demands faithfulness to God and His Word. As noted above, mere church attendance does not guarantee faithfulness, but it seems hard to consider how one can be faithful in other areas if they are not faithful in attendance.

Frank Higginbotham used to use two illustrations that were helpful to me as a young Christian. Mr. Higginbotham would tell of an elder who was often present at the Church building. Of course, this elder was present at services but on any given day, if he was not at home, he was most likely at the church building. Fred Stevens was so known for being at the building that whenever he was not home for some time, the family dog would make its way to the church building. Even it knew that if Fred was not home, he would be at the church building. Mr. Higginbotham would then ask, "Where would your dog go to find you?"

Another illustration Mr. Higginbotham would use was of a paperboy. When I was young Steve, Mr. Higginbotham's son, had a paper route. I later took that route over. It was a paper route that required Monday through Saturday delivery. Mr. Higginbotham would say, if the paperboy is scheduled to bring a paper Monday through Saturday, and he only brought a paper 3 or 4 times a week, would you call that paperboy a faithful paperboy? In contrast, he would point out that if a paperboy delivered the paper faithfully day in and day out and all of a sudden did not show up one day, you would automatically think something must have happened (something must be wrong). Mr. Higginbotham would then indicate this is how we should be in our attendance. If the doors are open 3 times a week, we should be there 3 times a week. If someone is faithful and they miss a service, automatically someone would think, "Something must be wrong."

As you think about a starting place to the faithfulness God desires of His child you might ask yourself am I faithful to be at services each time the door is open? And we might even ponder if we had a dog, where would that dog go to find us?

John F. Board
Elizabethtown, KY