

## 10. Our Need for Forgiveness and Peace

*“Few things so disintegrate our lives and so paralysis our efforts for the future as guilt and remorse over our past.” J.R. Barry*

In today's society, sin has become almost a laughing matter. When did you last hear the word sin taken seriously? But as sociologist Ernest Becker points out, “Modern man is a sinner with no word for it.” Sin is very real in our world today, whether we want to admit it or not. As a sinner with a conscience, I know that I have done what I ought not to have done. I have defiled my own value system and even that of the universe. I need forgiveness, but I cannot forgive myself.

You cannot stick a splinter in your finger and just ignore it; it must be removed. The same goes for sin in the mind and heart. There is something in the mind that punishes the body for the sins of the soul. A famous surgeon from Sweden made this amazing statement: “I found God at the end of my scalpel; in the body tissues! The right thing morally is always the healthy thing physically.”

Certainly, medical doctors and psychiatrists play an important role in society. However, situations occur where, instead of a new medication, we need to experience the forgiveness and peace of God. We need to get right with God, ourselves and those around us.

The superintendent of a large mental hospital affirms, “I could dismiss close to one half of my patients tomorrow, if they could only be assured of forgiveness.” A Hollywood psychiatrist added, “Many patients of mine need a mourners bench, which is another way of saying their basic need is spiritual and not just some adjustment within themselves.”

Repentance and the confession of definite sins in our lives, proves extremely difficult for most of us. Yet, a number of experts in psychiatric counselling maintain that maturity and healing can only take place when we willingly admit our sins and take responsibility for our own actions. As CS Lewis points out, “Christianity has nothing to say to people who are quite convinced that they do not need forgiveness. It is after you realize that there is a real Moral Law and a Power behind the law, and that you have broken the law.... it is after all this, and not a moment sooner, that Christianity begins to talk...when you are sick you will listen to the doctor.”

If you examine world religions you will find that no provision has been made for forgiveness of sin, apart from the cross of Christ. The psychiatrist may remove erotic or false guilt, but only God can remove realistic, or true guilt. (Romans 5:8; 2nd Corinthians 5:21; 1st Peter 2:24).

Be a why you and you know Rev. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead expressed it well, “*The forgiveness of God, in my opinion, is the strongest therapeutic healing power in the world.*”

