

# Proverbs 28:13 Commentary

Proverbs 28:13 He who **conceals** his **transgressions** will not **prosper**, but he who **confesses** and **forsakes** them will **find compassion**. (NASB: Lockman)

**BBE:** He who keeps his sins secret will not do well; but one who is open about them, and gives them up, will get mercy.

**HCSB:** The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy.

**KJV:** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

**NLT:** People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.]

**Youngs Literal:** Whoso is covering his transgressions prospereth not, And he who is confessing and forsaking hath mercy.

**Whoever acknowledges sin, God will cover it.  
Whoever covers it, God will lay it open.**

**He who conceals His transgressions** - From whom are they "concealed"? Certainly not from God for "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good." (Pr 15:3) And not even from one's self for conscience is always aware of the offense against God whether it is acknowledged as such or not. That leaves other men before whom we conceal our transgressions, but even that is not a "safe house" for God through Moses says "be sure your sin will find you out." (Nu 32:23). And thus the folly and futility of attempting to conceal sin! Is there some sin in your life that you think is secret? You need to think again. "Secret" sin on earth is open scandal in heaven!

## **OUR INHERENT TENDENCY TO CONCEAL SIN IS INHERITED FROM ADAM**

When we sin, our natural tendency is to conceal the sin. If you wonder where this basic instinct of fallen man comes from, we need to look no further than the Garden of Eden. What was the effect of the first sin on the original sinner?

Then the eyes of both of them (Adam and Eve) were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings (**Concealing their transgression!**). And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife **hid** themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I **hid** myself." 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 And the man said, "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." (Ge 3:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

**Comment:** Sin made Adam and Eve seek to hide from God. Then Adam sought to pass the blame to his wife, refusing to own up to his own sin, which is another subtle way we "conceal" our sins (we blame others - this is in my opinion. Be a Berean - Acts 17:11). Neither of Adam's tactics resulted in him prospering (that's clearly an understatement!)

**Job** "commented" on the Genesis Record of covering sin asking "Have I **covered** (**kacah**) my transgressions like Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom" (Job 31:33 ) (**Note:** The fig leaves were an external picture of Adam's attempt to hide the sins internally, in his bosom. Unconfessed sins cause serious "heart disturbances"!)

**H A Ironside writes that:** The greatest mistake a soul can be guilty of is to attempt to cover sin and transgression. Yet men invariably avoid speaking out frankly with a confession of their true state and actions. It seems to be natural to fallen man (ever since the day that our first parents sought to hide their nakedness by fig-leaf aprons) to endeavor to cover his shame, hoping to avoid the just consequences of his sin. But God's Word clearly reveals the fact that he who justifies himself will finally be condemned. It is the one who sides with God and condemns himself who is justified from all things... When a man attempts to cover his own sin,

he adds to the dreadful list, for he is refusing to obey the command that goes out to all men everywhere calling on them to repent. But when God covers sin, it is done effectually and perfectly and will never be interfered with for eternity.

**Morris comments on our "fig leaf" attempts to cover our sins:** The hasty fabrication of fig leaf aprons might conceal their procreative organs from each other, but could hardly hide their sin from God. Neither will the "filthy rags" of self-made "righteousnesses" (Isaiah 64:6) cover sinful hearts today. The "garments of salvation" and the "robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10) can be provided only by God, just as God provided "coats of skins" for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

**Farindon** writes: It is the very nature of sin, not only to infect the soul, but to bewitch it, that it shall either not feel it or not be willing to evaporate and expel it. Though God hath set up a tribunal in our hearts, and made every man a judge of his own actions, yet there is no tribunal on earth so much corrupted and swayed from its power and jurisdiction as this. No man is so well pleased with any cheat as that which he puts upon himself. Our conscience checks us, and we silence it; sin appears and we cover it. This covering of sin is more natural than any sin beside... God hath imprinted upon man a natural shame of sin. God left this impression of shame upon us to keep us within compass, that we should not commit sin. But, too

often, what was made as a means to prevent sin is made a cloak to cover it. Shame is a good buckler to oppose against sin.

**Spurgeon comments:** No sooner had man disobeyed his Maker's will in the garden of Eden than he discovered, to his surprise and dismay, that he was naked, and he set about at once to make himself a covering. It was a poor attempt which our first parents made, and it proved a miserable failure. "They sewed fig-leaves together." (Ge 3:7) After that God came in, revealed to them yet more fully their nakedness, made them confess their sin, brought their transgression home to them, and then it is written, the Lord God made them coats of skin (Ge 3:21). Probably the coats were made of the skins of animals which had been offered in sacrifice, and, if so, they were a fit type of him who has provided us with a sin-offering and a robe of perfect righteousness.

**Every man since the days of Adam has gone through much of the same experience, more or less relying on his own ingenuity to hide his own confusion of face. He has discovered that sin has made him naked, and he has set to work to clothe himself.**

**J Vernon McGee** - This is a great proverb. It seems a common practice today for Christians to try to cover their sins. You will find in the average church that there is a Band-Aid of silence wrapped over the cancer of sin. People don't like to talk about it; in fact, they don't admit its existence. They like to think they are very good.

**R F Horton** - Every attempt to conceal from God or from man or from oneself that one is diseased with sin is ineffectual: every lame excuse which seeks to palliate the guilt; every hypocritical pretense that the thing done has not been done, or that it is not what men usually suppose it to be; every ingenious argumentation which seeks to represent sin as something other than sin, as a mere defect or taint in the blood, as hereditary and unavoidable weakness, as an aberration of the mind for which one is not responsible, or as a merely conventional and artificial offense, -- all such attempts at hiding must be failures, "covering" of that kind can be no atonement. Quite the reverse; this trifling with conscience, this deluded self-righteousness, is the worst possible aggravation of the sin. Hidden that way, though it be, as it were, in the bowels of the earth, sin becomes a poisonous gas, more noxious for confinement, and liable to break out in awful and devastating explosions. The covering for sin which is spoken of in Pr 16:6 (atonement ~ covering) is of a very different and of a quite particular kind. Coming this verse with the others at the head of the chapter, we may observe that every effectual "covering" of sin in God's sight involves three elements, - confession, forsaking and a changed practice. (continued below under confession) ([The Book of Proverbs -by R. F. Horton](#))

**Speaker's Commentary** - If wrong has been done, the course which man is naturally tempted to take, that of hiding, hushing up, does but increase his misery. The burden is still on him. The conditions of freedom are confession and amendment. ([Speaker's Commentary - Proverbs](#))

**Conceals** ([03680](#)) (**kach/kasah**) means literally to cover as the frogs **covered** Egypt (Ex 8:6), the Shekinah glory cloud the cloud of God's glory **covered** Mount Sinai or the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex 24:15 Nu 9:16), the waters of the Red Sea **covered** the Egyptians (Ex 15:5). In its figurative sense **kacah** can describe dishonor or shame covering the guilty (Ps 69:7; Jer. 3:25) or the Israelites' covering the altar with tears (Mal 2:13). Kacah can mean keep to oneself, not respond with knowledge, i.e., keep information from others, though known and understood by oneself (Pr 12:16, 23). Cover (for clothing or secrecy).

**NAS Usage:** closed(2), clothed(1), conceal(1), conceals(8), cover(50), covered(51), covering(4), covers(20), engulfed(3), forgive(1), hidden(1), hide(2), keep(1), made a covering(1), overwhelm(2), overwhelmed(2), take refuge(1).

**Kacah** is translated in the **Septuagint\Lxx** with the Greek verb **epikalupto [word study]** (from **epi** = over + **kalúpto** = cover) which literally means to conceal, hide, cover or cover over (as a shroud). Figuratively or metaphorically it means to cover over sins, i.e., forgive, pardon. Peter uses the derivative noun **epikalumma** (1Pe 2:16 = figurative "covering" = a strategy for concealing something, a pretext, **Lxx** = literal cover in 2Sa 17:19).

**Epikalupto** in Pr 28:13 describes fallen man's habitual [verb here is in the present tense] tendency to cover over and hide sins. The first reaction of sinful man was to hide his sin from God! It is interesting that in David's confession of sin in Psalm 32 **epikalupto** conveys the meaning that God covers over of the sins (a picture of "atonement").

(A Psalm of David. A Maskil.) How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is **covered** (Hebrew = **kacah**; Lxx = **epikalupto**)! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! (Ps 32:1,2) ([Click](#) for discussion of the other use of **kacah** and **epikalupto** in this same psalm - Ps 32:5)

**Spurgeon's Comment:** Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven. He is now blessed and ever shall be. Be he ever so poor, or sick, or sorrowful, he is blessed in very deed. Pardoning mercy is of all things in the world most to be prized, for it is the only and sure way to happiness. To hear from God's own Spirit the words, "absolvo te" is joy unspeakable. Blessedness is not in this case ascribed to the man who has been a diligent law keeper, for then it would never come to us, but rather to a lawbreaker, who by grace most rich and free has been forgiven. Self righteous Pharisees have no portion in this blessedness. Over the returning prodigal, the word of welcome is here pronounced, and the music and dancing begin. A full, instantaneous, irreversible pardon of transgression turns the poor sinner's hell into heaven, and makes the heir of wrath a partaker in blessing.

The word rendered **forgiven** is in the original taken off or taken away, as a burden is lifted or a barrier removed. What a lift is here! It cost our Saviour a sweat of blood to bear our load, yea, it cost him his life to bear it quite away. Samson carried the gates of Gaza, but what was that to the weight which Jesus bore on our behalf?

**Whose sin is covered** (Hebrew = **kacah**; Lxx = **epikalupto**). Covered by God, as the ark was covered by the mercy seat, as Noah was covered from the flood, as the Egyptians were covered by the depths of the sea. What a cover must that be which hides away forever from the sight of the all seeing God all the filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit! He who has once seen sin in its horrible deformity, will appreciate the happiness of seeing it no more forever. Christ's atonement is the propitiation, **the covering**, the making an end of sin; where this is seen and trusted in, the soul knows itself to be now accepted in the Beloved, and therefore enjoys a conscious blessedness which is the antepast of heaven. It is clear from the text that a man may know that he is pardoned: where would be the blessedness of an unknown forgiveness? Clearly it is a matter of knowledge, for it is the ground of comfort.

Some **transgressions** are best **concealed**! When we are hurt by another's actions, Solomon advocates that we conceal or cover over their sins. Just try to do that without the enablement of God's grace and Spirit!

He who **covers** (Hebrew = **kacah**; Lxx = **krupto** = to conceal, hide) a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends. (Proverbs 17:9)

**Comment:** There is a proper time to **conceal** transgression (to keep it secret) and that is when it is someone else's transgression. To not conceal it in this context means not to repeat the person's failure (e.g., instead of gossiping).

Hatred stirs up strife, but love **covers** (Hebrew = **kacah**; Lxx = **kalupto** = to cover, protect, hide) all transgressions. (Pr 10:12).

**Comment:** Love endures and covers up wrongs by forbearing and forgiving the wrongdoer. This verse is cited in 1Pet 4:8 and Jas 5:20. Love doesn't tell the sin to others. If we are angry with someone who has sinned against us, aren't we often sorely tempted to spread the news about their sin rather than covering their sin in order to protect them? Love does the latter! I failed on this one often and even did so within the last hour!

A truly good man will be tender towards every one's failings but his own. The charity we exercise towards others is, however, very different from those excuses which we are too apt to form for ourselves.

**Kacah** is in the piel stem in Pr 28:13 which usually expresses an intensive or intentional act. In other words this person goes to considerable effort to "intentionally" conceal their **transgressions**. So this man is intentionally, actively hiding his sin in secrecy...

like Adam and Eve when God came into the Garden of Eden (Ge 3:7,8,9, 10). Hiding sin never pays good dividends - in fact in context it guarantees a poor return ("will not prosper").

When we try to conceal our transgressions, this is strong evidence that we really haven't faced our sins honestly and judged them according to God's Word for what they are - an affront against His holy character!

**Bridges** - The contrast is not between great sins and small, but between sins **covered**, and sins **confessed** and forsaken. Whosoever covers the smallest sin, shall not prosper. Whosoever confesses and forsakes the greatest, shall find mercy. " ([Proverbs 28:13 Commentary](#))

Concealing sin from God is self-deception for no one can hide their sin from the all seeing eyes of God (Pr 15:3, Pr 5:21note, Hebrews 4:13-note) One of the most dramatic OT examples is Achan who thought he could hide his sin literally (buried it).

(Achan when confronted by Joshua said) when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed (Heb = taman = hide something so that it cannot be found; Lxx = krupto = to keep secret, to hide, English ~ cryptic) in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it." (And just as Pr 28:13 promises, the one who conceals his sin shall not prosper) ... And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. (Joshua 7:21, 25)

**David** concealed his sins of adultery Bathsheba and murder of Uriah for almost nine months which undoubtedly deceived him into thinking he had "gotten away with it"! Then God sent his prophet Nathan who confronted David...

Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul... Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. (2Sa 12:7, 13, 1-14-note)

Elisha's servant **Gehazi** tried to conceal his sin of lying to Naaman and taking money from him when his master had refused compensation (2Ki 5:21).

But he went in and stood before his master. And Elisha said to him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?" And he said, "Your servant went nowhere." (**Ed: Gehazi lied to conceal his sin**). Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go with you, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money and to receive clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and male and female servants? Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you and to your descendants forever." So he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow. (2Ki 5:25, 26, 27)

Concealing sin is folly for it results in living a lie much of the time, it precludes forgiveness (1John 1:9), it causes estrangement from God (Ps 66:18), it produces inner turmoil and spiritual "dehydration" (Psalm 32:4, 5), and finally concealed sin leads to festering sin and also to repeated sins.

**Sins concealed by men  
can never be  
Sins cancelled by God.**

**Why would one conceal sin if it clearly is not spiritually profitable?** One reason is because of the failure to realize the destructive nature of sin, either because there is insufficient knowledge of God's standard or there is failure to do what we know we should (James 4:17) or the fact that sin is inherently deceptive, so the person is not even aware that they are sinning. Other reasons might be because one feels it is too painful to face the dishonor and shame or there is too much pleasure for one to give it up or there is too much pride to admit sin as sin.

**A C Gaebelein...**

An important message is contained in verse 13. **Every attempt** to cover up sin is a failure. How much of this is done today, not merely the covering of individual sins, but the denial of sin itself. The modern theology uses much ingenious argumentation which tries to make out of sin something else; speaks of it as a mere defect, as if it were some kind of a taint in the blood, a hereditary and therefore unavoidable weakness, something for which man is not responsible (Contrast David's acknowledgement of personal responsibility in Ps 51 "my transgressions... my iniquity... my sin" Ps 51:1, 2). All these inventions, which sweep aside the declarations of the infallible Word of God, are "covering up." No mercy can there be for those who deny sin and sins. The fig

leaves must be torn away with which man still tries to cover his nakedness. There must be confession, repentance, self-judgment and then of course trust in Him who died for the ungodly. ([Proverbs 28:13 Commentary](#))

**Transgressions** - Is in the plural which prompts **Perowne** to comments that...

No sin ever stands alone: each single transgression is the mother of many transgressions: each is a root of bitterness whence spring many bitter branches, so that we cannot one sin without confessing many. (Beloved, how true this is in my personal experience. It is not your experience also?) ([The Book of Psalms](#))

**Transgressions** (06588) (**pesha**) is derived from a root describing the breach of relationship between two parties (civil or religious). The idea of this noun is that the individual makes a willful choice to reject God's authority and hence to deviate from the path of godly living. Defection from God's standard. **Pesha**' describes a rising up in clear defiance to authority. A revolt against God's standards. In short, **pesha**' focuses on the rebellious nature of the sin (E.g., Ge 50:17) and means to go beyond the limits set by (a moral principle, standard, law, etc.).

**Rebellion** is inherent in this word for sin. The English word rebellion is ugly and describes open, usually unsuccessful defiance or resistance to an established government, in this case God. An open and avowed renunciation of the authority of God to Whom one owes his allegiance. Do we really understand that this is what we do when we willfully choose to sin against a law or commandment that we clearly know? It is utter spiritual insanity! Like one person said when we act this way we are in essence "practical atheists!"

**Boice** "It refers to crossing a forbidden boundary with the thought that this is a serious rebellion."

The 1828 Webster's dictionary says that **transgression** is "The act of passing over or beyond any law or rule of moral duty; the violation of a law or known principle of rectitude; breach of command."

**Albert Barnes** said that **sin**...

always renders the mind blind, and the heart hard, and shrouds everything in the moral world in midnight.

**Entanglement by the Cords of one's own Sin** - Not long after a wealthy contractor had finished building the Tombs prison in New York, he was found guilty of forgery and sentenced to several years in the prison he had built! As he was escorted into a cell of his own making, the contractor said, "I never dreamed when I built this prison that I would be an inmate one day." (cp Nu 32:23)

Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to stray!  
Cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay!  
Keep you longer than you ever thought you would stay!

## SIN IS LIKE A BOA CONSTRICTOR!

Are you beginning to tolerate/conceal **"pet"** sins? If you are, then you need to remember the fate of the man with the **pet boa constrictor**" (Do a Google search - use the following search terms and keep the parenthesis sign as written >>"**pet boa**" killed). After 15 years of living with his owner, one day the "pet boa" would not let its "owner" out of its grip resulting in the owner's tragic death. Wild animals remain wild and so does **Sin**. Do not be deceived (Stop being deceived)!

### Related Resource:

- The Deceitfulness of Sin

Psalm 19:8 says that the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart... so when we come to God and agree with Him that we have sinned against Him and His holy standard... in His great mercy based on the blood of the Lamb, our Father says "Welcome home!" and that brings joy to our heart... fellowship is re-established, oneness is the order once again. Hallelujah.

As Oswald Chambers once said "Measure your growth in grace by your sensitiveness to sin."

SIN BRINGS FEAR (Ps 32)  
CONFESSION BRINGS FREEDOM Ps 32:5

Sin carries two rods about it: shame and fear.  
--Edward Marbury

**The sins that would entangle us**  
Must never be ignored;

For if we try to cover them  
They'll pierce us like a sword.

## THREE WAYS TO DEAL WITH SIN

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that...

All of us struggle with sin. Human nature pulls us down as gravity does, yet God has made us and saved us to lift us up (1Jn 1:5-2:6). There are three ways we may deal with our sins.

**Cover them.** We cover our sins with our words. This is lying-- deceiving others and ourselves and lying to God. Lies are darkness, whereas God's truth is light. When we lie, our character erodes (Pr 28:13). When we cover sin, we lose God's light, fellowship and character. (**Ed:** We cover our sins by making excuses for them and by refusing to come to the light where they may be exposed. Some "cover" their sin by trying to have it legalized by the laws of the land, so they can sin shamelessly. Some "cover" their sin by blaming someone else. Some "cover" their sin by simply [deceptively] denying it.)

**Confess them.** Admit and judge them--agree with God about your sin. This involves the heart and the will (**Ed:** The Lord will not despise a broken and contrite heart - this is the heart that is willing to confess! Ps 51:17-note). Some people have died because they repeatedly, willfully, proudly and arrogantly defied the will of God. Admit you are a sinner, say what is wrong and then come to Him and name it. Confess your sin only in the circle of those influenced by it--individuals or family. (Don't become an exhibitionist with the public.) Confession brings release, freedom, forgiveness and a new beginning.

**Conquer them.** Jesus is in heaven today as our Advocate--as a Lawyer before the Father. Abide in Him, love Him, walk with Him in the light of His Word. Keep His commandments. Fellowship is a by-product of our walk with God. To love Him is to serve Him and obey His commandments.

Are you covering sin or conquering sin in your life? Confess any known sin and ask God to clean your heart. He wants to forgive you so He can restore fellowship with you ([Psalm 51:1-2 The High Cost of Committing Sin](#)).

**Adam Clarke** on how men cover their transgressions...

They are conscious that they are doing wrong, and they try to cover and conceal what they are doing. They resort to a variety of expedients. Some flatly deny them. Others cover their sins by evasion, or they shift the blame off upon others. Some plead their weakness, and the circumstances in which they were placed. Many plead the practice of others. It is the custom of the trade. The vilest class attempt to cover their sins by glorying in them.

**J R Miller...**

"Cleanse me from hidden faults." (Ps 19:12) They are **secret sins** which men commit, and of which they know. **They think no one else knows of them.** Perhaps their friends do not suspect that they are guilty of any secret sin. They wear the white garment of a fair reputation, while under it are foul spots they would not have anyone see. But such sins are not really secret. No sin can be hidden from God.

**Hidden sins  
are open to the eye of God.**

The worst thing any man can do with his sins—is to try to cover them up, to keep on committing them—but concealing them. The only safe thing to do—is to confess them and put them out of your life. "The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy." Proverbs 28:13

**Thomas Watson - The curtain-sinner** - A godly man does not indulge himself in any sin.

Though sin lives in him—yet he does not live in sin. A godly man may step into sin through infirmity—but he does not keep on that road.

What is it to indulge sin? To indulge sin is to give the breast to it and feed it. To indulge sin is to commit it with delight. The ungodly "delight in wickedness," 2 Thess. 2:12. In this sense, a godly man does not indulge sin. Though sin is in him—he is troubled at it and would gladly get rid of it.



There is as much difference between sin in the wicked, and sin in the godly—as between poison being in a serpent, and poison being in a man. Poison in a serpent is in its natural place and is delightful—but poison in a man's body is harmful and he uses antidotes to expel it. So sin in a wicked man is delightful, being in its natural place—but sin in a child of God is burdensome and he uses all means to expel it.

A godly man will not allow himself in secret sins. Some are more modest than to commit open gross sin. That would be a stain on their reputation. All will not sin on a balcony—but perhaps they will sin behind the curtain!

But a godly man dare not sin secretly, for he knows that God can neither be deceived by our subtlety, nor excluded by our secrecy. He knows that secret sins are in some sense worse than others. They reveal more deceit and atheism. "He knows the secrets of every heart," Psalm 44:21.

But the curtain-sinner thinks that God does not see: "Have you seen what the leaders of Israel are doing with their idols in dark rooms? They are saying—The Lord doesn't see us!" Ezek. 8:12. How it provokes God, that men's atheism should give the lie to His omniscience! "He who formed the eye—shall He not see?" Psalm 94:9.

A godly man knows that secret sins shall not escape God's justice. A judge on the bench cannot punish the treason of the heart. But the sins of the heart are as visible to God, as if they were written upon the forehead! As God will reward secret duties; so He will revenge secret sins!

A godly man enters his protest against sin: "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin?" Romans 7:24. A child of God, while he commits sin, hates the sin he commits!

**Spurgeon** contrasts man's covering, which is worthless and culpable (Pr 28:13), and God's covering, which is profitable, and worthy of all acceptance (Ps 85:2).

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

Psalm 85:2 You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You **covered** all their sin. Selah.

## HOW TO CONCEAL TRANSGRESSIONS

**Spurgeon** explains that there are many ways in which men try (unsuccessfully) to cover their sin...

**(1) Some do so by denying that they have sinned, or, admitting the fact, they deny the guilt; or else, candidly acknowledging both the sin and the guilt, they excuse and exonerate themselves on the plea of certain circumstances which rendered it, according to their showing, almost inevitable that they should act as they have done.** By pretext and presence, apology and self-vindication, they acquit themselves of all criminality, and put a fine gloss upon every foul delinquency. Excuse-making is the commonest trade under heaven. The slenderest materials are put to the greatest account. A man who has no valid argument in arrest of judgment, no feasible reason why he should not be condemned, will go about and bring a thousand excuses, and ten thousand circumstances of extenuation, the whole of them weak and attenuated as a spider's web. Someone here may be saying within himself,

"It may be I have broken the law of God, but it was too severe. To keep so perfect a law was impossible. I have violated it, but then I am a man, endowed with passions that involve propensities, and inflamed with desires that need gratification. How could I do otherwise than I have done? Placed in peculiar circumstances, I am borne along with the current. Subject to special temptations, I yield to the fascination; this is natural."

So you think; so you essay to exculpate yourself. But, in truth, you are now committing a fresh sin; for you are abasing God, you are inculcating the Almighty. You are impugning the law to vindicate yourself for breaking it. There is no small degree of criminality about such an unrighteous defense. The law is holy, just, and good. You are throwing the onus of your sins upon God. You are trying to mane out that, after all, you are not to blame, but the fault lies with Him who gave the commandment. Do you think that this will be tolerated? Shall the prisoner at the bar bring accusations against the Judge who tries him? Or shall he challenge the equity of the statute while he is arraigned for violating it? And as for the circumstances that you plead, what valid excuse can they furnish, Has it come to this—that it was not you, but your necessities, that did the wrong and

are answerable for the consequence? Not you, indeed! you are a harmless innocent victim of circumstances! I suppose, instead of being censured, you ought almost to be pitied. What is this, again, but throwing the blame upon the arrangements of Providence, and saying to God,

"It is the harshness of thy discipline, not the perverseness of my actions, that involves me in sin."

What, I say, is this but a high impertinence, ay, veritable treason, against the Majesty of that thrice holy God, before Whom even perfect angels veil their faces, while they cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts"? I pray thee resort not to such a covering as this, because, while it is utterly useless, it adds sin to sin, and exposes thee to fresh shame.

**(2) In many cases persons violating the law of God have hoped to cover their transgression by secrecy.** They have done the deed in darkness. They hope that no ear of man heard their footfall, or listened to their speech. Possibly they themselves held their tongue, and flattered themselves that no observer witnessed their movements or could divulge their action. So was it with Achan. I dare say he took the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment, mid the confusion of the battle, and hid it when his comrades seemed too much engaged to notice so trivial an affair. While they were rushing over the fallen walls of Jericho, amidst the debris and the dust, he might be unmolested; and then, in the dead of night, while they slept, he turned the sod of his tent, dug into the earth, and buried there his coveted treasure. All looks right, to his heart's content. He has smoothed it down, and spread his carpet over the grave of his lust. Little did he reckon of the Omniscient eye. Little did he count on the unerring lot that would come home to the tribe of Judah, to the family of the Zarahites, to the house of Zabdir, and, at last, to the son of Carmi, so that Achan himself would have to stand out confessed as a traitor—a robber of his God. Men little know the ways in which the Almighty can find them out, and bring the evidence that convicts, out of the devices that were intended to cover their sin...

**(3) Again, full many a time sinners have tried to cover their sin with falsehood** Indeed, this is the usual habit—to lie—to cloak their guilt by denying it. Was not this the way with Gehazi? When the prophet said, "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" he said, "Thy servant went no whither." Then the prophet told him that the leprosy of Naaman should cleave to him all the days of his life. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira, in lying in order to hide their sin, how quickly was it discovered, and how terrible was the retribution! I wonder that men and women can lie as they do after reading that story. "Hast thou sold the land for so much?" said Peter. And Ananias said, "Yea, for so much." At that instant he fell down and gave up the ghost. Three hours after, when his wife, Sapphire, said the same, the feet of the young men who had buried her husband were at the door, ready to carry out her corpse, and bury her by his side. Oh! sirs, ye must weave a tangled web, indeed, when once ye begin to deceive; and when you have woven it you will have to add lie to lie, and lie to lie, and yet all to no purpose, for you will be surely found out. There is something about a lie that always deludes the man who utters it. Liars have need of good memories. They are sure to leave a little corner uncovered through which the truth escapes. Their story does not hang together. Discrepancies excite suspicions, and evasions furnish a clue to discoveries, till the naked truth is unveiled. Then the deeper the plot the fouler is the shame. But to lie unto the God of truth, of what avail can that be? What advantageth it you to plead "not guilty," when he has witnessed your crime? That infallible Eye which never mistakes is never closed. He knows everything; from him no secret is hid. Why, therefore, dost thou imagine that thou canst deceive thy Maker?

**(4) There are some who try to cover their sin by prevarication** With cunning subtlety they strive to evade personal responsibility. Memorable is the instance of David. I will not dwell upon his flagrant crime; but I must remind you of his sorry subterfuge, when he tried to hide the baseness of his lust by conspiring to cause the death of Uriah. There have been those who have schemed deep and long to throw the blame on others, even to the injury of their reputation, to escape the odium of their own malpractices. Who knows but in this congregation there may be someone who affects a high social position, supported by a deep mercantile immorality? Merchants there have been that have swollen before the public as men of wealth, while they were falsifying their accounts, abstracting money, yet making the books tally, rolling in luxury, and living in jeopardy. Have they prospered? Were they to be envied? The detection that long haunted them at length overtook them; could they look it in the face? We have heard of their blank despair, their insane suicide; at any rate, a miserable exposure has been their melancholy climax. "Be sure your sin will find you out." You may run the length of your tether. It is short. The hounds of justice, swift of scent and strong of limb, are on your trail. Rest assured, you will be discovered. Could you escape the due reward in this life, yet certainly your guilt is known in heaven, and you shall be judged and condemned in that great day which shall decide your eternal destiny. Seek not, then, to cover up sin with such transparent cobwebs as these.



**(5) Some people flatter themselves that their sin has already been hidden away by the lapse of time.** "It was so very long ago," says one, "I had almost forgotten it; I was a lad at the time." "Aye," says another, "I am gray-headed now. It must have been twenty or thirty years ago. Surely you do not think that the sin of my far-off days will be brought out against me? The thing is gone by. Time must have obliterated it." Not so, my friend. It may be the lapse of time will only make the discovery the more clear. A boy once went into his father's orchard, and there in his rough play he broke a little tree which his father valued. But, rapidly putting it together again, he managed to conceal the fact, for the disunited parts of the tree took kindly to each other, and the tree stood as before. It so happened that more than forty years afterwards he went into that garden after a storm had blown across it in the night, and he found that the tree had been riven in two, and it had snapped precisely in the place where he had broken it when it was but a sapling. So there may come a crash to your character precisely in that place where you sinned when yet a lad. Ah! how often the transgressions of our youth remain within our bosoms! There lie the eggs of our young sin, and they hatch when men come into riper years. Don't be so sure that the lapse of time will consign your faults and follies to oblivion. You sowed your wild oats, sir; you have got to reap them. The time that has intervened has only operated to make that evil seed spring up, and you are so much the nearer to the harvest. Time does not change the hue of sin in the sight of God. If a man could live a thousand years, the sins of his first year would be as fresh in the memory of the Almighty as those of the last. Eternity itself will never wash out a sin. Flow on, ye ages; but the scarlet spots on the sand. Flow on still in mighty streams, but the damning spot is there still. Neither time nor eternity can cleanse it. Only one thing can remove sin. The lapse of time cannot. Let not any of you be so foolish as to hope it will.

When the trumpet of the resurrection sounds, there will be a resurrection of characters, as well as of men. The man who has been foully slandered will rejoice in the light that reflects his purity. But the man whose latent vices have been skilfully veneered will be brought to the light too. His acts and motives will be alike exposed. As he himself looks and sees the resurrection of his crimes, with what horror will he face that day of judgment! "Ah! ah!" says he, "Where am I? I had forgotten these. These are the sins of my childhood, the sins of my youth, the sins of my manhood, and the sins of my old age. I thought they were dead and buried, but they start from their tombs. My memory has been quickened. How my brain reels as I think of them all! But there they are, and, like so many wolves around me, they seem all thirsting for my destruction." Beware, oh! men. Ye have buried your sins, but they will rise up from their graves and accuse you before God. Time cannot cover them.

**(6) Or do any of you imagine that your tears can blot out transgressions?** That is a gross mistake. Could your tears for ever flow; could you be transformed into a Niobe, and do nothing else but weep for aye, the whole flood could not wash out a single sin. Some have supposed that there may be efficacy in baptismal water, or in sacramental emblems, or in priestly incantations, or in confession to a priest—one who asks them to disclose their secret wickedness to him, and betrays a morbid avidity to make his breast the sewer into which all kinds of uncleanness should be emptied. Be not deceived. There is nothing in these ordinances of man, or these tricks of Romish priestcraft (I had almost said of witchcraft, the two are so much alike) to excuse the folly of those who are beguiled by them. You need not catch at straws when the rope is thrown out to you. There is pardon to be had; remission is to be found; forgiveness can be procured. Turn your back on yonder shavelings; lend not your ear to them, neither be ye the victims of their snares. In the street each day it makes one's soul sad to see them. Like the Pharisees of old, they wear their long garments to deceive. You cannot mistake them. Their silly conceit publishes their naked shame. Confide not in them for a moment. Christ can forgive you. God can blot out your sin. But they cannot ease your conscience by their penances, or remove your transgressions by their celebrations.

Thus I have gone through a rough, not very accurate, list of the ways by which men hope to cover their sin, but they "shall not prosper." None of these shall succeed. ([Two Coverings and Two Consequences](#))

**Spurgeon** then speaks about the **futility of trying to conceal one's sin...**

Do you not know that Providence is a wonderful detective? There are hounds upon the track of every thief, and murderer, and liar—in foot, upon every sinner of every kind. Each sin leaves a trail. The dogs of judgment will be sure to scent it out, and find their prey. There is no disentangling yourselves from the meshes of guilt; no possibility of evading the penalty of transgression. Very wonderful have been the ways in which persons who have committed crimes have been brought to judgment. A trifle becomes a tell-tale. The method of deceit gives a clue to the manner of discovery. Wretched the men who bury their secrets in their own bosom. Their conscience plays traitor to them. They have often been forged to betray themselves. We have read of men

talking in their sleep to their fellows, and babbling out in their dreams the crime they had committed years before. God would have the secret disclosed. No eye had seen, neither could other tongue have bold, but the man turned king's evidence against himself; he has thus brought himself to judgment. It has often happened, in some form or other, that conscience has thus been witness against men. Do I address anyone who is just now practicing a secret sin? You would not have me point you out for all the world, nor shall I do so. Believe me, however, the sin is known. Dexterous though you have been in the attempt to conceal it, it has been seen. As surely as you live, it has been seen. "By whom?" say you. Ah! by One who never forgets what he sees, and will be sure to tell of it. He may commission a little bird of the air to whisper it. Certainly he will one day proclaim it by the sound of trumpet to listening worlds. You are watched, sir; you are known. You have been narrowly observed, young girl; those things you have hidden away will be brought to light, for God is the great discoverer of sin. His eye has marked you; his providence will track you. It is vain to think that ye can conceal your transgressions. Before high heaven, disguise is futile. Yea, the darkness hideth not; the night shineth as the day. I have known persons who have harboured a sin in their breast till it has preyed upon their constitution. They have been like the Spartan boy who had stolen a fox, and was ashamed to have it known, so he kept it within his garment, till it ate through his flesh, and he fell dead. He suffered the fox to gnaw his heart ere he would betray himself. There are those who have got a sin, if not a lie in their right hand, yea, a lie in their heart, and it is eating into their very life. They dare not confess it. If they would confess it to their God, and make restitution to those whom they have offended, they would soon come to peace; but they vainly hope that they can cover the sin, and hide it from the eyes of God and man. He that covereth his sin in this fashion shall not prosper. ([Two Coverings and Two Consequences](#))

## COVER FOR THE PROUD SINNER

**Bridges** on concealing our transgressions...

The proud sinner naturally wishes to be thought better than he is. His sin must have some cover (Cicero stamps confession of wickedness as disgraceful and dangerous. Thus does heathen morality develop the pride of depraved nature.) He must at least give it a good name. (Isa 5:20) He would cover it, if possible, from himself; putting it out of mind, banishing all serious thoughts, stifling conviction, and then trying to persuade himself that he is happy. To escape evil consequences, a lie is resorted to (eg Cain Ge 4:9, Rachel Ge 31:34, 35, Joseph's brothers Ge 37:31-35; David 2Sa 11:15, 25; the adulteress Pr 30:20. Cp Jer 2:23, Peter = Mt 26:69, Ananias and Sapphira = Acts 5:1-8. Is this not a saddening propensity in children? The first offense may be trifling. But the fear of punishment induces a lie. Another lie is necessary to cover the *first*! Every step adds to sin.).

Or if the facts are too plain to be denied they says something like "the worst part is unfounded. We were not in it so much as our neighbor." Ignorance, good, or at least not bad, intentions, custom, necessity, strong temptation, sudden surprise, the first offense; constitutional infirmity; even the decrees of God, (Jer 7:10)--one or more are pleaded in palliation (covering by excuses). Or to save our honor--rather our pride--the blame must be shifted on another (Adam and Eve, Ge 3:12, 13. Cp Job 31:33; Aaron, Ex 32:21-24; Saul, 1Sa 15:20, 21; Pilate, Mt 27:24-26). Even God Himself (Ge 3:12, Jas 1:13, 14) is made accountable--a secret but daring charge carrying with it its own self-contradiction. Indignantly He challenges the proof, and lays the sin at the right door.

More commonly, but most wrongfully, it is laid upon Satan (Ge 3:13). The most of his power is, that he is a tempter (Mt 4:3, 1Th 3:5). And no claim could he have ever established, had not we willingly sold ourselves to his service. Our father Adam--again--must bear the burden (Ro 5:12). 'Must our "teeth be set on edge" for the "sour grapes which he ate?" (Ezek 18:2) Must the unborn children be held responsible for the inheritance, which their father lost? 'But it was the nature that sinned, of which we are a component part. We "were in his (Adam's) loins" (Heb 7:10) at the time, and therefore we share his responsibility. Our own personal sin has ratified the deed by our own free and repeated consent. All these attempted transfers are vain coverings. Conscience bears witness to the truth, that no man takes harm but from himself. But even this admitted--man with ceaseless ingenuity still attempts to frame a cover, for his sin. Some supposed good deeds are put forth as a compensation. (Mic 4:6, 7, Lk 20:47) And by balancing good and evil respectively against each other, he hopes to establish some preponderance in his favor. Yet all these fig-leaf coverings (Ge 3:7) for his nakedness only show his determination to hold his sin, and his pride of heart, which would rather hide it from God himself than submit to receive free mercy as a self-condemned sinner.

These attempts however to cover sin shall not prosper. The voice of an offended God summoned Adam from

his hiding-place to receive his sentence. (Ge 3:9) "The voice of Abel's blood cried from the ground," and the murderer became "a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth." (Ge 4:10, 11, 12.) Conscience lashed Joseph's brethren with the sin of bye-gone days. (Ge 42:21) Saul's *covering his sin* cost him his kingdom. (1Sa 15:21, 23) "The leprosy of Naaman clave to Gehazi and his seed for ever." (2Ki 5:27) The proud accusers of their fellow-sinner were "convicted by their own conscience." (Jn 8:9) "There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." (Job 34:22 with Job 24:14, 15) Their darkest deed is wrought in the open face of an all-seeing God, and "set in the light of his countenance," (Ps 90:8) to "be proclaimed upon the house-tops" before the assembled world (Lk 12:2, 3, Ec 12:14 1Cor 4:5).

This unsuccessful attempt to *cover* sin, while it adds to the guilt (Isa 30:1), is fraught with misery. The love of sin struggles with the power of conscience. The door of access to God is barred. (Ps 66:18) Christian confidence is clouded (Isa 32:3,4); and, unless Sovereign mercy interpose, it must end in the sting of "the never-dying worm." The *covering* of the disease precludes the possibility of the cure. Only the penitent confessor can be the pardoned sinner. ([Proverbs 28:13 Commentary](#))

## WILL NOT PROSPER:

**Net Bible Note on will not prosper** - The person who refuses to confess will not prosper. This is an understatement (a figure of speech known as tapeinosis); the opposite is the truth, that eventually such a person will be undone and ruined... This verse is unique in the book of Proverbs; it captures the theology of forgiveness (e.g., Ps 32 and Ps 51). Every part of the passage is essential to the point: Confession of sins as opposed to concealing them, coupled with a turning away from them, results in mercy. ([NET Bible Online](#))

Beloved we need to be aware that unconfessed sin and lack of prosperity is an immutable divine principle, for far too often we still think that we can defy God's call to confession and escape the consequences! This is self deception run amuck, for instead of escaping the consequences, we end up compounding the consequences!

The greatest loss of prosperity is the loss of fellowship with God. John puts it this way...

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth but if we walk in the light (Confessing our sins, owning our sins, with a broken and contrite heart) as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (1Jn 1:6, 7)

## A W Pink...

Disobedience chokes the channel of blessing. "He who covers his sins shall not prosper" (Proverbs 28:13). Unconfessed sin in the heart of a believer is like a worm at the root of prosperity. "If I regard iniquity in my heart—the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18), prayer is then futile. Unless we keep short accounts with God—we shall not enjoy His smile. Jeremiah 10:21 tells us what prevents "pastors" from prospering—self-sufficiency, failing to be cast entirely upon the Lord. ([A Prosperous New Year](#))

"He who covers his sins shall not prosper" no matter how well versed he is in the Truth, or admired by his fellows; for there is a worm eating at the root of his spiritual life. "But whoever confesses and forsakes them [however heinous or numerous] shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). See to it, my reader, that you make conscience of what men term "little sins" and excuse them not. See to it that you keep short accounts with God, penitently owning unto Him every known fault, if you would not miss His best. Acknowledge your transgressions, even though you have done so a thousand times previously. Avail yourself daily of the Fountain "opened for sin and for impurity" (Zec 13:1). ([Missing Gods Best](#))

Now three things are indispensable if we are to enjoy God's blessings, rather than suffer His chastisements. First, all known sin—past as well as present—must be repented of, confessed, and forsaken (Proverbs 28:13). It is unpardoned sins which withhold good things from us (Jer. 5:25). This principle has always obtained, and will unto the end of time. ([SOUND THE ALARM](#))

**Prosper** ([06743](#))(*tsalach/salah* - see word study) means to succeed or to cause to turn out successfully (Ge 24:21, 40), means to accomplish satisfactorily what is intended = generally expresses idea of a successful venture, as contrasted with failure. The source of true success is God's Spirit Who enables supernatural spiritual prosperity. Don't twist this promise to apply only to material prosperity, for that is far less valuable than spiritual prosperity. God may choose to prosper us materially, but not at the expense of

our spiritual prosperity!

It is used in a negative sense...

But Moses said, "Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the LORD, when it will not **succeed (tsalach/salach)**? (Numbers 14:41)

(The cursing of the LORD on Israel for failing to obey His Law - Dt 28:13,14) and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you **will not prosper (tsalach/salach)** in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you. (Deut 28:29)

**Meditation** (see also Primer on Biblical Meditation) on the Word of God is clearly linked with genuine **prosperity** in Joshua and Psalms -

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you **will make** your way **prosperous (tsalach/salach)**, and then you will have success. (Joshua 1:8-note)

And he (he whose delight is the Law of the LORD and who meditates on it day and night) will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season, And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he **prosper**s (tsalach/salach). (Ps 1:3-note)

**Tsalach** is translated in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** with the Greek verb **euodoo** (from **eú** = good + **hodós** = way) literally means to have a good journey (a) of removal of difficulties in the way (Ro1:10) (b) of material prosperity in daily avocation 1Co16:2 (c) of physical health 3Jn 1:2 or (d) of spiritual health.

And thus the one who conceals his transgressions will not have things turn out well and will not be successful (especially spiritually).

**Tsalach** - 64v in OT -

Ge 24:21, 40, 42, 56; 39:2f, 23; Num 14:41; Deut 28:29; Josh 1:8; Jdg 14:6, 19; 15:14; 18:5; 1 Sa 10:6, 10; 11:6; 16:13; 18:10; 2Sa 19:17; 1Ki 22:12, 15; 1Chr 22:11, 13; 29:23; 2Chr 7:11; 13:12; 14:7; 18:11, 14; 20:20; 24:20; 26:5; 31:21; 32:30; Neh 1:11; 2:20; Ps 1:3; 37:7; 45:4; 118:25; Pr 28:13; Isa 48:15; 53:10; 54:17; 55:11; Jer 2:37; 5:28; 12:1; 13:7, 10; 22:30; 32:5; Ezek 15:4; 16:13; 17:9f, 15; Dan 8:12, 24f; 11:27, 36; Amos 5:6

The first use is where Abraham's servant was sent to bring back a wife for Isaac and upon seeing Rebekah gazed

at her in silence, to know whether the LORD had **made** his journey **successful (tsalach/salach)** or not. (Ge 24:21)

**Tsalach** generally expresses idea of a successful venture, as contrasted with failure. The source of such success is God as shown by the following passages...

The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to **prosper (tsalach/salach)**. (Genesis 39:23)

He (Uzziah) continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God **prospered (tsalach/salach)** him. (2Ch 26:5).

Every work which he began in the service of the house of God in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and **prospered**. (2Chr 31:21)

(Nehemiah prayed for success) O Lord, I beseech Thee, may Thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant and the prayer of Thy servants who delight to revere Thy name, and **make Thy servant successful** today, and grant him compassion before this man." Now I was the cupbearer to the king. (Nehemiah 1:11)

So I answered them and said to them, "The God of heaven **will give** us **success**; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no portion, right, or memorial in Jerusalem." (Nehemiah 2:20)

David knew the truth of Pr 28:13 from his experience writing...

When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah. (Ps 32:3,4).

**Augustine comments:** Each man's sin is the instrument of his punishment, and his iniquity is turned into his torment.

**Spurgeon comments: When I kept silence.** When through neglect I failed to confess, or through despair dared not do so, my bones, those solid pillars of my frame, the stronger portions of my bodily constitution, waxed old, began to decay with weakness, for my grief was so intense as to sap my health and destroy my vital energy.

**What a killing thing is sin!  
It is a pestilent disease!  
A fire in the bones!**

While we smother our sin it rages within, and like a gathering wound swells horribly and torments terribly.

**The silent mourner  
the greatest sufferer.**

**For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me.** (Ed: Note that "for" explains why David wasted and groaned - it was retributive punishment directly from God!) God's finger can crush us -- what must His hand be, and that pressing heavily and continuously! Under terrors of conscience, men have little rest by night, for the grim thoughts of the day dog them to their chambers and haunt their dreams, or else they lie awake in a cold sweat of dread.

**God's hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down:  
better a world on the shoulder, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David.**

**My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.** The sap of his soul was dried, and the body through sympathy appeared to be bereft of its needful fluids. The oil was almost gone from the lamp of life, and the flame flickered as though it would soon expire.

**Unconfessed transgression, like a fierce poison, dried up the fountain of the man's  
strength and made him like a tree blasted by the lightning, or a plant withered by  
the scorching heat of a tropical sun.**

Alas! for a poor soul when it has learned its sin but forgets its Saviour, it goes hard with it indeed. Selah. It was time to change the tune, for the notes are very low in the scale, and with such hard usage, the strings of the harp are out of order: the next verse will surely be set to another key, or will rehearse a more joyful subject.

**Through my roaring all the day long.** He was silent as to **confession**, but not as to **sorrow**. Horror at his great guilt, drove David to incessant laments, until his voice was no longer like the articulate speech of man, but so full of sighing and groaning, that it resembled to hoarse roaring of a wounded beast. None knows the pangs of conviction but those who have endured them. The rack, the wheel, the flaming fagot are ease compared with the [Tophet](#) which a guilty conscience kindles within the breast: better suffer all the diseases which flesh is heir to, than lie under the crushing sense of the wrath of almighty God. The Spanish inquisition with all its tortures was nothing to the inquest which conscience holds within the heart.

**Samuel Page comments:** By bones, the strength of the body, the inward strength and vigor of the soul is meant. The conscience of sin, and the terror of judgment breaks the heart of a true penitent, so long as he beholds that his sin warrants death, his judge ready to pronounce the sentence of it, hell open to receive him for it, and the evil angels, God's executioners, at hand to hurry him to it (Ed: This is what every believer would deserve unless they were covered by the blood of Christ.).

**Thomas Taylor on the "heavy" hand of Jehovah:** A correcting hand, whereby God scourges and buffets his own children. Now the sense of God's power punishing or correcting, is called God's hand, as 1Sa 5:11. The hand of God was sore at Ekron, because of the ark; and a heavy hand in resemblance, because when men smite they lay their hand heavier than ordinary. Hence, we may note three points of doctrine: **first**, that all afflictions are God's hand; **secondly**, that God lays his hand heavily often upon his dear children; **thirdly**, that God often continues his heavy hand night and day on them.

The one who is concealing his sin shall not push forward, experience victory from the Lord, experience spiritual prosperity, thrive spiritually, accomplish satisfactorily what God intended. The key is continually seeking God with ALL YOUR HEART (Heb11:6)... lay aside the old.

**Will not prosper** - What does not spiritually prospering look like? You will not sing. You will not experience supernatural joy (Spirit is grieved and quenched by unconfessed sin). Indeed, nothing will stop your song quicker than unconfessed sin. We see this is Psalm 51 where the concept of joy and rejoice is repeatedly mentioned by David in the context of his confession of his sin with Bathsheba and against Uriah. You can mark it down as a maxim that sin always ruins where it reigns -- it reigns when it is unconfessed and is

"dethroned" when it is confessed! Are any "little sins" reigning in your heart as you read this note? Anyone you are harboring a grudge against, against whom you are embittered, against whom you are harboring unforgiveness. Or perhaps you think you have forgiven but your forgiven is only external and superficial -- beware of this culprit stealing your "spiritual prosperity" - read the booklet by Discovery House Publishers entitled [Avoiding The Dangers Of Superficial Forgiveness](#).

**Illustration of the Danger of Concealing Our Sins** - Certain great iron castings have been ordered for a railway-bridge. The thickness has been calculated according to the extent of the span and the weight of the load. The contractor constructs his moulds according to the specifications, and when all is ready pours in the molten metal. In the process of casting, through some defect in the mould, portions of air lurk in the heart of the iron, and cavities like those of a honey-comb are formed in the interior of the beam; but a whole skin covers all the surface, and the flaws are effectually concealed. The artisan has covered his fault, but he will not prosper. As soon as it is subjected to a strain the beam gives way. (William Arnot)

**Byron Paulus** Executive Director of the revival oriented Life Action Ministry writes that...

After reaching out to more than four million believers in 6,000 churches during the past four decades, our team of revivalists would unanimously concur that the **number one problem (Ed: "sin") they encounter is unforgiveness. Bitterness is rampant. Forgiveness is not.** And in church after church, as Life Action proclaims the truth about bitterness and forgiveness, we hear powerful testimonies of God **setting captives free**. The road to forgiveness in my life was grounded in the biblical example modeled by Joseph—a man who had every reason for bitterness and hate, yet who emerged from years of rejection and hopelessness as a forgiver, full of grace, still honoring the Lord. For me, true forgiveness has meant daily choosing between two options, two responses in my soul.

Below are some other related resources on the critically important topic of unforgiveness, a sin I fear is being "epidemically" concealed in the lives of many of God's children...

#### Related resources

- Multiple illustrations and quotes related to forgiveness/unforgiveness
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Ephesians 4:32
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Colossians 3:13
- Exposition of "Forgiveness" in Matthew 6:12 and Matthew 6:14-15
- Sermon on Forgiveness - [Acts 13:38-39](#)

Someone has well said that a "little" unconfessed sin will **add** to your trouble, **subtract** from your energy and **multiply** your difficulties. (and I would add -- unconfessed sin will **divide** brethren, families, husbands and wives, etc)

Regarding the "toxic" effects of sin one has said it enters like a needle and spreads like an oak tree.

**Joni Eareckson Tada** spoke of the failure to **prosper** when she said...

Disease is just one of the many results of man's sin, along with death, sorrow, guilt and disasters of nature.

**Vance Havner** said it this way...

Sin is spiritual cancer, and the man who tries to live with it dies of it.

**Matthew Henry** adds that...

If we be ruled by sin we shall inevitably be ruined by it.

#### D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

The tragedy of sin is that it affects man in his highest faculties. Sin causes us to become fools, and behave in an irrational manner.

**Spurgeon** makes a serious contrast...

**I. MAN'S COVERING, AND ITS FAILURE.** There are many ways in which men try to cover their sins. Excuse-making is the commonest trade under heaven. Some cover by secrecy and some by falsehood. Some think their sin has been hidden away by lapse of time.

**II. GOD'S COVERING, AND ITS SUCCESS.** By the atoning sacrifice which was presented by the Lord Jesus. Before God covers sins He unveils them. The covering is as broad as the sin; it completely covers, and for



ever covers.

---

**Hide Or Seek?** - An Indianapolis patrolman ran into trouble while he was investigating a routine traffic mishap. He had interviewed witnesses, arrested one of the drivers, and written up the accident report. Then he noticed that the offending motorist was chewing on something that wasn't gum. He was eating the report! Despite the officer's efforts to retrieve the report, it was destroyed. But the delay was only temporary. The patrolman tracked down the witnesses again and recompiled the evidence.

The resistance and cover-up that this Indiana officer encountered is similar to what Isaiah saw in the people of Israel centuries ago. The prophet was grieved as he watched his countrymen try to ignore and conceal the evidence of their sin. They, in effect, stuck their fingers in their ears while the Lord spoke (Isa. 30:9), and they encouraged their prophets to tell them only what they wanted to hear (Isa 30:10). They would rather hide than seek the mercy of God. Consequently, the Lord sent judgment on them (Isa 30:12-17).

We can learn from Israel's mistakes that an attempt at coverup won't do any good. It's only temporary. We must confess our sins to God and forsake them. Then we will know the joy of God's forgiveness. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The sins that would entangle us  
Must never be ignored;  
For if we try to cover them  
They'll pierce us like a sword.  
—Sper

**The sin we try to cover up  
will eventually bring us down.**

**BUT HE WHO CONFESSES:**

### **CONTINUAL CONFESSION: A VALUABLE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE**

**John Stott** wrote an entire book entitled "Confess Your Sins" in which he stated that...

One of the surest antidotes to the process of moral hardening is the disciplined practice of uncovering our sins of thought and outlook, as well as of word and of deed, and the repentant forsaking of them. ([Confess Your Sins The Way of Reconciliation - 94 page book](#))

The classic NT passage which parallels Pr 28:13 is in John's first epistle...

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we **confess** (**present tense** = this is to our habitual practice; confession is to be our lifestyle) our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive (**aphiemi** = conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation; to send away from) us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1Jn 1:9)

**Comment:** If our confession be personal and particular, offered sincerely from the heart to God, He will **completely** and graciously pardon and purify us. (See how complete His forgiveness is in the following passages [Meditate on the metaphors He uses] - Ps 32:1, 103:12 Isa 6:7 Isa 38:17 Isa 44:22 Micah 7:18,19 Acts 3:19,20 Heb 8:12-note) If we confess our sins, they are not only covered (by the blood of Christ) but they are canceled completely!

**Thomas Sherman comments:** This (1Jn 1:9) is a Scripture which many stumble at—as if a bare **confession** was enough. Whereas it is more fully explained in Proverbs 28:13, "If we **confess** and **forsake** our sins."

**John MacArthur** says that Pr 28:13: Links the two inseparable parts of **true repentance**: the **confession** and **forsaking** of sin.

**Note that when a believer chooses to confess transgressions**, he (she) is in essence working out his (her) "salvation with fear and trembling" (Php 2:12-note). However, the truth is that we would never choose to confess our transgressions if God's Spirit in us would not be at work to will and work to His good pleasure. (Php 2:13-note). Amazing God. Amazing plan of salvation. Amazing grace!

**But - Always take the "pause the refreshes" and which edifies and which causes you to meditate on the Word of Truth and Life!** Whenever you encounter a **contrast**, always query it with one of the **with the 5W/H questions** such as "What is being contrasted?" (When?, Why? Who is involved? etc) This proverb presents us with one of preeminent contrasts in all of Scripture which is itself based upon another great contrast "**but God**" in Ephesians 2 where we read

**But God**, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Eph 2:4, 5-note, Ep 2:6, 7-note)

## **WE MUST FIRST UNCOVER SIN IN ORDER TO "COVER" IT!**

**Bridges** observes that...

God and man each cover sin; God in free unbounded grace (Isa 43:25, 44:22); man, in shame and hypocrisy. The sinners here contrasted are chargeable with the same guilt. But how opposite are the remedies adopted, and their several results! The contrast is not between great sins and small, but between sins covered, and sins confessed and forsaken. Whoso covereth the smallest sin, shall not prosper. Whoso confesseth and forsaketh the greatest, shall find mercy. "Love covereth" our neighbour's sins (Pr 10:12); pride our own.

**R F Horton**...

The covering for sin which is spoken of in Pr 16:6 (atonement ~ covering) is of a very different and of a quite particular kind. Coming this verse with the others at the head of the chapter, we may observe that every effectual "covering" of sin in God's sight involves three elements, - confession, forsaking and a changed practice.

First, there is confession. This appears on the face of it to be a paradox: the only way of covering sin is to uncover it! But it is strictly true. We must make a clean breast of it; we must acknowledge its full extent and enormity; we must spare the patient ear of God no detail of our guilt. The foul, explosive gases must be let out into the open, since every attempt to confine them increases their destructive power. The running sore must be exposed to the Physician's eye, since every rag put over it to hide it becomes steeped in its defiling tides. It is true, confession is a painful and a weary task: it is like removing a heap of dust and refuse by the spade fulls,-- each bit as it is disturbed the atmosphere with choking particles and noisome smells; worse and worse is revealed the farther we go. We came to confess a single fault, and we found that it was but a broken shard lying on the foul and pestilential heap. Confession leads to confession, discovery to discovery. It is terribly humiliating. "Am I then so bad as this?" is the horrified cry as each candid admission shows only more and worse that must be admitted. True confession can never be made into a priest's ear,--to men we can only confess the wrongs which we have done to men; but true confession is the awful tale of what we have done to God, against Whom Only we have sinned and done evil in His sight. It is sometimes urged that confession to a priest gives the penitent relief: possibly, but it is a false relief; since the eye of the priest is not omniscient, the sinner confesses only what he chooses, bring the broken shard, and receives absolution for that in lieu of removing the whole heap of abominations that underlie. When we have gone as far as we can in laying ourselves bare to man, there remain vast untraversed tracts of our life and mind which are reserved; "Private Road" is written on all the approaches, and trespassers are invariably prosecuted. It is only to God that a real confession can be made, because we know that to Him all is necessarily evident; with Him no subterfuges avail; He traverses those untraversed tracts; there are no private roads from which He is excluded; He knows our thoughts afar off.

The first step in the "covering" of sin (speaking of atonement) is to realize this. If our sins are really covered they must first be laid bare; we must frankly own that all things are open and laid bare; we must get away from the priest and into the hands of the great High Priest; we must abjure the confessional and bring God Himself into the secret places of our hearts to search us and try us and see if there be any evil way in us. The reserve, and the veilings, which every individual cannot but maintain between himself and all other individuals, must be torn away, in full and absolute confession to God Himself. ([The Book of Proverbs -by R. F. Horton](#))

When man uncovers his sin, God covers it.  
When man cloaks, God strips bare.

When man confesses, God pardons.

--Augustine

## Bridges on confession...

**Long indeed is the struggle, ere every false cover is cut off; ere the heartless general confession--*We are all sinners*--is exchanged for the deep-felt personal acknowledgment, "giving glory to God "Thus and thus" have I done. Behold I am vile. What shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." (Josh 7:19, 20, Job 40:4. Cp Jer 8:6) But glorious is the divine victory over pride and sullenness, when this first act of repentance, this first step of return (Lk 15:17, 18), is heartily accomplished.**

**God needs not confession for His own information.**

**But He demands it for our good.**

It brings no claim on His mercy. But it is a meetness (suitableness) for the reception of it. Christ has fully satisfied the claims of justice. But the claims must be acknowledged in the humble acceptance of the benefit. The mercy is ready; but the sinner must sue it out--"Only acknowledge thine iniquity." (Jer 3:12,13.)

Our yearning Father is "waiting" for this moment, "that he may be gracious." (Lk 15:20, Isa 30:18, with Hos 5:15) There is no further keeping of anger. He shall have mercy, instant reconciliation. (Ps 32:5. Comp. similar examples: 2Chr 33:12, 13; Jer 31:18, 19, 20; Jonah 3:5-10; Lk 15:21, 22, 23, 24; Lk 23:40, 41, 42, 43. See also the promises, Lev 26:40, 41, 42; 2Chr 7:14; Job 33:27, 28; Isa 1:16, 17, 18; Isa 55:7; Ezek 18:21, 22; 1Jn 1:9.)

Words may be few while the heart is full. With David it was but a single sentence; but the closet workings of his heart witnessed to the enlargement and ingenuousness of his sorrow. (2Sa 12:13 with Ps 51:1ff. See also David's tender dread of *covering sin*. Ps 139:1, 23, 24) Thus man confesses the debt; God crosses it out from his book; and sweet is the penitent's song--"Blessed is he, whose sin, is covered." (Ps 32:1)

**But we must not overlook the distinctive feature of this confession.** It is not that of Pharaoh, extorted on the rack; (Ex 9:27, 34) or of Saul and Judas, (1Sa 24:16, 17; 26:3,4. Mt 27:4,5) the stinging of remorse; or of the Pharisees and Sadducees, (Mt 3:6, 7, 8, 9) mere formal profession; or of the harlot, (Pr 7:14) a cover for sin. Penitent faith confesses in the act of laying the hand upon the great sacrifice, (Lev 16:21) and hence draws strength of purpose to forsake all that has been here confessed.

**For while the hypocrite confesses without forsaking, (Pharaoh and Saul)  
the hearty forsaking is here the best proof of tile sincere confessing.**

And this first act of the penitent is matured into the **daily habit of the saint**. The further we advance, the deeper will be the tone of confession. (Job 40:4, 42:6, Ezek 16:63) The moment sin is seen to be sin, let it be laid on the Surety's Head. Every moment of unconfessed sin adds to its burden and guilt. The thought of a nature estranged from God; a heart full of corruption; sins of youth and age; before and after conversion; against light and conviction, knowledge and love; the sins of our very confessions, their defilement, coldness, and too often self-righteous tendency; all supply abundant material for abasing acknowledgment.

**Plead the greatness,  
not the smallness of our sin.**

(Ps 25:22 with Lk 18:11. Comp. Isa 43:24, 25, 26.) Never deem any sin so trifling, as not to need the immediate application of the blood of atonement. Genuine conviction gives no rest, until by the believing apprehension of this remedy the peace of God is firmly fixed in the conscience. As Bunyan so accurately pictured--not at the wicket-gate, but at the sign of the cross, did the Christian find the grave of sin.

**This evangelical humiliation lays the only solid ground for practical godliness.** It is a sorrow full of joy, and not less full of holiness. No Achan will be reserved (Josh 7:1); no Agag spared (1Sa 15:20); no right hand or right eye favored. (Mk 6:17, 18, 19, 20; Mk 9:43-48) It will not be "the unclean spirit going out, and returning to his house with sevenfold influence;" (Mt 12:43, 44) or the man, who leaves his home, but forsakes it not, all his heart and joy being still there. Here the forsaking will be without the thought of returning; yea, with the fixed determination never to return. (Job 34:32) It will not be the exchange of one path in the broad road for another more attractive; but the relinquishment of the whole road with all its by-paths. The inner principles as well as the outer walk; "the unrighteous thoughts," no less than "the wicked ways" will he forsake (Isa 55:7) heartily and forever. ([Proverbs 28:13 Commentary](#))

**Confesses** ([03034](#)) ([yadah](#) - see word study) is used in the OT to acknowledge or confess sin, God's character and works, or

man's character. In a number of context the verb means to praise (Ge 29:35, 49:8). Sin must not be covered but confessed (which results in it being covered by the blood of the Lamb, Jn 1:29).

## **SIN MUST NOT BE SELF COVERED BUT SAVIOR COVERED!**

The Hebrew verb "confess" speaks of **continuous action** (even as does the Greek verb for confess in 1Jn 1:9-see [note](#); see also the Lxx verb exegeomai below). Confession is a continuous experience with the Christian. No child of God, who has any sense of sin's heinousness, could (or should) complete a day and go to sleep without confessing his or her sins to God. David's statement should put the fear of the Lord in us for he testified, "When I kept silent (about my sin), my bones wasted away through my groaning (roaring) all day long" (Ps 32:3).

Wherever there is conviction of sin, the believer will (or should) hate it, confess it, and forsake it. When was the last evening you confessed your transgressions of that day (you did have some didn't you?) before you fell asleep? Are you having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep? Could lack of confession and the unrest it creates in a believer's heart have anything to do with your insomnia? Just a thought. I am planning on chronicling my confessions daily because even as I wrote these notes I realized I went to sleep last night without confessing several very glaring "bouts of unholy behavior"!

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates "**confesses**" with an interesting verb **exegeomai** (English = exegesis = unfolding interpretation thru teaching) which has the idea of unfolding, declaring thoroughly and particularly even as an excellent teacher is to make known the meaning of a passage. Exegeomai is in the **present tense** in Greek calling for confession to be our continual practice just as does the Hebrew form of the verb yadah (see preceding paragraph). Confession is to be a believer's lifestyle. Furthermore, the picture painted by this unique verb **exegeomai** seems to be **not** one of confessing in "generalities" ("Oh Lord, I have sinned against Thee") ... but of very specific confession, of naming the sins by their specific heinous names, not confessing them in vague (even abstract) generalities. Remember that concealing the sin involves rationalizing it in order to avoid confessing it, whereas confession involves naming the particular sin and "owning" it as your own despite the pain and shame it causes your heart! That's genuine confession!

**Yadah - 111v -**

Gen 29:35; 49:8; Lev 5:5; 16:21; 26:40; Num 5:7; 2 Sam 22:50; 1 Kgs 8:33, 35; 1 Chr 16:4, 7f, 34f, 41; 23:30; 25:3; 29:13; 2 Chr 5:13; 6:24, 26; 7:3, 6; 20:21; 30:22; 31:2; Ezra 3:11; 10:1; Neh 1:6; 9:2f; 11:17; 12:24, 46; Job 40:14; Ps 6:5; 7:17; 9:1; 18:49; 28:7; 30:4, 9, 12; 32:5; 33:2; 35:18; 42:5, 11; 43:4f; 44:8; 45:17; 49:18; 52:9; 54:6; 57:9; 67:3, 5; 71:22; 75:1; 76:10; 79:13; 86:12; 88:10; 89:5; 92:1; 97:12; 99:3; 100:4; 105:1; 106:1, 47; 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31; 108:3; 109:30; 111:1; 118:1, 19, 21, 28f; 119:7, 62; 122:4; 136:1ff, 26; 138:1f, 4; 139:14; 140:13; 142:7; 145:10; Pr 28:13; Isa 12:1, 4; 25:1; 38:18f; Jer 33:11; 50:14; Lam 3:53; Dan 9:4, 20; Zech 1:21

**The way to cover our sin <  
is to uncover it by confession.**

--Sibbes

## **SPECIFIC SIN SPECIFIC CONFESSION**

When you have committed a specific sin against God, be sure to specifically confess that sin. As **John Blanchard** says...

Acknowledging that one is a sinner is no more conviction of sin than believing the truth about Jesus is saving faith.

**Spurgeon's** exhortation is also apropos regarding confession of specific sins...

Do not give fair names to foul sins. Call them what you will, they will smell no sweeter.

**Moses** uses this **yadah**...

So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall **confess** that in which he has sinned. (Lev 5:5, context = Lev 5:1, 2, 3, 4, Nu 5:6, 7)

On the **Day of Atonement** we read...

Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and **confess** over it all the iniquities of the

sons of Israel, and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. (Lev 16:21)

In **Second Chronicles** we see **yadah** used in the context of **confession**...

When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against Thee, and they pray toward this place and **confess** Thy name, and turn from their sin when Thou dost afflict them then hear Thou in heaven and forgive the sin of Thy servants and Thy people Israel, indeed, teach them the good way in which they should walk. And send rain on Thy land, which Thou hast given to Thy people for an inheritance. (2Chronicles 6:26, 27, cp Lev 26:40, 1Ki 18:33, 35, 36)

**H A Ironside** - Confession is the divinely-appointed method of securing a clear conscience, not confession to some human mediator, but to God Himself. The basis of our forgiveness is the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because in rich grace, He bore the sinner's judgment on Calvary and shed His precious blood to put away sin, God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Ro 3:26-note). Confession does not mean a general acknowledgment of sinfulness and wickedness of life, uttered to ease the soul. True confession involves genuine repentance and self-judgment. The repentant man no longer hugs the chains that bind him but longs for full deliverance from them. He comes to God with real concern about his unholy ways, thoughts, and words, earnestly seeking grace to cease from them and to walk uprightly before the Lord. But he cannot do this in himself. Only when he rests in simple faith in the finished work of Christ and yields himself to God as one now alive from the dead is he able to rise above the sins that have blighted his life and almost damned his soul.

There are two kinds of forgiveness, **judicial** and **parental**. When we trust Christ as Lord and Savior, we receive forgiveness from the penalty of sins which is the picture of **judicial** forgiveness. When we, as believers, confess our sins, we receive **parental** forgiveness (1Jn 1:9-note) which maintains fellowship with God our Father. Anyone who **confesses and forsakes** his sins has the assurance that God not only forgives but forgets (Heb 10:17-note).

Consider the nature and advantage of confessing and forsaking sin.

1. Our confession must be spiritual.
2. Our sin must be confessed as a great evil.
3. Our sin must be confessed as deserving special punishment.

(From Sketches of Four Hundred Sermons.)

It is far better to deal with sin by confessing and renouncing it. As David found out, confession results in God's mercy and forgiveness (Ps 34:5; 51:1-12). Don't sweep sin under the rug. Instead put it under the blood.

In **Psalm 32** which most authorities think is a response to David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba David declares...

I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not **hide** (**kacah** ; Lxx = epikalupto as the man who conceals his sin = Pr 28:13); I said, "I will **confess** my transgressions to the LORD"; And Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin. Selah.

**Comment:** While David did "hide" (**kacah**) his sin for almost a year after his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband Uriah, he eventually did "come clean" before God as recorded so beautifully in Psalm 51 (See commentary **Psalm 51:1-9** and **Psalm 51:10-19** ).

**Spurgeon's comments on Ps 32:5: I acknowledged my sin unto thee.** After long lingering, the broken heart bethought itself of what it ought to have done at the first, and laid bare its bosom before the Lord. The lancet must be let into the gathering ulcer before relief can be afforded. The least thing we can do, if we would be pardoned, is to acknowledge our fault; if we are too proud for this we double deserve punishment.

**And mine iniquity have I not hid.** We must confess the guilt as well as the fact of sin. It is useless to conceal it, for it is well known to God; it is beneficial to us to own it, for a full confession softens and humbles the heart. We must as far as possible unveil the secrets of the soul, dig up the hidden treasure of Achan, and by weight and measure bring out our sins. I said. This was his fixed resolution.

**I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.** Not to my fellow men or to the high priest, but unto Jehovah; even in those days of symbol the faithful looked to God alone for deliverance from sin's intolerable load, much more now, when types and shadows have vanished at the appearance of the dawn. When the soul determines to lay low and plead guilty, absolution is near at hand; hence we read,

**And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.** Not only was the sin itself pardoned, but the iniquity of it; the

virus of its guilt was put away, and that at once, so soon as the acknowledgment was made.

**God's pardons are deep and thorough: the knife of mercy cuts at the roots of the ill weed of sin. Selah. Another pause is needed, for the matter is not such as may be hurried over.**

**Daniel** uses **yadah** in one of the greatest prayers in Scripture in Daniel 9...

And I prayed to the LORD my God and **confessed** and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments **we** (Notice Daniel's humble attitude to include himself a sinner!) have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly, and rebelled, even turning aside from Thy commandments and ordinances. (Da 9:4, 5-**note**, cp second used of Yadah in Da 9:20-**note**)

**Comment:** It is worth noting that Daniel gives five descriptions of sin against God!

**Joseph Hall** was right when he said...

How easily sin gets into the heart; how hardly it gets out of the mouth.

**Gill** writes that we must confess our sins...

to God, against it is committed, and who only can pardon it; and though it is known unto him, yet he requires an acknowledgment of it, which should be done from the heart, with an abhorrence of the sin, and in the faith of Christ, as a sacrifice for it; and it is not enough to **confess**, there must be a **forsaking** likewise, a **parting** with sin, a **denying** of sinful self, a **leaving** the former course of sin, and a **quitting** the company of wicked men before used to, and an **abstaining** from all appearance of evil; as is and will be the case, where there is a true sight and sense of sin, and the grace of God takes place: and such find "mercy", pardoning grace and mercy, or pardon in a way of mercy, and not merit; for though the sinner confesses and forsakes it, it is not that which merits pardon and mercy in God, who is rich in it, delights in showing it, and from whom it may be hoped for and expected by all such persons; (Ps 32:5-[note](#)) (1Jn 1:9)

Former Moody Bible Church pastor **Alan Redpath** said...

The time lag between the moment of sinning and the moment of forsaking and confessing is a sure indication of the true nature of a man's walk with God.

**Study Torrey's cross references on**

### Confession of sin

- God requires - Leviticus 5:5; Hosea 5:15
- God regards - Job 33:27,28; Daniel 9:20-23
- Exhortation to - Joshua 7:19; Jeremiah 3:13; James 5:16
- Promises to - Leviticus 26:40-42; Proverbs 28:13

**SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED WITH**

- Submission to punishment - Leviticus 26:41; Nehemiah 9:33; Ezra 9:13
- Prayer for forgiveness - 2Sa 24:10; Ps 25:11; 51:1; Jer 14:7-9,20
- Self-abasement - Isaiah 64:5,6; Jeremiah 3:25
- Godly sorrow - Psalms 38:18; Lamentations 1:20
- Forsaking sin - Proverbs 28:13
- Restitution - Numbers 5:6,7
- Should be full and unreserved - Ps 32:5; 51:3; 106:6
- Followed by pardon - Ps 32:5; 1John 1:9
- Illustrated - Lk 15:21; 18:13

**Exemplified**

- Aaron - Numbers 12:11
- Israelites - Nu 21:6,7; 1Sa 7:6; 12:19
- Saul - 1Sa 15:24



- David - 2Sa 24:10
- Ezra - Ezra 9:6
- Nehemiah - Nehemiah 1:6,7
- Levites - Nehemiah 9:4,33,34
- Job - Job 7:20
- Daniel - Daniel 9:4
- Peter - Luke 5:8
- Thief - Luke 23:41

**Speaker's Commentary** - If wrong has been done, the course which man is naturally tempted to take, that of hiding, hushing up, does but increase his misery. The burden is still on him. The conditions of freedom are confession and amendment, confession to God of sins against Him, to men of sins against them. The teaching of ethical wisdom on this point is identical with that of Psalmist, Prophet, Apostles, and our Lord Himself. ([Proverbs 28:13 Commentary](#))

**John Gill** explains that...

whenever he is charged with sin, and reproved for it by his fellow Christian, he should **not cover** it, that is, he should own it, for not to own and acknowledge it is to **cover** it. He should not deny it, which is to **cover** it with a lie, and is adding sin to sin. Nor should he justify it, as if he had done a right thing; nor extenuate or excuse it, or impute it to others that drew him into it, as Adam, which is called a **covering** transgression, as Adam, (Job 31:33).

**A C Gaebelein** - Every attempt to cover up sin is a failure. How much of this is done today, not merely the covering of individual sins, but the denial of sin itself. Modern theology uses much ingenious argumentation which tries to make out of sin something else; speaks of it as a mere defect, as if it were some kind of a taint in the blood, a hereditary and therefore unavoidable weakness, something for which man is not responsible. All these inventions, which sweep aside the declarations of the infallible Word of God, are "covering up." No mercy can there be for those who deny sin and sins. The fig leaves must be torn away with which man still tries to cover his nakedness. There must be confession, repentance, self-judgment and then of course trust in Him who died for the ungodly. ([Proverbs 28:13 Commentary](#))

**John Gill** explains that the man who **covers his sin**...

**shall not prosper** in soul or body, in things temporal or spiritual; he shall not have peace of mind and conscience, but, sooner or later, shall feel the stings. He shall not succeed even in those things he has in view by covering his sins (Nu 32:23). He shall not be able to cover them long, for there is nothing covered but what shall be revealed; if not in this life, which yet often is, however at the day of judgment, when every secret thing shall be made manifest; nor shall he escape the shame and punishment he thought to avoid by covering it, as may be observed in the case of Achan, (Joshua 7:11-25) ; in short, he shall have no mercy shown him by God or man, as appears by the antithesis in the next clause

**William Bates** in his article on "God's Forgiveness of Sin" has a subtopic on on Confession which addresses the question of "What About Confession to Other People?" (not just to God)...

An initial and prerequisite thing in approach to God by the sinner, between which two sin intervenes, is confession. It is the vital link between the soul and God...

**Confession is, so to speak, an instinct of the heart. Unconfessed sin bars the way of approach to God, confession opens it.**

The needfulness of confession to God of sin en bloc and in particular is plain enough; but how about confession to others?

Perhaps there is no matter in practical Christian experience that has brought keener pain to sensitive-conscienced souls than that of confession of sin to those against whom we may have sinned. And who is there that does not desire to have this question satisfactorily treated, and, if possible, settled?

Realizing the importance, the difficulty, and the delicacy of this phase of the subject the author, instead of depending upon his own thought, is glad to avail himself, not only as to substance but much as to form, of editorial matter in the Christian Herald and the Sunday School Times, which gratefully he does with the permission of the editors of both journals.

'Charles E. Hurlburt, Director of the African Inland Mission, said at the Victorious Life Conference at Princeton:

**“Confession is a dangerous thing.”** The consecrated Bible student and teacher, [Dr. Arthur T. Pierson \(Biography\)](#), is quoted as having said on this subject of confession: “God does not want us to wash our dirty linen in public.” Neither Mr. Hurlburt nor Dr. Pierson were speaking of confessing our sins to God; this is an imperative obligation and a sacred privilege. They were speaking of making confessions to others for the sake of confessing, an imaginary duty which has indeed tormented some earnest, sincere Christians, and which Satan can bring before us in his effort to drive us beyond God’s will.’

‘Confession of sin {in the manner urged in James, 5:16, “Confess therefore your faults

one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed”) is often a source of cruel torture to sensitive souls. It should be very clearly understood that if we have wronged any one in thought, word, or deed, it is our duty to confess it to that person; but a wrong which may be so far back in the past that it can justly be said to affect no one but God and ourselves, and which a quickened conscience is insistently bringing before us, needs to be confessed only to God.’ ‘The entire passage in James is dealing with the subject of bodily healing, and with the calling in of elders of the church for special prayer for such healing in the name of the Lord. If the sick one has committed sins, we are told, in connection with this special ordinance of prayer and healing, that he will be forgiven those sins; and obviously such sins are to be confessed at such a time. But the passage is not dealing with the subject of confession in general.’

‘There is nothing in the Bible that tells the Christian to make public confession of his sins, or to confess his sins to any human being, merely in order that “justice” may be satisfied and the sin be made known to another. The Christian is always to confess his sins to God, against whom every sin is directed; and if we thus “confess our sins he [Jesus] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). When confession to God has been made, then confession of that sin need not be made to any human being unless some one has been defrauded or injured by our sin and our confession to that one will help to undo the injury or make good the loss.’ ‘This is a reasonable principle: confess a sin to any one who will be injured, defrauded, or wronged in some way if that confession is withheld. But unless actual injury or injustice will be done by withholding confession, there is no sound reason for believing that the confession is necessarily required by, or pleasing to God.’

‘Confession merely in order to let others know of our sin, when their knowing it will do neither them nor any one else any good, is not only unnecessary but is unscriptural. No Christian should ever be required to confess sin simply to humiliate him.’ ‘There is no spiritual value in voluntary self-mortification. When our sins find us out and put us to public shame, we have no right to complain, and should bear it meekly; but self-exposure is no duty, and we should accept it as a merciful dispensation when we are saved from open humiliation, and all the more when our exposure would involve others. It is a sacred duty to shield those who love us from shame on our account.’

‘When one has sinned and has repented of his sin, has confessed it to God, has been forgiven through the redemption and advocacy of Jesus Christ, and then has repaired the injury to the utmost of his power, or is going on to repair it as rapidly as he can, let him drop the whole matter of confessing to anybody else unless further confession is necessary to save some one from injury or loss. God wants us to forget all about any further confession and leave the matter wholly with the forgiving and restoring love of God. The devil loves to torture sincere and conscientious Christians with the devilishly false idea of the duty of confession in directions where God does not want confession made.’

Such, then, are the conditions, on the human side, to be fulfilled in order to God’s forgiveness of our sins: repentance, forgiveness of others, confession. ([God’s Forgiveness Of Sin -- By William H. Bates - Bibliotheca Sacra 79:315. July, 1922, p. 265](#))

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**Cover-up** - After bearing the burden of a guilty conscience for more than four decades, an elderly man decided he couldn’t go on any longer without confessing his crime.

When he was brought to trial, he told the judge, “After living with this thing hanging over my head for 40 some years, it got heavier and heavier until I just couldn’t stand it any longer.” What a clear illustration that guilt is inescapable!

The judge decided to show mercy. “Criminal charges are not warranted in this case,” he said, as the old man, now hard of hearing, strained to catch his words.

Confession is the key to the problem of guilt. The Lord pleaded with His people through the prophet Jeremiah, trying to get them to

see where they had been unfaithful. Over and over again He warned that He would judge them for denying that they had done wrong, and for refusing to come back to Him for mercy (Jer 2:35). He urged them to stop running from what they had done and to admit their sin (Jer 3:13).

What about you today? Is there something in your life that you are covering up? It won't work. You can't fool God. Confess it to the Lord and experience His mercy, love, and grace. — by Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Jesus died to pay sin's debt,  
Forgiveness to bestow;  
But all who try to cover sin  
His grace will never know.  
—DJD

**Confession is the key  
that opens the door to forgiveness.**

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## THE EVIL OF UNCONFESSSED SINS

**Octavius Winslow's** devotional on Pr 28:13 - AUGUST 22.

**A sense of guilt upon the conscience  
invariably occasions distant views of God.**

The moment Adam became conscious of having sinned, He hid himself from God's eye. He sought concealment from the endearing presence of Him who had been used to walk in the cool of the evening through the bowers of Paradise, in sweet and confiding communion. It is so now! Guilt upon the conscience, sin unconfessed, imparts misty, gloomy, distorted views of God. We lose that clear endearing view of His character which we once had. We dare not look up with holy, humble boldness. We misinterpret His dealings; think harshly of His ways; and if providences are dark, and afflictions come, in a moment we exclaim, "I have sinned, and God is angry." And so we seek concealment from God. We sink the Father in the Judge, and the child in the slave.

**Another evil that results from sin unconfessed is the hardening tendency it produces upon the conscience.** To a child of God, who has felt and mourned over the power of sin, we need not stay to prove how hardening is the tendency of sin; how it crusts the heart with a callousness which no human power can soften, and which often requires heavy affliction to remove. Where a child of God, then, neglects the habit of a daily confession of sin, by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, the conscience loses its tenderness, and becomes, by this gradual process, so hardened as at length to think nothing of a sin, which at a previous period would have filled the soul with horror and remorse.

**One more evil we may mention, and that is, that a neglect of this most important duty causes a fearful forgetfulness of sin, without the sweet sense of its forgiveness.** The believer loses sight of his sin, not because he knows it to be pardoned, afresh blotted out, but from a mere carnal forgetfulness of the sin. The child of God, on whose conscience the atoning blood has been afresh sprinkled, cannot soon forget his sin. Oh no! Freed from a sense of its condemnation, delivered from its guilt, and looking up to the unclouded face of a reconciled God, yet He remembers how far he could depart from the God that so loved him, and so readily and freely forgave him. The very pardon of his sin stamps it upon his memory. He thinks of it only to admire the love, adore the grace, and extol the blood that blotted it out; and thus he is led to go softly all his days. "My soul has them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me."

**But the believer who neglects the duty and the privilege of confession loses the remembrance of his sin, until brought under the rod of the covenant.** Then some deep and heavy chastisement recalls it to his memory, and fills him with shame, humiliation, and contrition. In this state, the Eternal Spirit comes into the soul with His restoring mercies, leads the abased and humbled believer afresh to the "fountain opened,"; and God, the God of all comfort; speaks in words of comfort to his broken heart. ([AUGUST](#))

- **He who confesses:** Lev 26:40 41 42 1Ki 8:47 48 49 Job 33:27 Ps 51:1 2, 3, 4, 5,10 Jer 3:12,13 Da 9:20 21 22 23 Lk 15:18 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 1Jn 1:8, 9, 10
- **forsakes:** Ex 10:16,17 1Sa 15:30 Mt 3:6, 7, 8, , 10 27:4,5 Acts 26:20 )

Here's pardon for transgressions past,  
It matters not how black they're cast  
And O, my soul, with wonder view  
For sins to come here's pardon too.

Be wary of Satan's ruse to convince you that all you must do is confess your sins. The truth of Pr 28:13 is that confessing your sins is **no substitute** for **forsaking** them. **Do not be deceived!** (cf Gal 6:7) Forsaking sin is very close to what it means to repent of sin. When we forsake sin, we abandon it, we leave it in a lurch. When we repent, we turn from the sin and toward a godly behavior.

**William Hendricksen** records that "When the Sunday School teacher asked the class, "What does it mean to repent?" a little boy answered, "To repent means to be sorry enough to quit doing what is wrong."" ([New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. 1996, Baker](#))

## WHEN TO CONFESS? IMMEDIATELY!

Proverbs 28:13 links confession with forsaking sin. This implies that an individual ought to confess his transgressions as soon as he is aware of them. Delay in confessing and forsaking sin constitutes concealment, which results in loss of spiritual prosperity, as well as inviting trouble and divine discipline and the LORD cannot work on our behalf (Isa 59:1,2).

**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** notes

Ideally, we should confess our sins when we first become aware of them. But there are two time limits that the Bible provides. First, Ep 4:26 states: let not the sun go down on your wrath. This teaches that sin should be confessed by nightfall. Secondly, 1Co 11:23-33 admonishes us to examine ourselves before we partake of Communion.

**Augustine** phrased it this way...

The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.

**R F Horton** - Sin is formless, vague, impalpable. But our own individual transgressions can be fixed and defined; bringing ourselves to the test of the Law, we can say particularly, "This practice of mine is condemned, this habit of mine is sinful, this point of my character is evil... and then we can definitely turn our back on the practice or the habit, we can distinctly get rid of the blot in our character, we can fly this guilty silence, rouse ourselves from our selfish indolence. "We live to grow less like what we have been;" and it is this act of the will (Ed: but see Php 2:13), this resolute purpose, this loathing what once you loved, and turning towards that which once you ignored,--it is, in a word, the twin process of repentance and conversion, that constitutes the second act in this "covering" of sin. Not, of course, that in a moment the tyranny of old habits can be broken, or the virtue of new activities acquired; but "the forsaking" and "the departing from" are instantaneous exertions of the will. Zaccheus, directly the Lord speaks to him, stands forth, and breaks with his sins, renounces his extortions, resolving to make amends for the past, and enters on a new line of conduct, promising to give the half of his goods to the poor. That is the essential seal of every true confession: "Whoever confesses and forsakes" his transgressions. ([The Book of Proverbs -by R. F. Horton](#))

**Forsakes** (05800) ('**azab**) basically means to depart from something -- to leave, to forsake (48x), to leave (26x; "left" 22x), to loose, to depart, to abandon. Things that can left behind or forsaken include persons (Ge 44:22; Nu 10:30; Ru 1:16; 2Ki4:30), people who should left behind (Ge 2:24); places (2Ki 8:6; Jer 18:14; 25:38) and objects (Ge 39:12,13; 50:8; Ex 9:21). Men can forsake God (apostatize) (Dt 28:20, 31:16, Jer 1:16), can abandon qualities of virtue (1Ki 12:8, 2Chr 10:8, 13), the way (of righteousness) (Pr 15:10), instruction/wisdom (Pr 4:2, 6), reproof (Pr 10:17 - "ignore" = forsake), kindness (lovingkindness, faithfulness) (Pr 3:3). God promises to not forsake His people (Ge 24:27, 28:15, Dt 31:6,7 contrast what God's people will do = Dt 31:16). In a use similar to Pr 28:13, we are instructed to "forsake wrath." (Ps 37:8)

**1828 Webster - Forsake** = To quit or leave entirely; to desert; to abandon; to depart from. 2. To abandon; to renounce; to reject. 3. To leave; to withdraw from; to fail. In anger, the color forsakes the cheeks. In severe trials, let not fortitude forsake you. 4. In scripture, God forsakes his people, when he withdraws his aid, or the light of his countenance.

To abandon, reject, desert or leave a former association (1Ki 18:18). Abandoned, deserted or rejected, forsaken (Isa 6:12; 10:14;

17:2, 9; 54:6; 60:15; 62:4; Jer 4:29; Zep 2:4).

**Stephen Renn on azab** (Expository Dictionary of Bible Words) - One significant concept that underlies the usage of this term is that of “abandonment,” particularly in regard to Israel’s neglect and rejection of their covenant obligations towards God. Theologically speaking, the idea of “forsaking” one’s covenant responsibility, in the sense of abandoning or neglecting it, is of prime importance. It is predicated of God negatively in that He never abandons His responsibility and always keeps His promises with regard to His people (e.g., Ge 24: 7; Dt 31: 6, 8; Jos 1: 5; 1Ki. 6:13; Ezra 9: 9; Isa. 42:16). However, it is also predicated of Yahweh when He abandons His people, albeit temporarily, as punishment for violating the terms of the covenant and hands them over to the curse sanctions of the law (e.g., Dt 31:17; Isa. 17: 2, 9; 54:7; Jer. 12: 7). In regard to the Israelite people themselves, azab is frequently employed to indicate their “abandonment,” their “rejection” of God (e.g., Dt 28:20; 2Ki. 21:22; 2Ch. 13:11; Ezra 8:22; Isa. 1: 4; Jer. 2:17). It is something they are warned against doing in Jos. 24:20; 1Ch. 28: 9. The Israelites’ wholesale “abandoning” of the covenant is referred to in Jer 22: 9; Da. 11:30. The practice of idolatry as an inevitable consequence of “abandoning” God is cited in Jdg 2:12, 13; 10:6; 1Sa. 12:10; 1Ki. 9: 9; 19:10; 2Ki. 22:17; 2Ch. 34:25; Jer. 1:16; Hos. 4:10. Israel is also condemned for “abandoning,” “forsaking” the commandments of Yahweh — that is, for disobeying them (cf. 2Ki. 17:16; Ezra 9:10; Jer. 9:13). **Azab** is also used quite frequently to refer to “forsaking” in the sense of “(physically) leaving behind,” whether referring to people (e.g., Ge 50: 8; Ex 2:20; Isa. 10: 3); to objects and animals (e.g., 2Sa. 5:21; 1Ch. 14:12; Jer. 14: 5); or to places (e.g., Lev. 26:43 [the land]; Jer. 51: 9 [Babylon]; Zep. 2: 4 [Gaza]). To “leave” or “forsake” in the sense of putting aside physical and psychological dependence is given a special significance in Gen. 2:24, which describes the essence of a rightly-ordered marriage — that a man “leave” his father and mother and be united with his wife. See also Gen. 44:22; Isa. 10:14.1.

In Pr 28:13 the writer urges the path of **forsaking transgressions**. God issued a similar merciful plea in Isaiah 55...

Let the wicked **forsake** ('azab) his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion (racham) on him, and to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. (Is 55:7)

**Forsaking** (leaving it in the lurch) a sin includes not only giving it up but also actually “forgetting” in the sense that there is no longer a desire for it. We are called here to work out our salvation but for the desire to be truly lost involves the gracious, miraculous surgery of God extirpating the desire from our heart (Php 2:12-note, Php 2:13-note).

**NAS Usage:** abandon(3), abandoned(11), abandons(1), commits(1), deserted(1), failed(1), fails(1), forsake(48), forsaken(56), forsakes(2), forsaking(1), forsook(16), free(5), full\*(1), give... vent(1), ignores(1), leave(26), leave them undone(1), leave your behind(1), leaves(2), leaving(1), left(22), left me behind(1), left the behind(1), left behind(1), let it go(1), neglect(2), stopped(1), surely release(1), withdrawn(1).

**'Azab -**

Ge 2:24; 24:27; Ge 28:15; 39:6, 12f, 15, 18; Ge 44:22; 50:8; Ex 2:20; 9:21; 23:5; Lev 19:10; 23:22; 26:43; Nu 10:31; Deut 12:19; 14:27; 28:20; 29:25; 31:6, 8, 16f; 32:36; Josh 1:5; 8:17; 22:3; 24:16, 20; Jdg 2:12f, 21; 10:6, 10, 13; Ruth 1:16; 2:11, 16, 20; 1 Sam 8:8; 12:10; 30:13; 31:7; 2 Sam 5:21; 15:16; 1 Kgs 6:13; 8:57; 9:9; 11:33; 12:8, 13; 14:10; 18:18; 19:10, 14, 20; 21:21; 2 Kgs 2:2, 4, 6; 4:30; 7:7; 8:6; 9:8; 14:26; 17:16; 21:22; 22:17; 1 Chr 10:7; 14:12; 16:37; 28:9, 20; 2 Chr 7:19, 22; 10:8, 13; 11:14; 12:1, 5; 13:10f; 15:2; 21:10; 24:18, 20, 24f; 28:6, 14; 29:6; 32:31; 34:25; Ezra 8:22; 9:9f; Neh 3:8; 4:2; 5:10; 9:17, 19, 28, 31; 10:39; 13:11; Job 6:14; 9:27; 10:1; 18:4; 20:13, 19; 39:11, 14; Ps 9:10; 10:14; 16:10; 22:1; 27:9f; 37:8, 25, 28, 33; 38:10, 21; Ps 40:12; 49:10; 71:9, 11, 18; 89:30; 94:14; 119:8, 53, 87; Pr 2:13, 17; 3:3; 4:2, 6; 9:6; 10:17; 15:10; 27:10; 28:4, 13; Isa 1:4, 28; 7:16; 10:3, 14; 17:2, 9; 18:6; 27:10; 32:14; 41:17; 42:16; 49:14; 54:6f; 55:7; 58:2; 60:15; 62:4, 12; 65:11; Jer 1:16; 2:13, 17, 19; 4:29; 5:7, 19; 9:2, 13, 19; 12:7; 14:5; 16:11; 17:11, 13; 18:14; 19:4; 22:9; 25:38; 48:28; 49:11, 25; 51:9; Lam 5:20; Ezek 8:12; 9:9; 20:8; 23:8, 29; 24:21; 36:4; Dan 11:30; Hos 4:10; Jonah 2:8; Zeph 2:4; Zech 11:17; Mal 4:1.

**Below are some representative uses of 'azab** (if you have time study the previous passages to get a better sense of what 'azab means)...

(Josh 1:5) “No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or **forsake** you.

(Josh 8:17) So not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who had not gone out after Israel, and they **left** the city unguarded and pursued Israel.

(Josh 24:16) The people answered and said, “Far be it from us that we should **forsake** the LORD to serve other gods;

**Comment:** Good words. Walk should always support our talk, and their subsequent walk into idolatry did not

support their words (see Judges below). See wise Joshua's warning below.

(Josh 24:20) "If you **forsake** the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you."

(Jdg 2:12-note) and they **forsook** the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger.

(Jdg 10:6-note) Then the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, served the Baals and the Ashtaroath, the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the sons of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; thus they **forsook** the LORD and did not serve Him.

(Jdg 10:10-note) Then the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against You, for indeed, we have **forsaken** our God and served the Baals."

(Jdg 10:13-note) "Yet you have **forsaken** Me and served other gods; therefore I will no longer deliver you.

(Ru 1:16-note) But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to **leave** you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.

(Ru 2:11-note) Boaz replied to her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you **left** your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.

(Ru 2:16-note) "Also you shall purposely pull out for her some grain from the bundles and **leave** it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

(Ru 2:20-note) Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed of the LORD who has not **withdrawn** his kindness to the living and to the dead." Again Naomi said to her, "The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives."

(Ps 9:10-note) And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O LORD, have not **forsaken** those who seek You.

(Ps 22:1-note) A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why have You **forsaken** (**Lxx = egkatalaipo**) me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

(Ps 71:9-note) Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not **forsake** me when my strength fails.

**David** uses the verb '**azab** to urge us to...

**Cease** from anger and **forsake** (**Lxx = egkatalaipo** = leave behind, desert) wrath. Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. (Ps 37:8-note).

We generally have no trouble forsaking what we hate or find repulsive. It follows that we need to have God open our eyes to see our sins the way He sees them. **John Calvin** put it this way...

Men never entertain a real hatred towards sin unless God illuminates their minds and changes their hearts.

**Find compassion** (**07355**) (**racham**) means to show love for, to love deeply, to feel, show or have compassion on, to be compassionate, show pity or mercy (Hab 3:2), to experience compassion (in the pual - Ho 1:6). **Racham** speaks of tender, heart-felt concern. To tenderly regard someone or tenderly love especially as parents love their infant child. Root refers to deep love (usually of a "superior" for an "inferior") rooted in some "natural" bond.

**Racham** refers to **compassion** which stirs one's emotions (like a parent for their child - see below). **Racham** expresses a deep and tender feeling of compassion, such as is aroused by the sight of weakness or suffering in those that are dear and/or need help. **Racham** pictures the expression of "a sympathetic view of another's distress, motivating helpful action." (John Frame)

The truths about God's racham should stimulate in His children a desire to seek to imitate His tender feelings of compassion to those who don't necessarily deserve our compassion but who are in need of it.

**Martin Luther**...

Wounds cannot be healed until they are revealed and sins cannot be forgiven until they are confessed.

As the Puritan **Thomas Manton** once said...



The right spring of mercy is a sense of God's mercy; it is a thank-offering, not a sin-offering.

**Thomas Adams**

He that demands mercy and shows none ruins the bridge over which he himself is to pass.

Or as **Thomas Fuller** once asked...

If God should have no more mercy on us than we have charity one to another, what would become of us?

**Albert Barnes** convicts us all with his wise comment that...

Nowhere do we imitate God more than in showing mercy.

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**C R Wood** has the following outline related to the **The Answer to Concealment of Sin...**

**A. Motivation**

1. The desire for forgiveness
2. The weariness of suffering
3. The desire for prosperity

**B. Steps**

1. Confession: agreeing with God that what we have done is sin (Psalm 51:4)
  - a. This should be done in detail
  - b. It should be done as soon as possible
2. Forsaking
  - a. It is absolutely essential
  - b. It involves sorrow for sin
  - c. It requires help from God

**C. Results**

1. The mercy of God is extended
  2. Peace of heart, mind and soul are made possible
  3. Prosperity is now potential (spiritual emphasis) (Sermon Outlines on the Book of Proverbs. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications)
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**William S Plumer** on **True Repentance** of which Pr 28:13 confession is only one aspect...

**True repentance embraces these things:**

- 1. A knowledge of sin.** When Nathan convinced David of his sin, he cried for mercy (2Sa 12:13note). Men will not repent of sins of which they think themselves innocent.
- 2. Humility, deep and genuine abasement of soul before God.** The penitent says: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer you?" "O God, you know my foolishness." Job 40:4; Psalm 69:5. True penitents "know every man the plague of his own heart." 1 Kings 8:38.
- 3. Sincere and hearty confession of sin.** "He who covers his sins shall not prosper; but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13. "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and you forgave the iniquity of my sin." Psalm 32:5. Compare Psalm 51:3; Jer. 3:13; 1 John 1:9.
- 4. Shame belongs to genuine repentance** So said David: "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up." Psalm 40:2. So Ezra: "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to you." Ezra 9:6. Compare Ezek. 36:31, 32. Nor does the pious blush cease when pardon comes. Far from it. Ezek. 16:63.

**5. With shame is joined sorrow, ingenuous grief for sin** "Godly sorrow works repentance to salvation not to be repented of." 2 Cor. 7:9, 10. To these are added,

**6. Self-loathing, self-abhorrence.** Job 42:6; Ezek. 6:9; 20:43. Of course one thus exercised also has,

**7. Hatred of sin, sin in every form.** Psalm 66:18; 97:10; 119:104, 128. All these exercises are accompanied with

**8. Love of holiness—a delight in the law of God after the inner man** Romans 7:22; Psalm 119:140. Such a great change leads to

**9. An amendment of life, a thorough reformation, works meet for repentance** Matt. 3:8. "If I have done iniquity, I will do no more." Job 34:32. ([THEOLOGY](#))

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## **APPLYING PROVERBS 28:13 TO YOUR MARRIAGE**

**Application of Pr 28:13 principle to marriage** - Are you prospering in your marriage? In asking this question, we are not asking about income, or reputation, or social status (though all such can be the fruit of prospering). The question is rather one of true fellowship between husband and wife, something that is simply and solely the gift of a gracious God. Is your marriage prospering? If you are prospering, then it is because you are not "covering" your own sins in marriage, but rather the sins of the other. If you are not prospering, then it is because your own sin is being covered in some illegitimate fashion, and you and your marriage need to look to the mercy of God.

**The Basic Barrier:** We all understand our frailties very well. It is very unlikely that anyone here gets up in the morning, and sits down to make a "to do" list, writing on it things like, "be short with the kids this afternoon," "be uncommunicative with my wife," or "be disrespectful to my husband." We don't plan these things—they ambush us. But there is an aspect of this that we don't understand well at all, and it is this aspect that is the most significant barrier to confession of sin in marriage. It is a problem that afflicts both men and women, but it has to be said that masculine pride is by far and away the biggest offender here. The problem has to do with our response after the fact. When we wait for the effects of our sin to "blow over," or just let others "cover it in love," or act like nothing much happened, then our problem is insidious, diabolical, arrogant, marriage-destroying pride. If the sin was major (like an outburst of anger), then the situation demands that we seek forgiveness. To refuse to seek forgiveness is arrogance (Ed: And "covering" the sin). If the sin was minor (like irritation in the voice), and we refuse to seek forgiveness, then our pride is so great that we refuse to pick up a trifle. The former damages directly, and the latter damages by petty insult. For the proud and arrogant, it is either too big to confess or it is too small to confess. Nothing is ever "just right" to confess.

**Dealing With a Backlog:** If you have not lived this way in your marriage, then the chances are good that you have the marital equivalent of a garage that has not been cleaned out for twenty years. The first thing to do is to confess your sins individually (and separately) to God (1John 1:9). When you are right with Him, the time is right to make restitution with one another. When you are standing on a high dive, that sensation in your throat is fear. When you are standing on the end of that bouncy board called humbling yourself, with no water in sight down below, the sensation is also fear—fear fueled by pride.

**Maintenance:** It is always preferable to have a fence at the top of the cliff instead of parking an ambulance at the bottom. One way to build this fence is to keep short accounts. Do not set yourself up for great transgressions through continuance in presumptuous sins (Ps. 19:13). So here are some suggested house rules that should be agreed upon by husband and wife, and this agreement should be close to the bone. You should be looking for deep agreement, where man and wife say to one another, "This is the way we want to live."

**Do not separate, however temporarily, if you are out of fellowship:** this means the husband should not go to work, the wife should not go shopping, and so on. When there is sin between you, that is the most important priority of your life. This does not mean that you have to fix all the problems that are related to the sin, but you must address the sin. Do not go into the presence of others when you are out of fellowship: this includes church, parties, Bible studies, or casual visits. Do not let anyone into your home when you are out of fellowship: your home should be a place of love and rest, and you do not want any others to ever be ushered into the House of Tension. If you are around others, and it happens then, arrange a hand signal for putting things right: this should be a simple way of saying, "I was wrong, please forgive me," and "Yes, I do." It should not be so complex that your wife thinks you are telling her to steal third. But neither should there be private apologies for public sins. Do not make love when you are out of fellowship: do not make your central union and communion into hypocritical disunion. (Douglas James Wilson)

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HERE is the way of mercy for a guilty and repenting sinner. He must cease from the habit of covering sin. This is attempted by falsehood, which denies sin; by hypocrisy, which conceals it; by boasting, which justifies it; and by loud profession, which tries to make amends for it.

The sinner's business is to confess and forsake. The two must go together. Confession must be honestly made to the Lord Himself; and it must include within itself acknowledgment of the wrong, a sense of its evil, and an abhorrence of it. We must not throw the fault upon others, nor blame circumstances, nor plead natural weakness. We must make a clean breast of it and plead guilty to the indictment. There can be no mercy till this is done.

Furthermore, we must forsake the evil: having owned our fault, we must disown all present and future intent to abide in it. We cannot remain in rebellion and yet dwell with the King's Majesty. The habit of evil must be quitted, together with all places, companions, pursuits, and books which might lead us astray. Not for confession, nor for reformation, but in connection with them, we find pardon by faith in the blood of Jesus.

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**F B Meyer (Our Daily Homily) writes** - There must be confession before forgiveness. This is clearly taught everywhere in God's Word. "If thy brother trespass against thee seven times a day, and seven times a day turn to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." But he must turn and say, I repent. This is the clear condition. You may and must use every method of inducing him to say this; but he must be brought to say it, before it is right to pronounce the gracious formula of absolution. There may be the disposition to forgive, but there cannot be the declaration of forgiveness, until the wrongdoer perceives the wrong and expresses his regret and sorrow.

The prodigal must say to his father, "I have sinned." It is only as we confess our sins, that our merciful High Priest can forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Confession is to take God's side against sin. It is the lifting out of one thing after another from heart and life, and holding them for a moment before God, with the acknowledgment that it is our fault, our grievous fault.

There is only one way in which transgressions can be covered: that of which the psalmist speaks, when he says, Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered, because hidden under the propitiation of the blood. In Hood's poem, Eugene Aram sought to cover his sin under the leaves of the forest, and beneath the waters of the river. But in vain. So sinners try to cover their sins in vain. But God hath set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation — a word which denotes the mercy-seat — the lid that covered the stone slabs on which the finger of God had written the Law.

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**Exaggeration** - A woman said to a preacher, "I have a habit that I know is hurting my testimony—the habit of exaggeration. I start to tell something and I go on and on enlarging the story. People suspect that it's not true, and they lose confidence in me. I'm trying to get over it. Could you help me?"

He responded, "Let's talk to the Lord about it."

She prayed, "Lord, You know I have this habit of exaggeration ... " At this point the preacher interrupted, "Call it lying and you may get over it!" The woman was deeply convicted and confessed her wrong.

We often excuse our pet sins by giving them more acceptable names. Our bad temper we call "nerves"; our untruthfulness, "exaggeration"; our dishonesty we call "good business." In seeking to overcome these sins, we need to bring them out in the open, call them honestly by name, and sincerely repent (Proverbs 28:13).

A man entered a dentist's office and sat down to have his teeth fixed. "I can feel a huge cavity with my tongue," he said. The dentist examined the man's teeth and said, "It'll only be a small filling." "But why does it feel so large?" asked the patient. "Just the natural tendency of the tongue to exaggerate," replied the dentist with a twinkle in his eye. We may smile, but aren't we all prone to blow things out of proportion? Indeed, "the tongue is a little member and boasts great things" (James 3:5).—Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, forgive us for misusing our tongues. - Henry Bosch

**To stretch the truth is to tell a lie.**

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**Lawson** writes

Sin is the source of misery and ruin: It has turned angels into devils and people the regions of horror with those that once dwelt in the abodes of perfect bliss. It has brought misery and woe into our world, that might have been a lower heaven, if we had not revolted from God and destroyed ourselves by our iniquity. But, blessed be the Lord, our condition is not desperate, like that of the angels who kept not their first habitation. God looked upon our race with an eye of compassion and provided us effectual relief. The Son of God is our great atonement and we are called to the enjoyment of pardon through faith in His blood. Under a deep sense of our guilt and danger, we are warranted to claim salvation from sin and wrath from that mercy that reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

But such is the folly of many sinners, that they would rather hide their sins from their own eyes, and, if possible, from the eyes of God, than receive mercy under the character of sinners. They will allow themselves to be sinners, but they will not confess their sins; or, if they cannot altogether deny them, they endeavour to save their honour (1Sa 15:30), or rather their pride, to the ruin of their souls, by excusing and extenuating them, or by transferring, like our first parents, the blame of them to others (1Sa 15:20, 21). How foolish is it for those that pine away under a mortal disease to conceal it from the knowledge of the world, rather than seek a cure from the physician?

Those who cover their sins shall not prosper; for it is impossible to cover them from the eye of our Judge, and to endeavor to shelter ourselves under coverings that are not of his spirit, is an additional provocation to the eyes of his glory. If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged; but if we cover our sins with excuses, and will not suffer ourselves to be sensible of our absolute need of sovereign mercy, how can we expect to share in that salvation, which is bestowed on men to the praise of the glory of the grace of God?

If we will not acknowledge our disease, we refuse to the physician the praise of a cure.

There are some who expose themselves to the censure of this text, by hiding their sins from men, when providence, by bringing them to light, calls for a public confession as one evidence of repentance. Such persons think it would be a dishonor to them to confess their faults; but the dishonor lay in committing them, and confession, with other proofs of repentance, is the only possible means of wiping it away. They stand upon a false point of honor, and expose themselves to disgrace and misery; for they shall not prosper, because they refuse to give glory to God by taking shame to themselves (Josh 7:19).

Those that hide their sins shall not prosper, because they reject that mercy without which they must be miserable. They prefer their own fig-leaf coverings to that covering of sin by pardoning mercy which is the ground of blessedness to the guilty (Ps 32:1). But if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1Jn 1:9). Under the law, the offerer of an atoning sacrifice was appointed to lay his hands upon the head of the victim, as a token of the translation of his guilt unto his sacrifice. In like manner, we are to confess our sin, with a dependence on that blessed sacrifice which takes away the sin of the world, claiming the pardon of our iniquities through the Messiah, whose soul was made an offering for sin; and through him all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.

But what shall we say of those who confess their sins, like Pharaoh, and again return to the practice of them? (cp Ex 9:27, 10:16) These persons are not partakers of mercy, for their confessions were never sincere. They were never produced by a genuine humiliation, nor mingled with faith in the atonement, and therefore they are not accompanied with reformation. They are provocations to God, because He is mocked and insulted by such deceitful professions.

But he that confesses and forsakes his sins shall have mercy. It was divine mercy that wrought in him such a happy temper. The sincerity of his repentance is an evidence of his interest in the blessings of saving mercy. That mercy which he has already experienced shall still follow him, till he is crowned with loving-kindnesses and mercies.

Thank You Father for not giving us what we deserve but instead providing for us what we don't deserve... the Way of escape in the wilderness of this wanton wasting world... Forgiveness of our abominable sins through the shed blood of the Holy Lamb of God. Hallelujah.

**Illustration:** In a conservative southern church, the pastor's wife found pornography on her husband's computer. After confronting him with the evidence, he admitted downloading the images off the internet, even using the computer in his study which was located in the church itself. Somehow he had separated his ongoing sexual sin from his responsibilities and duties as a man of God.

**Illustration:** In an August 2000 poll conducted by Christianity Today on internet pornography, 33% of active ministers admitted

having visited porn sites. Over half of those ministers said that they had visited those sites more than once. A total of 18 percent of clergy said they visit sexually explicit Web sites between a couple of times a month and more than once a week. This poll includes many liberal and 'mainstream' ministers, but it would be very naive to think that porn was not a problem for some bible-believing ministers.

**Illustration:** In another bible-believing church not far from my home, a Christian businessman sought investment capital from other Christian individuals and businesses. He promised to invest the money in new Christian enterprises and promised a high rate of return on their money. Alas, however, there was no new enterprise, and there was no return on their money. He had embezzled hundreds of thousands of dollars from his fellow Christians. He was charged by civil authorities and jailed. The unbelieving world had another excuse to demean biblical Christianity.

**Illustration:** A nice Christian family joined the church by letter from another city. Brad and Susan had four wonderful little boys ranging in age from two years up to ten years. Susan had a beautiful voice and sang specials in the church. Brad was a bible teacher and had taught Sunday school at their former church. But Brad and Susan had a terrible secret. He had a terrible temper that caused him to abuse Susan both physically and emotionally. No one in the church had any idea until she took her boys and left to return to her hometown. Brad followed her back and tried to reconcile with her. But his secret was now public and there was no turning back.

**Spurgeon** - You say that you can handle your secret sins, that there is no one hurt by them. But you may as well ask the lion to let you put your head into his mouth. You cannot regulate his jaws: neither can you regulate sin. Once done, you cannot tell when you will be destroyed. You may put your head in and out a great many times; but one of these days it will be a costly venture. " Christian friend, go not continue to hide your sin. Don't harbor that sin, buried deep in the tent floor of your heart. It will affect your family, your home, your spiritual inheritance, and your purpose in life. There is no sin worthy of separating us from our Father. It is not necessary to confess your secret sins to everyone, for it is none of their business. Do business with God. Repent and let God restore you to fellowship.

### **Proverbs 28:13** **by William Arnot**

**Arnot's** entire chapter on Pr 28:13 is included because it is no longer published and because **C H Spurgeon** thought so highly of Arnot's work writing "We wish Dr. Arnot had gone steadily through the whole book, for his mind was of an order peculiarly adapted for such a task. Those passages which he dilates upon are set in a clear and beautiful light. For a happy blending of illustrative faculty, practical sound sense, and spirituality, Dr. Arnot was almost unrivalled." ([Spurgeon, C. H. Lectures to my Students](#)). **Below are Arnot's comments...**

This verse is divided to our hand. The separating lines are very distinctly drawn: they mark at once the appropriate place of each portion, and the mutual relations of all. Two persons are introduced; two opposite courses are ascribed to them; and two correspondingly opposite results are predicted. The one covers his sins, and therefore shall not prosper: the other confesses and forsakes his sins, and therefore shall have mercy.

The two distinct yet closely related subjects are the covering the confession of sin, with the consequences that follow either course. Two kinds of seed are sown in spring, and two kinds of fruit are gathered in harvest. As man sows, so shall he reap.

Few people know what sin is; and those few do not know it well. Both the name and the thing which it signifies are common; and yet neither is well or widely understood. Men cover their sins because they know a little of them, and then the covering prevents them from learning more. They suspect that the knowledge would not be pleasant and therefore keep it out of the way. They would call that prophet willingly, if they could be assured that he would prophesy good concerning themselves.

Sin is in a man at once the most familiar inmate and the greatest stranger. There is nothing which he practices more or knows less. Although he lives in it--because he lives in it, he is ignorant of it. Nothing is more widely diffused or more constantly near us than atmospheric air; yet few ever notice its existence, and fewer consider its nature. Dust and chaff and feathers, that sometimes move up and down in it, attract our regard more than the air in which they float; yet these are trifles which scarcely concern us, and in this we live and move and have our being. The air which we breathe is every day and all day affects our life and happiness more than those occasional meteoric phenomena which excite the wonder of the world. The air exerts a predominating power on life, independently of the thought or thoughtlessness of those who breathe it. Such, in this respect is sin. It pervades humanity, but in proportion to its profusion men are blind to its presence. Because it is

everywhere, we do not observe it anywhere: because we never want it; we are not aware that we ever have it. But to ignore its existence does not change its nature, or remove its effects. Sin decisively affects the time and eternity of men, although they neither observe its presence nor dread its power. Our ignorance or indolence cannot change the law of God and the nature of things. Sin is sin in its character and consequences—in its present guilt and future doom—although the sinner die without discovering the element in which he lived. "Behold, I knew not," will neither arrest nor annul the sentence, "Depart from me." The true reason of the sinner's ignorance is the greatness of his sin. If it had been some brilliant feather floating in the air, he would have followed it with his eye, and inquired into its origin: but the air itself—he lived in it, and therefore never became aware that there was such a thing.

Beware of the old, stolid, atheistic blunder, of counting that nothing exists which cannot be seen. Moral evil is invisible as the human soul, or God its maker; yet it exists and its effects are great. God unseen rewards the search of those who seek Him; sin unseen punishes the neglect of those who seek it not. If you diligently seek for God your friend, He will be your rewarder; if you diligently seek for sin your foe, it will not be your destroyer. The acute and learned Saul of Tarsus, did not discover his own sin until his journey to Damascus, although it wrought constantly as a law in his members. It was because it lay so near that he failed to observe it. A scratch on the skin is more easily discovered than a poison circulating in the blood. Alas! We know better every trifling accident that occurs in the world, than the enmity to God which reigns at first in all, troubles even disciples to the last.

But the knowledge of sin, difficult by the nature of the thing, is rendered still more difficult by positive efforts to conceal it. Life has three sides like tablets, on which moral character, good or evil, is graven and displayed -- an aspect inward, an aspect outward, and an aspect upward. The corresponding departments of duty, as expressed in Scripture, are, "to live soberly and righteously and godly;" but when in any or all of these directions a man comes short, an evil heart of unbelief makes an effort to conceal the sin. Watchers and witnesses stand round the man on all three sides: himself, his neighbor, and God, observe and condemn the various forms of transgression.

Criminals are not the only class who strive to hide their deeds from the sight of men. Reputable citizens occupy much of their time, and expend much of the energy, in the task of making themselves seem better than they are. But after covering his sin from his neighbor the hypocrite must take up the more difficult task of concealing it from himself. A busy court is constantly in session within a human heart. Opposing parties are ever wrangling there. Nowhere is special pleading more cunningly employed to make the worse appear the better reason. No effort is spared to hide the ugly side of sin, and set off its more seemly parts as virtue. The imaginations of man's heart, evil themselves, are constantly employed like clouds of artisans in weaving webs to cover other evils.

But the chief effort of the alienated must ever be to cover his sins from the sight of God. The arts are manifold; and they are practised in secret: it is not easy to detect and expose them. The strong man armed who maintains possession of the citadel puts forth all his strength to prevent the entrance of a stronger One. As long as a human heart is held by the prince of darkness, the human faculties enslaved are compelled to guard the gates against the Light of Life. The keynote of the carnal is given by the possessing spirit: "What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus? art thou come to torment us?" All the wiles of the tempter and all the faculties of his slave are devoted to the work of weaving a curtain thick enough to cover an unclean conscience from the eye of God. Anything and everything may go as a thread into the web; houses and lands, business and pleasure, family and friends, virtues and vices, blessings and cursings—a hideous miscellany of good and evil—constitute the material of the curtain: and the woven web is walked over and over again with love and hatred, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, to thicken the wall without and deepen the darkness within, that the fool may be able with some measure of comfort to say "in his heart, No God!"

**But " he shall not prosper" in this effort to cover his sin.** God cannot so be mocked: His laws cannot so be evaded. Although sin in its spiritual nature cannot be seen by human eyes and weighed in material balances, it is as real as the objects of sense. Although its essence is not palpable, its power is great. If it be not destroyed, it will become the destroyer. If it be not through grace cast out of a man in time, it will in judgment cast the man out from God and the good at last.

Certain great iron castings have been ordered for a railway-bridge. The thickness has been calculated according to the extent of the span and the weight of the load. The contractor constructs his moulds according to the specifications, and when all is ready pours in the molten metal. In the process of casting, through some defect in the mould, portions of air lurk in the heart of the iron, and cavities like those of a honey-comb are



formed in the interior of the beam; but a whole skin covers all the surface, and the flaws are effectually concealed. The artisan has covered his fault, but he will not prosper. As soon as it is subjected to a strain the beam gives way.

The catastrophe, you reply, is due to the violation of physical laws, and we all know that they inexorably and impartially chastise transgressors. For that very reason has the example been taken from the domain of the natural laws. You know that it is foolish to hide a sin in the heart of the iron. It shall not prosper. Laws which you see in operation will avenge the trick. The case belongs to matter and its essential properties. The senses take cognizance of the fact. We believe it, because we see it.

Well; sin covered becomes a rotten hollow in a human soul, and when the strain comes, the false gives way. If the hypocrite, through the merciful arrangements of Providence, be tried and tested in this life, the fair appearance will collapse, and a deceived heart, taught by terrible things in righteousness to know itself, may yet find God a Saviour. It is thus that the trial of faith "is much more precious than of gold that perishes" (1 Peter 1:7). The fall which reveals a fatal defect, before it is too late to obtain a remedy, is in form a calamity, but in essence and effect the best of blessings. If no severe pressure come to test the spurious goodness within the limits of this life, it may hold together until it be out of sight in the grave. But it is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment. The strain which will try every man's work is put on there. The unsoundness caused by covered sin will be detected then. The assize and the condemnation are not visible. If men refuse to believe what they cannot see, they must even wait until they get their own kind of evidence. If a material generation in a material age will make sure that there is no flaw in the iron which spans the river and bears their goods; and go with the hollow which covered sin has left in their souls to meet the final judgment; they must even be left in unbelief to take in conviction when it can no longer lead to life. "Seeing is believing." That curt proverb will receive a terrible fulfilment. When the Lord comes the second time, "Every eye shall see him:" but they who are first convinced then shall "believe and tremble."

## **2. He who confesses and forsakes his sins shall find compassion (mercy)**

The subject in the second member of the proverb is that genuine confession which stands opposed to the covering of sin. It tells us what such confession is, and what it obtains. Reformation is the test of its character, and pardon its blessed result. There is a relation of a close and interesting kind between confessing and forsaking sin. Confession is false, unless the confessed sin be also forsaken; and actual amendment is unsound at heart, unless the forsaken sin be also confessed. Neither can stand alone. They must lean on each other.

Confession is made to Him against whom the sin has been committed. All sin is sin against God; to God therefore confession of all sin should be made. Some acts offend also a brother; and in these cases confession should be made also to him.

The confessional system of Rome is false from the foundation. It blasphemously puts a man in the place of God. Its roots are rotten, and its branches cannot bear fruits of righteousness. Instead of securing that the sin confessed shall be forsaken, its natural tendency and common effect is to prepare the way for repetition. It is like a merchant's monthly clearance, leaving the room empty for another set of accommodation bills, to be cleared out in turn when the next month is done. So violently did this abuse outrage even men's natural sense of right, that it became the hinge on which, in its earliest stage, the Lutheran Reformation turned.

True confession is made to God. The human spirit must come into direct contact with the Divine. The Father of our spirits permits the child to approach himself on such an errand: and the offspring man has faculties fitted for converse with God a spirit.

When confession is real, it is complete. The same conviction which shows a sinner that he ought to confess, shows him that he ought to confess all. If it is not a confession of all, it is not confession. It is the old trick of covering the sin. When the spirit of adoption is attained, the confessor, with the simplicity of a little child, gives the keys of his heart to God, and welcomes the Omniscient Searcher into all its secret chambers.

True confession will produce actual forsaking of sin, as a living root sends up branches, spreads out blossoms, and nourishes fruit. If a son far separated in residence, and long alienated in heart, relent at length and humbly invite his father to forgive and visit him: and if evil men and evil works find harbor still in the son's dwelling, before the father's visit the place will be purged of its disreputable occupants. If the son is still wedded to these companions and these pursuits, he will not sincerely invite his father to come in; if he really desires that his father should come in, he will at the same moment and under the same impulse drive out the offenders. It is thus that true confession to God, in the nature of the thing, carries with it an abandonment of the sins

confessed; and if the sins confessed are not effectively abandoned, the confession has been a lie. If the persons and things that displeased the father are not dismissed, the son, whatever he may have said, did not actually desire that the father should visit and inspect his dwelling.

There is also a relation between making confession of sin and obtaining mercy from God. Sin is confessed, forsaken, forgiven; so lie the links of this short chain. When sin is cast out of the heart, it neither works any more as a ruling power in the man's members, nor lies as condemning guilt in the book of God. It is sin hidden, and so made still the object of your choice, that has power either to pollute or destroy. Sin cast forth from the heart is harmless. It cannot then pollute the life; and it will not then remain an element of treasured wrath. Similar facts and laws may be found in nature. Some substances which on the surface of the earth cannot hurt a child, may, if pent up within the earth, rend the mountains or engulf a city.

If any one fear lest this representation should rob God of his glory, and ascribe the initiative to man, let him look again, and look more narrowly into the process.

First of all, the confession of the sinner did not provide the mercy of God. That mercy was complete before he confessed his sins, before he committed the sins which he confesses. First and last the mercy is divine. It is the Father's love; Christ's sacrifice; the Spirit's ministry. It was finished when Messiah died. Bought by the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, it was waiting in full free offer when first man's need began. The penitence of sinners did not make God gracious. His mercy is all his own, and his glory he will not give to another.

Further: the confession and reformation of sinners did not open in the treasured fountain of mercy a channel which was formerly shut. Before the man confessed, not only was the fountain full, but the stream was flowing. It was beating on the door of his closed heart. It ran waste because he shut it out; but all the work of grace was done by God, and all the glory of grace due to God, before that callous nature opened to receive it. When at last the barrier gave way, mercy flowed in; but the man's confession neither made the mercy in its upper spring, nor charged therewith the channels which unite the earth to heaven.

But, once more and chiefly, confession, so far from being the cause, is the effect of divine mercy. You see on the surface of the word here that confession obtained mercy; but you must look beneath and learn what produced confession. It was mercy. The promise is, "Whoever confesses and forsakes his sins shall have mercy." That promise was in substance made before any sinner confessed, otherwise there never would have been on earth any confession of sin. That promise has power. It touches a sinner while he is dead, and hard, and still as a stone—it touches and moves him. It touches his heart, and makes it flow down like water in confession; it touches his life, and leads him into the paths of righteousness. Had there been no such gracious offer from God, there would have been no such submissive surrender by man.

This is a circle, you say. The sinner who confessed obtained mercy, and that very mercy caused the sinner to confess. So it is; and it is like God. All the worlds are globes, and all their paths are circles. His dispensations circulate. All good comes forth from himself, and all glory returns to himself. His mercy displayed, broke the stony heart, and caused the confession to flow; the confession flowing, opened the way for mercy to enter. If I have not a broken, contrite heart, God's mercy will never be mine; but if God had not manifested his mercy in Christ, infinite and free, I could never have a broken, contrite heart.

This principle may be seen reflected from the darkest event which has yet sprung from the war in India. Some hundreds of British men and women with their children were shut up within a hastily reared and imperfect fortification at Cawnpore. A numerous enemy swept round their crazy fort, and cut off all hope of escape. When heat and hunger had well-nigh done his work for him, the insurgent chief approached and offered terms to the enfeebled garrison. They surrendered on the heathen's promise, confirmed by his oath, that they should all be permitted to depart in safety to their friends. The promise was cruelly broken, and the broken promise has wrung the nation's heart and nerved her soldiers' arms; but the promise produced the surrender. The promise of life, when trusted, had power to open those gates, which the enemy could not have forced, as long as a living defendant stood within. Another garrison in a neighboring city were surrounded afterwards in a similar manner by the same faithless foe; but they have not opened their gates, and certainly never will. No promise is held out to them, at least no promise in which they will confide. They will trust no white flag held up by those bloody hands. They will fight in hope as long as they can, and when hope dies, they will fight in despair; but fight they will to the uttermost and to the end.

So would sinners fight against an angry God, if He did not promise free pardon, or if they did not trust the promise made. It is the promise of life that makes the dying open their gates.

When we were unjustly suspecting the true God, as our countrymen justly suspected the heathen chief,—when we, like stupid children, were refusing to trust in redeeming love,—Jesus, who came to show us the Father, taught us, as they teach little children, by a picture. The picture is the prodigal son. We are all familiar with the scene. Its features, great and small, are graven on our memories from our earliest childhood, and maintain their place even to old age.

In upon the callous heart of the worn-out and weary profligate, when his pleasures were palling and his flesh was pining away from his bones,—in upon his dry, desolate heart darted the memory of a father's love; down into the depths of that long alienated spirit sank the conviction that his father's fondness was still unchanged. That power overcame: he said, " I will arise and go to my father:" he arose and went. These are the objects that loom dimly in the back-ground; but look!—hush! These figures full in the fore-ground,—who are these? Many false and foolish things are said of canvass paintings; but this picture, which Jesus gave in his word, of the Father's mercy winning a wanderer back,—of a wanderer so won, making full, frank confession of his sin, and getting instant free forgiveness,—this is the picture for me. See the figures! They move! they move! The Father ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him ; and he, the worthless, lay upon the Father's bosom. It is all over: on this side there is no upbraiding, on that side no distrust.

A simple-minded disciple once said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us." What that good man desired to see, surely our eyes have seen. God, as Jesus shows Him to us,—"God is love." ([Laws from heaven for life on earth](#))