



The

OBSTACLE

to

Revival

There is only one obstacle that can block the work of the Holy Spirit and prevent a revival among God's people, and that is **sin**. "If I regard iniquity in my heart," declared David, "the Lord will not hear" (Ps. 66:18). And Isaiah 59:2 records these significant words: "Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." Sin is the great barrier to revival, and it must be put away. There is no alternative. There can be no compromise. God will not work as long as sin is covered up.

NEED TO CONFESS

In Hosea 10:12 we read, "Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD, till He comes and rains righteousness on you." And in 2 Chronicles 7:14 the promise of the Lord's blessing is based upon unalterable conditions: "If My people ... will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin

and heal their land." Nothing short of a heart broken over its sinful condition, full confession and restitution will satisfy God. Sin must be forsaken utterly before God will manifest a revival.

Only God is able to bring about the sorrow that results in confessing and forsaking sin. And nothing less will do. From personal experience, David wrote: "A broken and a contrite heart—these O God, You will not despise" (Ps. 51:17). Likewise, Solomon wrote: "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Pr. 28:13).

HOW TO CONFESS

The Spirit of God will not permit a true revival as long as iniquity is unconfessed. God's people *must* get right with God, and they must get right with each other in doing so (1 Jn. 4:20,21).

There are three kinds of confession:

- *Private*: A sin committed against

God alone, needs to be confessed to no one but God (1 Jn. 1:9; Ps. 32:5).

- *Personal:* A sin committed against another must be confessed both to God and to the wronged one. There will be no peace until confession has been made and forgiveness sought (Mt. 5:23, 24).

- *Public:* Whenever a sin has been committed against a company of people, the confession must be as public as the transgression (2 Cor. 2:10,11).

It is a common experience for groups to gather together for several nights of prayer for revival and yet never have their prayers answered. What is the trouble? Consider Isaiah 59:2 again: “Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

WHAT TO CONFESS

We must deal with our sins before we ask in faith expecting showers of blessing. Allow God to speak to you now through the following questions:

- ✓ Have we forgiven those who have offended us? Is there malice in our hearts toward anyone? Are we holding grudges? Do we refuse to be reconciled?

- ✓ Do we get angry? Do we lose our temper? Do we allow wrath to get the best of us?

- ✓ Do we have feelings of jealousy when another is preferred before us? Do we become envious of those who can do things better than we can?

- ✓ Are we impatient? Do we get irritated easily? Do little things annoy us?

- ✓ Are we easily offended? Do we get hurt when people overlook us? If we are neglected, do we engage in self-pity?

- ✓ Is there pride in our hearts? Do we think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think? Are we too proud to seek forgiveness?

- ✓ Have we been dishonest? Are we above reproach in all our transactions? Do we give a day's work for a day's pay?

- ✓ Do we gossip? Do we slander the character of others? Are we talebearers and busybodies? Are we fault finders?

✓ Are we worldly? Are we taken up with the glitter and show of this life?

✓ Are we stealing? Do we take even little things that do not belong to us?

✓ Are we bitter towards others? Is there any hatred deep within our hearts?

✓ Are we worried or anxious? Do we fail to trust God for our temporal and spiritual needs? Are we continually fretting over the future?

✓ Are we guilty of lustful thoughts? Do we allow our minds to be taken up with impure and unholy thoughts?

✓ Do we lie? Do we exaggerate and convey false impressions?

✓ Are we afraid to confess Christ openly? Are we ashamed of Jesus? Do we hide our relationship with Christ when surrounded by the world's people?

AFTER WE CONFESS

These are some things that hinder the work of God in the midst of His people. But let's call them what God calls them—**sins!** The sooner we admit that we have sinned, and confess and for-

sake those sins, the sooner we can expect God to open the channels of communication and blessing—to hear us and to work in mighty power. We cannot deceive God. Why deceive ourselves? Let's remove the obstacle before we take another step: "If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged" (1 Cor. 11:31).

The story of attempted revival down through the centuries has gone this way: night after night the Word of God has been ministered without results, until someone bursts out in open confession, begging forgiveness from the one wronged. Another may break down in tears, confessing a root of bitterness or hard feelings or jealousy. Once confession and restitution take place, once our sins are uncovered and acknowledged, then—and not until then—will the Spirit of God bring in a revival.

Revival begins with the prayer of David when he cried, "Search me, O God ... and see if there is any wicked

way in me” (Ps. 139:23,24). Once the obstacle of sin is taken out of the way then God can come into our lives with His mighty reviving power. Like David, won't you pray now and confess your sins so that revival can begin with you?

– *O. J. Smith*

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Grace & Truth • 210 Chestnut Street, Danville, IL 61832

or • P.O. Box 4902, Kaduna Junction P.O., Kaduna, Nigeria

Email: tracts@gtpress.org / Web: www.gtpress.org

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