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Week 37 – What To Do When We've Blown It

Introduction:

Review of past three messages:

- James 2 – God desires for faith to generate good works in our lives
- Romans 6 – Grace frees us from slavery to sin
- 1 Corinthians 13 – Only Jesus can live the Christian life in us and through us

Question of the Day:

What do I do when I mess up? How do I deal with life after I've blown it?

First John in Context:

1 John was written to combat the growing problem of Gnosticism that was infiltrating the early church.

Gnostics (from Greek "gnosis" = knowledge) believed they had secret spiritual insight and created a two-tiered Christianity: the enlightened ones versus everybody else.

Two Fundamental Lies of Early Gnostic Dualism:

1. Jesus didn't actually have a _____ body
2. Sin doesn't actually _____

John Corrects these two lies:

1 John 1:1-4

Jesus was in fact a real, physical human being and the Apostles all had the privilege of seeing, hearing and touching Him. If you deny the physical humanity of Jesus, you cannot be a real Christian.

1 John 1:5-10

Sin is real and it separates sinners from a holy God. Only those who confess (admit, agree with God about) their sin can receive the gift of cleansing from all unrighteousness and therefore become a Christian.

The Big Idea:

Confession of sin to God is good, wise and normal for every believer in Christ. But true confession under the New Covenant is not about forgiveness. It is about relationship, humility and gratitude. And let's not forget that agreeing with God pertains to everything...not just sin! So let's also learn to confess our righteousness in Christ!

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS AND PERSONAL OR FAMILY REFLECTION:

Personal Life:

1. Share from your own personal journey about confession of sin. How were your thoughts and opinions about confession formed? Who or what influenced those ideas? Discuss...

Ponderings:

2. Is it possible that your understanding of confession has been skewed by remnants of leftover medieval Christianity rather than a more Biblical understanding of Christ's finished work? Discuss...
3. Why does it matter, practically speaking, whether a person falsely believes that their confession is what triggers God's willingness to dispense ongoing installments of forgiveness? Discuss...
4. Since "confession" means "to agree with, to speak the same thing as," what are some other aspects of God's truth that Christians should be regularly confessing?
5. James 5:16 says to "...confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." How is confessing sin to another human being different than confessing sin to God? Discuss...
6. When the Holy Spirit leads you to confess sin, it will never be accompanied by a sense of condemnation or accusation, but instead there is a "godly sorrow that brings repentance" (2 Corinthians 7). What is the difference between a godly sorrow and a sense of condemnation or accusation?

Promptings:

7. If you are in the habit of asking God to "forgive you," would you be willing to experiment with a more Biblical, cross-honoring practice of confession? Would you be willing to agree with God that your sin was wrong and hurtful, and *also* agree with Him about the fact that forgiveness is already yours, and that you have already been cleansed of all unrighteousness?

What might begin to happen in your personal victory over sinful behaviors if you more consciously lived from a sense of your true identity – your new identity – of total righteousness in Christ?