



guidelines for living

a 5 minute message

March 7, 2018

THE ONE THING THAT NEVER CHANGES

**He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
Proverbs 28:13**

Everything changes, yet nothing changes! Culture and civilization undergo tremendous changes, yet we who are part of that changing scene actually change so little. I mean, bottom line, human nature doesn't really change. Our struggles, our heart cries, our needs, our temptations all seem to repeat themselves generation after generation like repetitious themes in a third-rate play when the only thing that really changes is the scenic backdrop in the theater.

Since 1963, I've been writing and producing Guidelines, and analyzing the feedback that comes to us. I've concluded that with very minor variations, you're saying the same things year after year, whether you're in Manila, Los Angeles, or Kiev.

I've also noticed that we seldom learn from the mistakes and failures of other people--our parents and friends included. We think, "I can get away with this," or "Nobody has the right to tell me what to do," when if we could only "go to school" on the mistakes and failures of others, we could save ourselves much heartache and sorrow.

"OK," you may be thinking. "What's your point?" Scores of people today feel that morality is a private business. I hear things like, "The church or society has no right to dictate what I do--it's my business," or, "As long as nobody gets hurt and it's not illegal, nobody should tell me what to do!"

A new theme? No, not really. It's thousands of years old, literally. David believed the same thing. David who? David--the king of Israel, the one who killed Goliath and won the peace for the children of Israel 3000 years ago.

Like many of us today, David felt that morality was a private business. Running the kingdom was one thing. What he did in private was something else. It all exploded in his face. One day the prophet, Nathan said, "David, I want to tell you a story..." and he told how a wealthy man stole a lamb from a poor man, and then he asked the king, "What should be done to that man?" David was incensed at the wrongdoing. Then Nathan says, "You are the man!" His private sin became a matter of public exposure, and it destroyed his family.

It was Moses, who 400 years before David, said, "...you may be sure that your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). It was true in Moses' day. It was equally true in David's day, and it is certainly true today. You may be sure your sin will find you out.



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Whether it is your wife that you have wronged, or you defrauded the company you work for, or you chose not to pay your taxes, eventually, the time bomb of moral failure catches up with you. It's a fact of life. The affair that you thought was a private matter becomes public; the auditor learns about the secret fund, or your conscience screams out in the darkness of night and you can no longer live with yourself.

Is there a way out? Yes, there is. And the solution is as old yet, as contemporary, as the problem. Here it is: "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them [or forsakes them] finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). Great stuff--the solution to our needs. Confession--coming clean, admitting your failure--is the first step. The second—turning completely away from your wrongdoing and going a different direction. It's the only lasting solution.

Resource Reading: 2 Samuel 12: 1-25