

Oaks-West Church of Christ

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December 6, 2020

Don't "Lawyer Up" Yet

by Warren Berkley

There is nothing anywhere in the New Testament that encourages or recommends a relaxed, tolerant posture toward sin. Matthew Henry said: "The gospel, when rightly understood and received, sets the heart against all sin."

When Christians encounter sin, they should recall the word of the apostle John who said (in the beginning of the first epistle): "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," and "...if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," (1 Jno. 1:9, 2:1).

Applying this passage could take us in the wrong direction, if we rely on a flawed knowledge base. Here's what I mean. You see the word "Advocate," and may think

of the modern attorney or lawyer. If you take off in that direction and rely on your knowledge of defense attorneys in the news and on TV, you could miss the point of the passage completely.

If you think, "well, I've sinned. But I've got a good attorney who will get me off. No problem," you have missed the teaching of John. It is not like being guilty, denying your crime, hiring a powerful, eloquent attorney who can discover and use technicalities and therefore get you off. That's not it. And to think in those terms (1) grossly demeans the work of Christ on our behalf, (2) diminishes the real offense of sin, (3) takes no account of God, who is light, and (4) seriously impacts any future discipline of your character and spiritual growth.

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Jesus, our Advocate with the Father, has no interests in sinners getting away with anything. He is willing, however, to plead the case of the truly penitent. John defines the "truly penitent" in the verses previous to 1 John 2. The truly penitent honestly face the guilt of sin (v.8), confess the sin (v.9) and are committed to walking in the light.

Someone once expressed this to me with these simple words: "I have an advocate, not so I can sin, but in case I do."

One more thing. There is no automatic plea for a dismissal. Everything John teaches about Jesus' Advocacy is a benefit offered to the truly penitent. And to discover who is the truly penitent – read everything before 1 Jno. 2:1, and everything after the passage. Let John tell you who enjoys the benefits offered.

motive, reverent attitude and desire to worship God as He has directed.

When I look back over my life, there is something else that greatly contributed to my present interests in worshipping God. One of the earliest memories I have is, hearing my father pray. When a child hears his father pray to "Almighty God" day after day, that single voice makes a lasting impression and helps form the child's concept of reverence to God. "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much," (Jas. 5:17).

The Effective, Fervent Prayer

by Warren Berkley

Pause and reflect on all the influences that lead you to worship God in spirit and in truth. There is our faith in Jesus Christ, who died for us. Add to this our knowledge of all that should be done before God, revealed to us in His Word. Do not leave out the encouragement of association with God's people. These are some of the influences that can bring us to the assembly with good

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.



Upcoming Ladies' Bible Classes - Tuesday, December 8 at the building.

Services - The elders have decided to continue with the current service times of 10:45 am Sundays and 7:00 pm Wednesdays through the month of January. We will reevaluate in January. Thank you for your support and encouragement as we make these difficult decisions! --DT for the elders

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.



Please remember the following individuals in your daily prayers:

June Owens
Jack Wilson
Jerry & Nancy Richardson
Karen Hallmark
Shirley Perkins' brother, Leon
Morgan O'Hair
Dinah Williams
Tyler Hairston
Anna Urquhart

And continue to pray for each other

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

We have many that face challenges on a daily basis and need your prayers as well.

“praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

