Unconfessed Sin

The Bible says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9).

Isn't that wonderful? No matter what we have done, and how bad we have been, there's always a way back to life and health and freedom in God. Amazing. (Always – see John 6:37).

But suppose we choose another path, to gloss over our sins, try to bury them, keep them secret. What then?

Jesus taught that as well as our heavenly father, there is a devil who is the father of lies (John 8.44). By going down this path of deception, we put ourselves under his control. He is the thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10).

There are two possible consequences of walking this path, to my mind. Firstly, things we would prefer to remain secret have a way of coming out. Isaiah wrote, "Hail will sweep away your refuge of lies (Isaiah 28:17)." As Jesus put it, "there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed. What you have said in secret will be shouted from the house tops (Luke 12:2-3)." When that happens, there is little sympathy for those who have been involved in the cover-up.

Secondly, we reap what we sow. One of the saddest and grimmest things in life is to see a person in old age lose their personality and become so violent that they have to live in an institution. When I hear of a case of this kind, I don't say anything out loud, but the thought comes to my mind, I wonder if there was unconfessed sin earlier in life that may have contributed to this?

Now PLEASE, hear what I am not saying. I am not saying that every such case of break-down has been brought on by a person's bad behaviour. When a car crashes, there may be fault by the driver but equally, it may be a case of component malfunction in the vehicle, or perhaps the fault of somebody else. Life is a complicated matter.

Maybe a disease of the brain has been brought on by this cause or that. Personally, I am not impressed by people who have a confident medical explanation when their knowledge has been gained from watching an hour's TV or from something that they have picked up online, because as I understand it, nobody has got to the bottom of what causes loss of personality.

How can we protect ourselves? I think we do well to walk in the light, as he is in the light (1 John 1:7). "This is the verdict. Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light so that it may be plainly seen that God is in all he does (John 3:19)."

It may be tempting to say, I don't believe in God, when what you really mean is, there are bad things in my life which I don't intend to give up so belief in God would be inconvenient. It reminds me of the man

who badly wanted freedom. He decided he didn't believe in gravity, and was going to fly like a bird! Wonderful. He launched himself out of an upstairs window, having taken LSD. Not a good idea.

Let's make a clean breast of it. "Confess your sins to one another and pray for each other that you may be healed (James 5:16)." Don't let the devil get the upper hand.

Read the surrounding verses to the Bible passages above and act upon them, and may God bless you!

David Pennant, Woking