

## **Prov. 28:13-14, 29:1 (WCF 15:4) “Compassion or Calamity?”**

**For the Children:** When your parents ask you if you have done something wrong, do you sometimes try to pretend you didn't do it? If so, you have done TWO wrong things – the sin that got you into trouble AND lying to get out of it. That brings more trouble, not less. On top of that, you probably feel even more guilty, because you know you've lied. It's much the same with the Lord – though of course, unlike parents, He can never be fooled. If we don't admit our sins to Him, He is even more displeased and we feel even more guilty. It is very important to admit our sins to the Lord and ask Him for forgiveness every day. **Questions:** What are some of the ways people try to hide the fact that they've done wrong? What bad consequences come from trying to hide our sins from the Lord? What blessings come from owning up?

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### **Introduction:**

#### **First Point: Concealing and Hardening**

- 1) Concealing: People often try to conceal their sin (from others, from themselves and even from the Lord) out of pride. They want to look better than they are and fear humiliation. This is why the Bible stresses humility so much. It is needed for confession. People also try to conceal sin because of other possible consequences they fear – loss, retaliation etc. The usual methods for concealment are: making excuses; lying, blame-shifting, literal hiding and distraction by doing other good works. See Gen. 3-4. The Lord sees through all of these
- 2) Hardening: Hardening our conscience against (even “small”) sins leads to further hardening. Hardening the neck after much rebuke is particularly dangerous (29:1). Having to receive the Lord's rebuke is part of the “light yoke” of Christ (Mt. 11:28-30). When we receive that rebuke it actually lightens our load! The hardened sinner finds it too heavy to confess. He rebels against the Lord's Word, against His rebuke and judgements
- 3) He Will Not Prosper: Hardening our hearts in this way results in a bad conscience, a loss of assurance and joy. It may lead to temporal chastisement and if unchecked, can lead to eternal punishment. Long-term hardening places the sinner “beyond remedy.” No wonder v. 13 says such a sinner will not prosper, but suffer calamity. It may feel like confession is calamity, but the reverse is true

#### **Second Point: Confessing and Forsaking**

- 1) Confessing: “Confession” means recognizing and declaring our sin. We are to confess our sins, even though Christ has forgiven them, because thus we are reminded that God hates sin – even the “small” ones; also, we are directed to Christ, as He daily applies His once-for-all work to forgive our ongoing sins. Confession helps keep us humble and weans us off presumptuousness. It reminds us of the abundance of God's mercy as well. See 1 Jn. 1:6-9
- 2) Forsaking: As v. 13 indicates, forsaking sin goes with the true confession of it. True repentance bears the fruits of repentance. Neither our confession nor forsaking are ever perfect in this life, but these things should nevertheless characterize us
- 3) Fearing: The fear of God (awe, reverence and fear of offending the Lord) lies behind true confession and repentance (v. 14). The word is a strong one, put in a Hebrew form that makes it even more intense. Such intense reverence and fear works against the hardening of the heart and a presumptuous attitude
- 4) Compassion and Blessing; Those who confess their sins and forsake them, because they fear the Lord, are promised great blessings. One of the blessings is that God will show compassion and mercy, for Christ's sake. The mercy of God will be known more deeply (Ps. 32:1-2). The conscience will be cleansed and assurance strengthened. The joy of salvation will be experienced more readily, along with the joy of knowing that our works built on Christ will be graciously rewarded in the next life. These blessings may be anticipated even by those who have committed very great sins (WCF 15:4) – when we truly repent. Far from confession removing blessing and bringing shame, it brings blessing and sees shame removed through Christ

### **Conclusion:**