

Confess Sin and Receive Mercy

Proverbs 28:13-14

1. Read Psalm 32:1-11. In verses 1-4, how does David contrast the blessing of the one who confesses his sin with the misery of the one who tries to hide his sin? How should this contrast lead us to confess sin and seek God's mercy?

2. Psalm 32:8-9 points to following God and turning from sin (the idea of forsaking sin in Proverbs 28:13). The two illustrations in these verses show two ways that we may respond to God's instruction and guidance. In verse 8, the idea of guiding with the eyes points to one who responds willingly. Often a parent will use the eyes to guide a child, showing the child what they should or should not be doing. If the child responds to this guidance, then no discipline is needed. In verse 9, the idea of guiding a horse is that it often does not respond willingly, but needs the physical bit and bridle to guide it. As we learn of God's instruction, how do we respond? Do we respond willingly, like a child responding to the look of a parent? Or are we stubborn and unwilling, as a horse that needs a bit and bridle? How *should* we respond?

3. Read 1 John 1:8-10 and Romans 4:4-8. In Romans 4, Paul cited Psalm 32:1-2 in showing that we are justified by our faith and not by our works. Confession of sin and seeking God's mercy is ultimately a demonstration of faith, since it is done in the belief that God will fulfill His Word and forgive us (1 John 1:9). It is an acknowledgement that we cannot take care of our own sin (by trying to cover it ourselves or by trying to pay for it ourselves). How should God's promises concerning mercy to the humble who confess their sin affect what we do in response to sin? How should this mercy that we receive from God in response to our own sin affect the way we react to others who sin against us?