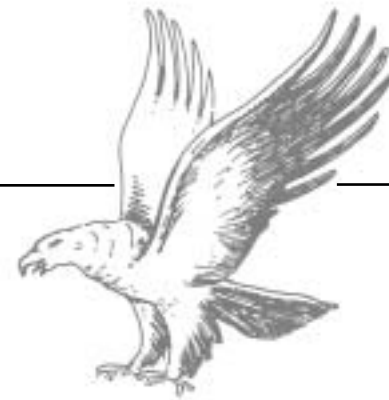


# Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



August 15, 2010

## An Honest Confession

A willingness to confess our sins to God is essential to maintaining a relationship with Him. But there is more involved in confession than merely saying “I’m sorry.”

“Then Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice’” (1 Sam. 15:24).

“So David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die’” (2 Sam. 12:13).

Two kings, two sins, two prophets, but an identical confession (“I have sinned”). A careful study of the two stories leading up to these confessions teaches us an important lesson about the nature of our relationship with God.

Saul’s sin was relatively minor, as sins go. In response to God’s command to destroy the Amelekites, Saul led his army on a vigorous campaign against these enemies, killing everyone and destroying all their property. He spared only their King, Agag, as a war trophy, along with a few of the best sheep to offer as a sacrifice to God. When Samuel met Saul upon his return from the battle, the prophet rebuked the king for his failure to respect God’s instruc-

tions. Destroying the Amelekites was not obedience, if Saul reserved the right to overrule God by holding back on a few details. As a consequence, Saul was rejected as king. He confessed his error and begged forgiveness, but God did not withdraw His judgment. From this point forward, Saul’s reign was doomed.

David’s sin, on the other hand, was so outrageous that even the Gentiles were shocked at its audacity. David committed adultery with a neighbor’s wife, then had the neighbor killed to cover up the deed. This was no trivial bookkeeping error, but a monstrous affront on God’s honor. In the most despicable manner possible, David shattered the sacred bonds upon which a stable society is built. Yet when confronted with his crimes, David uttered three little words, “I have sinned”—and got off scot free.

On the surface, God’s reaction to these two sins seems so unbalanced, so unfair. Why would he give David a pass on the two worst sins in the book, yet come down so hard on Saul’s minor infraction?

The answer to that question gets to the heart of what God is looking for in a relationship with us.

Saul’s sin may have been minor, but the sin—and the confession that followed the rebuke—revealed a heart that was centered on himself, not God. Notice that Saul’s confession was followed by a plea for Samuel to “honor me now, please, before the elders of my people” (1 Sam. 15:30). Saul was sorry that he got caught and his public image took a hit, not that he had offended God.

David’s confession, however, arose from a heart that was broken at the thought of what he had done to God. Concerning this incident, David later wrote, “against You, You only, have I sinned” (Psa. 51:4). Several people were hurt by what David had done, but none of that bothered him as much as the disrespect he had shown to God.

When we sin, it is important that we say “I’m sorry” to God. But it is more important that in our heart, we feel the pain of the injury we have inflicted upon Him. Without that inward contrition, an outward confession is mere show.

– David King