

Q: A man and a woman are engaged. The woman gets pregnant before they are married. The couple repents and confesses their sin to God. The couple also meets with the elders and confesses and repents. They do not confess and repent to the the whole congregation.

Should they have confessed and repented to the whole congregation? One person said “No, because the sin was private—she was not showing so therefore they did not need to. If she was showing, and others knew of the sin then they should repent before the congregation”

When is a person required by scripture to go forward and confess sin to the congregation? to the elders?

Some questions to think about prompted by the above situation (for thought, not to write answers):

- *Must ALL private sins be confessed publicly?*
- *Should SOME private sins be confessed publicly? If so, when?*
- *Is there ever any benefit in confessing private sins publicly though they may never be known otherwise?*
- *Is public confession of sin necessarily an indicator of repentance and grace?*

As you consider each of the following scriptures, think about how they would apply to the situation and questions above.

James 5:13-16 - confessing sins ...

- ▶ To whom?
- ▶ Purpose?
- ▶ Before the congregation ...
 - Required?
 - Ever beneficial?

Compare **Ac 8:22-24; 1Jn 5:16;**
Eph 6:19; 2Tim 1:3...6-8

- ▶ Public or private sins?

Mt 5:23,24; Lk 17:1-4 - confessing sins ...

- Confession *required?* To whom?
- Why?

Mt 18:6-9; 1Co 5:6

- Danger to Corinth if impenitence tolerated (if no confession, no action)?
- If repentant, how can a person avoid being withdrawn from?
- If penitent, what is the church to do?
2Co 2:6-8
- How can he let the church know he repented?

Josh 7:19-26

- Public confession necessarily mean he had repented?
- Public confession grant him grace so far as the corporal punishment for his deed?
- For thought: Should his family have revealed his sin? Compare Dt 13:6-11.