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Proverbs 28:13

13. “He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper,
But he who confesses and forsakes them will find
compassion.”

In this proverb we are given the two basic ways we can handle our sins and mistakes. The first way, the avenue that the natural man in the world usually takes, is to try to hide and cover-up his sins. But the Lord’s Word is clear, the person who conceals his transgression will not prosper.

The Godly way to handle sin is to openly confess and forsake our transgressions before God and the people around us. In doing so, this proverb promises we will find compassion.

Now lest any one be blind-sided by this promise, we can only expect to find compassion from God. The world will certainly not give us compassion, as Christians, when we plead guilty to crimes committed. In making ourselves vulnerable in this way, worldly minded people will certainly take advantage of us. Wicked people love to kick a guy when he’s down. And Jesus forewarns us, “Where the body is, the vultures are also gathered.”

Often friends and family will turn their backs on us,

as well when we confess our transgressions. Even fellow Christians and spiritual leaders may shun us, at least initially, when we admit our sins openly.

But regardless how other people react, to confess--rather than try to conceal--our transgressions will find compassion from God. Now that is not to say that God will remove the consequences of our sin. Often God allows us to receive the full brunt of the consequences from our sins to make sure we don't continue our misbehavior.

God loves us, and He wants the best for us. Salvation is what He is after for us; Jesus coming and dying for us proved that. But we must yield to God's ways, not our own. So regardless of the immediate, short-term consequences, we must confess and forsake our transgressions before God and man--only then can we hope to find compassion and ultimately salvation.

Personally, I have found in my own life and in the lives of those I have discipled, that open confession of sin empowers the individual to overcome weaknesses that they were previously unable to conquer. God's power is made available to those who will humble themselves and confess their sins openly and publicly. In order to publicly confess specific sins means the person's desire to overcome his weakness is stronger than the humiliation that comes with public confession. Humiliation comes before honor we are told, and in no other place is this more true than in public confession of sin. In this way we

find compassion from God (and sometimes even from His people) to help us in time of need--to forsake and overcome our sin.

In this way Proverbs 28:13 gives us God's true definition of repentance. And this has always been God's message to mankind; first through the prophets of old, then John, then Jesus Christ, and now proclaimed through the New Testament saints:

“Repent, that is confess and forsake your sins, that you may live.”