



Confession is defined as “a formal statement admitting that one is guilty of a crime.” Within Christianity confession is a central reality because you cannot become a Christian without confessing your awareness of sin and need of a savior. In the experience of Jesus’ apprentice, we develop patterns of confessing our errors (sin) and repenting, which is turning away from those acts of disobedience, and desiring to not sin habitually.

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DISCUSSION #1: CONFESSING MOTIVES

We can not find salvation and/or forgiveness of sin without confessing those sins to Jesus. 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:5-6

MY STORY | Starting Place

Why is it easier to forgive someone who apologizes for what he or she did (as opposed to the person who deflects responsibility, or worse, blames you)?

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If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

Why are half-hearted apologies worse than none at all?

What do you need from someone to believe his or her apology is sincere?

How specific do we need to be with God in our confession in order to experience His forgiveness?

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I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Psalm 32:5

React to the following quote: “If something can be excused, it does not need to be forgiven.”

Why is it important to acknowledge the dark motives that drove us to sin (in addition to the specific damaging words or actions)?

Could it ever be counter-productive to explain your motives to someone you’ve hurt? Explain.

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Confess one of this week's sins to God, being very specific about the motive that drove you to do it.

DISCUSSION #2: CONFESSION TO OTHERS

There is a biblical precedent for confessing our sins to one another (other Christians). James 5:16; Proverbs 28:13

MY STORY | Starting Place

What's the deepest, darkest secret that anyone has ever confessed to you? (Be sure to keep the identity of the person who told you confidential)

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Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. James 5:16

Why is it spiritually healthy to confess your sins to someone other than God? What are the possible benefits of this?

Under what circumstances is "confessing your sins" inappropriate, or so awkward that it becomes ineffective?

How do you choose a trusted "confessor"?

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Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. Proverbs 28:13

What are some reasons why people tend to cover up their sins?

What tends to happen to people (emotionally, mentally, physically, or spiritually) who keep their shadowy secrets hidden, sometimes for decades?

Why does Solomon put confession and forsaking sins together? What can happen when you do one, but not the other?

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Find someone you trust (deeply) and confess a sin that you've been covering up for a while. Don't hold back on the darker motives that drove you to do or say that thing. If you're confessing to the person you sinned against, be sure that the goal of your admission is to rebuild trust with that individual.

DISCUSSION #3: CONSISTENT CONFESSION

God calls His people to live a lifestyle of repentance. Proverbs 28:13; Psalm 32:5-6; Hebrews 10:26 *discussion turning from sin, is grieving (sadness) necessary?

MY STORY | Starting Place

Talk about a time when someone successfully re-gained your ability to trust him or her.

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. Psalm 32:6

The context of this verse is the no-holding-back confession of sin and disobedience; this following verse puts that kind of interaction with God during times when He can be found – which is every minute of the day.

Why does keeping a clean slate with God protect you from the inevitable surges of problems and trouble that life brings?

Why are life's trials and tribulations all the much harder when we hold on to unconfessed sin?

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For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. Hebrews 10:26.

What happens with our relationship with someone we forgive, and then give a second (sometimes a third & fourth) chance, only to see that mercy taken for granted—even expected?

What would naturally happen with our relationship with God if we just go on deliberately sinning, expecting to be forgiven—and even trusted?

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Pick one of your habitual sins, and confess that pattern of behavior to someone you trust. Come up with a plan, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to overcome that repetitive, damaging behavior.

DISCUSSION #4: CONFESSION AND CONSEQUENCES

Though confession and repentance can lead to forgiveness and restoration, it often times does not mean the dissolving of natural consequences of our actions. 2 Samuel 12:10-14; Galatians 6:7-9

MY STORY | Starting Place

Describe a time when you got away with something—big.

DIGGING DEEPER | Practical Biblical Application

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. 2 Samuel 12:10; see verses 10-14 for the entire consequences.

David was punished severely by God for sleeping with another man's wife. And yet, we know by the Psalms David wrote, that he had asked for and received God's forgiveness.

Why doesn't forgiveness automatically cancel the consequences of damaging words and behaviors?

How does experiencing forgiveness (after a full confession) make the consequences of sin so much easier to accept and endure?

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Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. Galatians 6:7

Confession (acknowledging our sin), repentance (feeling and accepting the consequences), and restoration (rebuilding trust) are three distinct realities. We can offer confession and embrace repentance, but we do not control the possibility of restoration. Has the fear of not immediately experiencing restoration kept you from embracing confession and repentance? What does this expose of your motive and heart?

How can the presumption upon God's grace lead to self-deception?

Give specific examples of the consequences you "harvested" because you planted good seeds—and then bad seeds.

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How can confession and repentance become a normal rhythmic aspect of your life? Who can you embrace this with? How often? Consider setting up a consistent time to safely embrace this value with someone in your life.