

God Centered Prayer
Lesson 8: The Confession of Sin
www.cvillechurch.com

Introduction: The Challenge of Confessing Our Sins.

- A. Many know how to ask for forgiveness; fewer know how to confess their sins.
- B. There is a reluctance to admit our failures, much less to confess them in prayer.
- C. When we recognize the importance of confession, we will do whatever it takes.

I. Why Should I Confess? – The Value of Confession.

- A. It is commanded by God (**1 John 1:9**).
 - 1. God knows about our sin before we confess it (**Job 34:21-22; Ps. 139:1-4**), yet the purpose of confession is not for God’s benefit, but ours!
- B. To be forgiven (**1 John 1:9; cf. Prov. 28:13**).
 - 1. Confession is not just a duty, but a requirement to receive forgiveness.
 - 2. Each time God forgives us, we are given a brand new start! (**Heb. 8:12**).
- C. To remove the wall of sin that separates you from God (**Isa. 59:2; Mic. 3:4**).
 - 1. To fellowship the most holy God, we must “*cleanse ourselves*” of sin (**2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Tim. 2:21**), which would include the confession of our sins.
- D. To unload the heavy burden of sin and guilt (**Mat. 11:28-30**).
 - 1. Unconfessed sins are a heavy burden to bear; our anxiety can weigh heavily upon us, even affect the way we feel physically (**Ps. 38:3-4, 18**).
 - 2. Unconfessed sin can cause much inward pain and guilt (**Ps. 25:16-18**).
 - 3. Confession unloads the sin that hinders our faithfulness (**Heb. 12:1**).
- E. To heal the soul (**Ps. 41:4; cf. Jas. 5:16**).
 - 1. Jesus died on the cross so we could be healed from our sins (**1 Pet 2:24; Jn. 12:40**). We need healing from the “Great Physician” (**Luke 5:31-32**).
- F. To cleanse our hearts and renew our spirits.
 - 1. Confession of sin is not just about receiving forgiveness, but about changing our heart that led to our committing the sin in the first place.
 - 2. Confessing our sins is part of the process of purifying our hearts of the desire for sin (**Ps. 51:7-10; cf. Mark 7:21-23**).
 - 3. Confession is a time to gain spiritual strength from God so we will not repeat our sins, but gain victory over future temptations (**Ps. 51:10b**).

II. What Should I Confess? – Confess Your Sins.

- A. We are commanded to confess our sins, not just admit that we are sinners.
 - 1. To “*confess our sins*” (**1 Jn 1:9**) is to acknowledge that we are guilty of committing sin, even to get specific about what we have done (**Ps. 51:3**).
 - 2. Asking for forgiveness is not a confession, admitting your sin to God is.
- B. It is foolish to hide your sins; instead “full disclosure” before God is required.
 - 1. Be open with God - Everything is already open before Him (**Heb. 4:13**).
 - 2. There is no sin we can keep secret (**Ps. 90:8; 69:5; 44:21**).
 - 3. Be resolved to confess all your sins instead of hiding them (**Ps. 32:5**).
- C. Don’t deceive yourself or live in denial: *Be honest!* (**1 John 1:8, 10**).
 - 1. Every Christian should do their best not to sin for as long as they can, yet no one should ever have the audacity to claim sinlessness in life.
 - 2. Humbly ask yourself each day: “In what way have I fallen short or have stumbled today?” (**Rom. 3:23; James 3:2**).

- D. “Who can understand his errors?” (Ps. 19:12-13; cf. Jer. 17:9-10).
1. Errors refer to sins of ignorance, not sins in general (from Heb. shagah, cf. Lev 4:13); we sin without realizing it for lack of knowledge.
 2. The more we know of God’s will, the more we will be held responsible (Luke 12:47-48).
 3. There is a clear difference between the person who seeks to know God’s will (2 Pet. 3:18) vs. the one who *chooses* to be ignorant and walk in sin.
 4. Who can perfectly recall every instance of their sin? - Every sinful thought, word spoken, deed, or “sin of omission” (Jas. 4:17)?
 5. Only God can do this. All is known to Him (Ps. 139:1-4; Prov. 15:3).
 6. Thus, we rely on God’s mercy to cleanse us from faults hidden from us.
- E. How we can get specific in the confession of sins (1 John 1:9).
1. By learning the law of the Lord, we will come to understand what is right and wrong, what is pleasing to God and what is a sin (Rom. 7:7).
 2. Keeping ourselves in the Word each day will create an awareness of our thoughts, words, and deeds (Heb. 4:12).
 3. As a result, we will be more conscientious of the sins we commit as they occur, especially when we remember God is watching (Heb. 4:13).
 4. Subject yourself to daily self-examinations (2 Cor. 13:5; Jas. 1:22-25).
 5. The “wall of pride” must come down to confess your sins (Jas. 4:6-10); Resolve to walk humbly with your God each day (Isa. 57:15).
 6. Don’t blame others (Gen. 3:12) or make excuses (Jas. 1:13; 1 Cor. 10:13). Own your sins and confess them as *your* fault (1 Chron. 21:17).

III. To Whom Shall I Confess, God or Man?

- A. Confession to men can be a blessing or a curse; therefore be wise, not foolish.
1. When great care is taken, confession of sin to “righteous” or spiritually mature Christians can be a wonderful blessing (James 5:16; cf. Gal. 6:1).
 2. Yet, such confessions must not be regulated or demanded by anyone; Required self-disclosure leads to exploitation and manipulation (e.g. “Auricular confession”, “Confession Entire”, confession to a “discipler”).
 3. Too much dependency on men can diminish our faith in Jesus who is the *only* mediator needed for confession (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb 4:14-16; 7:25).
- B. The most important Person that we need to confess to is God! (Ps. 32:5; 51:4)

IV. God Centered Confession vs. Me-Centered Confession.

- A. Confession is not just about us, it is primarily and mainly about God.
1. Our number one motivation to confess should stem from the fact that we have offended God (Ps. 51:4; e.g., Ezra 9:5-6; Neh. 1:4-7; Jer. 3:25).
 2. We must examine our hearts and ask the question: Is my sorrow over my sins worldly (me-centered) or godly (God-centered)? (2 Cor. 7:9-10).
 3. Our greatest concern should be not our disgrace, shame, and sufferings (consequences of sin), but how we “grieved the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 4:30).
- B. Ask for forgiveness with a penitent heart (Ac 8:22) and an attitude of gratitude.
1. Forgiveness is not an entitlement we deserve or are “owed” by God.
 2. Humility and thankfulness should reign in our hearts as we approach God’s throne each and every time we pray (Ps. 86; Luke 18:13-14).

Conclusion: Develop the Habit of Holiness to Confess Your Sins on a Daily Basis.