

### What about Confession?

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

Some observations about confessing our sins to our Heavenly Father.<sup>1</sup>

#### Confession does not *regain* God's favor.

As His children, we never lost it in the first place. God always loves us. We are always favored by God. Paul teaches that *nothing* can separate us from His love.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, [39] Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39.

As a child, many times I feared the loss of my parents' love when I did something wrong. Even discipline was sometimes viewed as an expression of anger towards me by my parents. Now that I am an adult and a parent I know that discipline is an act of love to correct the wayward ways of a child. As a child of my Heavenly Father I can come confidently albeit contritely into His presence knowing that He loves me. I am free from fear of God's anger

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. [15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14-16

#### Confession should not be primarily a promise to never to commit that sin again.

That is not the purpose of confession. Confession is being honest before Him that you have committed a *specific* sin. Witness Peter's bragging that he would *never* deny his Lord.<sup>2</sup> Overcoming recurring sins is a process of growth - ***to make a promise that you may very well not be able to keep introduces a denial of your struggle in your prayer life with Him.*** Dealing with recurring sins requires an honesty with ourselves and our Heavenly Father that we need help in our struggle to overcome our sin. Recurring sin often requires the prayers and support of others. If a man is addicted to *anything* this may very well be where discipleship and accountability is needed this can include addiction to pornography, unmanageable anger, dishonesty in business.. Let's be honest as Paul was - Read **Romans 7:14-25.**

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<sup>1</sup>The first time I gave this devotional back in 2000 I received a phone call from someone who differed in his thought from the force of the lesson. It is not the intent of introducing some new thought regarding Confession. Rather to invoke some personal, honest thought regarding our *transparency* with the Lord. We need to be honest with ourselves and the Lord regarding our personal sins. A word about the content of this devotional: I am basing some of the content for this devotional on an article, [Confession Misconceptions](#), written by Manfred Koehler, [Discipleship Journal](#), Issue 119 Sep/Oct 2000, Page 91.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 26:35.

**God does not get tired of our Confessions,  
especially the ones regarding sins that we repeat.**

[21] Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" [22] Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Mat18:21, 22, NIV

When the disciples asked Jesus how many times they should forgive sins that were repeated against them Jesus' answer was forever. This certainly reveals God's attitude toward us when we offend him by sinning. Please remember the important phrase "...he is faithful and just to forgive us..." in 1 John 1:9. Faithful means we can always count on Him to forgive us - "just" means that it is within the boundaries of His character to always forgive us when we come to him in confession.

Jonah complained to God after Ninivah was spared judgment because of a revival that God was "...a **gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.**"<sup>3</sup> It is His basic nature to forgive, based, of course on the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

**Confession of our personal sins does not necessarily require a deep emotional response.**

The use of the Greek *homologeō* which is translated "confess" in our passage means to agree with - literally to say the same word. When the Holy Spirit convicts us of our personal sin (s) we are not to deny that we have sinned but are to agree with the Holy Spirit that we have committed that *specific* sin. It is natural for a man to have a deep emotional response when he commits sins that are especially repugnant to him or that have affected others greatly or that he has been denying such as David sin with Bathsheba. His confession in Psalm 51 is the result of the severity of his sin, his own repugnance to it as witnessed in 2 Samuel 12:5. And rightly so - Paul speaks of godly sorrow in 2 Cor 7:10, 11. However, this is in reference to sins that have caused great offence in the church and when convicted *should* cause this sorrow. However, if a believer is keeping "short accounts" it may just be that there will be no deep emotional response. That in no way takes away from the genuineness of the confession.

**Confession is not the only occasion for baring one's soul before the Father.**

**(Read Hebrews 12:1-7)**

We do have occasions where recurring sins are a constant occupation of our thinking. The writer of Hebrews is urging us to not only think about our recurring sins that weigh us down but to look at Jesus, in prayer, and in the occupation of our thinking. If we bring our recurring sins to Him *and* worship Him knowing that He knows our weaknesses laying aside those sins becomes more an exercise of growing up and accountability to our Lord. It's when we hide from Him in shame as Adam and Eve did in the garden that we set ourselves up for defeat.

**Confession of our sins should direct our focus toward Jesus.** Focus on verse 2. If it does not, we stand in jeopardy of becoming neurotic about our repeating sins - a

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<sup>3</sup> Jonah 4:2b.

sure formula for constant defeat.

**Confession should not be reserved for the end of the day.**

**Pray without ceasing.** 1 Thess 5:17.

This does not teach that we should constantly close our eyes or act in some sort of sanctimonious way that looks like we are praying. No. But since confession is a part of our communion with our Heavenly Father - Paul is teaching here that whenever the need arises we should take out the time to "check in with the Lord" regarding any matter *including the moment we have offended a friend or spouse*. This habit opens up all kinds of possibilities including asking for wisdom on-the-fly regarding any matter *including matters at the work place*. This constant looking for opportunities for communion with the Father greatly enhances our dealing with recurring sins, by the way.

**Confession should not be reserved for personal sins alone.**

**Please read Neh. 1:3-11.** There may be application during the discipling others. We really have to be careful where we go with this. It would be very easy for "spiritual" pride to enter into our hearts but let me take this approach. Many times when a person is dealing with a particularly difficult temptation he will seek the help of another brother. While praying for our brother we may be especially touched with our own shortcomings. In this case Confession becomes a supportive ministry where we "carry" our brother along in his weakness. This is the spiritual approach rather than condemn our brother in our own sinful pride "thank God I don't have that problem" is all too common an attitude within the church. Paul pointed out this ministry in Galatians 6:1-5.

[1] Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. [2] Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. [3] If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. [4] Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, [5] for each one should carry his own load. NIV.

Nehemiah felt a burden for the sins of Israel because he himself had been dealing with his own sins. Notice Nehemiah's occupation with the concerns of others. No neurotic preoccupation with his own sins until he entered into prayers for his brothers back in Jerusalem. Then, knowing his own sinfulness, he entered into intercessory prayer for the Jews at Jerusalem with a heart that had been open before the Lord. This ministry can be powerful in the area of accountability between a person dealing with a persistent sin and another who had become a friend who is sharing his spiritual life in ministry.

Nehemiah is teaching us a valuable lesson of being transparent and honest before our Heavenly Father and our own conscience. Another important point to recall is that Nehemiah's prayer was not made before his brothers but between himself and the Lord. I think we can make a connection between Nehemiah's prayer and verse one of our passage in Galatians 6. This is the proper attitude / prayer of one who is about to assist a brother who is in need.

**Recovering from Personal Sins Is Very Important Exercise for Spiritual Growth**

The problem is if we neglect confession but rather form a list of sins we apparently do not have problems with it becomes an exercise in cover-up and hypocrisy. Paul lambasted the Jews for this in Romans 2:1-4:

**[1] You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. [2] Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. [3] So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? [4] Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?**

Now, it is true that this passage applies primarily to the unsaved but application can be made to the less than honest Christian. We must not get caught up in the exercise of condemnation of our Christian brothers in an effort of building ourselves up at his expense. We must be honest with our daily personal sins so that we can maintain a dynamic, personal relationship with the Lord.