

Notes:

"Many Christians are unthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteous. So, we remain alone in our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy...He who is alone with his sins is utterly alone." *-Dietrich Bonhoeffer* 

"We are generally more concerned about the disapproval of people whom we can see than we are about the disapproval of God whom we cannot see, and this makes repentance and confession before others difficult." -*Kenneth Boa, Conformed to His Image* 

"Confession is a difficult discipline for us because we all too often view the believing community as a fellowship of saints before we see it as a fellowship of sinners." –*Richard Foster* 

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**Thesis:** Today my aim is to retrain the narrative and reclaim the power of confession (both private and public).

"Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy." -*Proverbs 28:13* 

Those today who practice confession are in good company when it comes to scripture. They are numbered among those such as Aaron, the Israelites (God's chosen people), David, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Peter, and even the thief on the cross.

In one of the most practical books in all of scripture, James wraps up his challenging work by speaking of the importance and the power of prayer.

James conveys to his readers they should ALWAYS be praising or praying. In good times we praise, in bad times we pray (we pray in good times too). He speaks of the importance of elders and even the power of anointing the sick with oil as the elders pray for and over them (a practice that our shepherds have done and still do practice upon request).

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But after that, in this passage on prayer, he throws in this powerful command as we wrap up our series on the spiritual disciplines and the power of confession: "confess your sins to one another and pray for one another."	Notes:
*As a church family, we must change the perception of confession.	
Biblical confession is not a "have to" but a "want to."	
When there is sin in our life, and we are genuinely convicted by the Holy Spirit, we should WANT to be right with our forever family and should WANT the prayers and support of our spiritual brothers and sisters.	
In II Samuel 12, King David is presented with a "hypothetical situation" laid out by God and Nathan, and as a just ruler, David pronounced judgment only to find himself guilty.	
By his own admission, he has found himself a flawed, pathetic adulterer, deceiver, and a murderer. His sin cost Uriah his life and will cost him the life of his son.	
He is defenseless and desperately in need of forgiveness, mercy, and grace.	
Psalm 51.To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.	
We must be willing to overcome our vulnerability and allow the church to function as it should.	
We must be willing to overcome the fear that comes with confession and allow God to be fully engaged in our lives by exposing the things that keep us from completely serving Him.	
Paul encourages the church in Colossae to "put to death" those things affiliated with their earthly nature and their old self in that they died to such things as "sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk, and lying."	
In Galatians 5 we tend to focus on the fruit of the Spirit but often skim over the works of the flesh such as: "sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, and orgies."	

## CULTURE OF CONFESSION

Paul makes it crystal clear here that "those who do these things will not inherit the Kingdom of God."

Those who are willing to claim their baggage, albeit painful, are free to be about the business of recovery and are more capable of helping those who are struggling.

There is a credibility that exists among those who are willing to address/confess the sin in their lives that is not present in those who refuse to address and/or confess the sin in their lives.

\*But, for that to happen, we must make sure that we have created a safe environment where people can share and bear their souls without the very real fear of being gossiped about and/or slandered in the public square (especially by their Spiritual family).

By confessing our sins, we invite our Christian brothers and sisters to fight alongside us in the struggle. There is strength in numbers (especially when it comes to Christians).

"A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person." *-Dietrich Bonhoeffer* 

It is important to say here: Everyone doesn't have to come to the front row.

\*To be true to the text, it says to confess our sins to one another.

"This discipline [confession] sets us free from the burden of hidden sin, but it requires transparency and vulnerability in the presence of one or more people whom we implicitly trust. When we uncover and name our secrets, failures, and weaknesses, they lose their dominion by virtue of being exposed." *-Kenneth Boa, Conformed to His Image* 

There is something to be said for having someone who you trust- that you can confide in. Do not choose this person lightly. Pray about the one with whom you choose to confide. Notes:

## CULTURE OF CONFESSION

Here are some questions you need to ask yourself when selecting a confidant:	Notes:
<ul> <li>Who will not judge you but will hold you spiritually accountable? - "Anybody who has once been horrified by the dreadfulness of his own sin that nailed Jesus to the Cross will no longer be horrified by even the rankest sins of a brother." <i>–Dietrich Bonhoeffer</i></li> <li>Who will you not lie to when asked hard questions?</li> <li>Who can keep your conversation in confidence?</li> </ul>	
<ul><li>Who is a good listener?</li><li>Who will pray for you before, during, and after your struggles have been revealed?</li></ul>	
<ul> <li>POINTS TO PONDER AS WE PREPARE TO PART:</li> <li>We know from II Samuel 12 that confession clears the way for forgiveness.</li> <li>We know from Nehemiah 9:1-38 that confession clears the way for unhindered worship</li> <li>We know from Psalm 32:3-5 that confession brings relief.</li> <li>We know from Matthew 5:23-24 that confession clears the way for right relationships</li> <li>We know from James 5:13-20 that confession clears the way for real fellowship</li> <li>We know from I John 1:1-10 that confession clears the way for freedom and breaks the power of sin.</li> </ul>	
"The discipline of confession brings an end to pretense. God is calling into being a Church that can openly confess its frail humanity and know the forgiving and empowering graces of Christ. Honesty leads to confession, and confession leads to change." — <i>Richard Foster</i>	
Honest confession not only increases our own spiritual health, but also the health of the congregations we lead. It can change the DNA of the whole church.	