



Confession in Prayer

February 25, 2007

I call on you, O God, for you will answer me; give ear to me and hear my prayer. - Psalm 17:6

Icebreaker!

When you were a kid, was there anything you ever did that your parents never found out about?

We have all done things and “gotten away” with it. *What does it mean to “get away” with doing something?*

- It means we did something and never had to face the consequences.

There were probably times many of us fooled our parents but what about God? *Is it possible to “get away” with things in God’s eyes? Why/Why not?*

- It is not possible because God knows everything.

Henry Nouwen once said “To pray is to walk in the full light of God, and to say simply, without holding back, ‘I am human and you are God.’”

Confession means speaking honestly to God about who we are and what we have done. Confession is not just about when we have done something wrong. *What are some other things that involve confession other than sin?*

- We can confess Jesus as our Lord to God and people
- We can confess to God that we have doubts and serious questions.
- We confess our weaknesses and temptations and pray that God would strengthen us.

This study is specifically going to deal with the most common type of confession—confession of sin. Sin, it is not what was intended for mankind. It breaks the bonds between ourselves and God (Isa 59:2), is universal to all mankind (Rom 3:23), and in the end results in death (Rom 6:23). God is a God of life and seeks relationship with us. He has cured the sin problem when we are Christians. The only thing that keeps our sins from pardon is our own willingness to confess them.

Text:

Psalm 32

What was David’s life like when he refused to confess his sins to God?

- Wasting away, groaning, no strength.

What was David’s life like once he confessed his sins to God?

- He was forgiven and blessed.
- He had God’s protection and deliverance.

Fear of confession

Sometimes we don't want to tell God about our sin for fear of the consequences or maybe because we have done the same sin over and over again. David says, the one with unconfessed sin is the one who is in trouble and not the person who confesses. Is it always easy to confess to God? No. Is life always better when we do? Yes. *Why?*

- Because confession repairs the rift between us and God as He is then willing and able to forgive us.
- Life is better with confession because it is life as it was meant to be and not a life full of sin and lies.

Text

1 John 1:5-10

If God is light, how is confession part of the process of becoming more godly in our lives?

- Confession renounces the darkness/sin in our lives and exposes it to God's light.
- Only when exposed can sin be taken care of. Confession exposes sin and it is up to us to do it.

John says everyone sins. If someone says they don't sin, they are a liar. But if we confess our sins, God will prove faithful. Confession is a part of being a faithful follower of God. It is admitting when we have made a mistake and looking to God for a better way to live. The Bible is clear that confession is a necessary part of our relationship with God.

How are we Doing?

How well do we practice confession in our personal lives and with other people?

James 5:16 calls on us to confess our sins to each other. *What makes that such a hard thing to do?*

- We don't usually feel safe confessing to another person.

But the Bible says that is something we should do. What have we been missing? Safe environments where we can pour out our honest emotions and raw struggle before a group of fellow Christians and not be met with terrified looks on everyone else's faces.

How can our LIFE groups be a safe place to confess our sins to each other?

- There are only a few other people in the room.
- We need to be careful not to cut other people down when they say something that makes us uncomfortable because they may never try to do it again.
- There may be a time your group will want to split into groups of 3-4 and confess and pray for each other. It would be powerful. Just do it with an agreement of confidentiality with each other.

Application

If God says we should do it, we need avenues to make this happen. At the same time this is not something we force people into or do for show. If it happens it needs to happen naturally when people feel comfortable with it.

How would our relationships with each other grow if we confessed our hurts and sins to each other more often?

How would our relationship with God grow if we were more honest with Him in our prayer lives?

Find someone you can pray with that you feel safe enough to confess one of your weaknesses to. This has to be someone you have a tremendous amount of trust in. Share with each other and pray for each other about that area of your lives every day for a week.

End in prayer. Open the prayer requests up for more than the hurting and those who are lost—open it up for anyone who wants to practice confession as well.

Leaders— thank you for all you do!