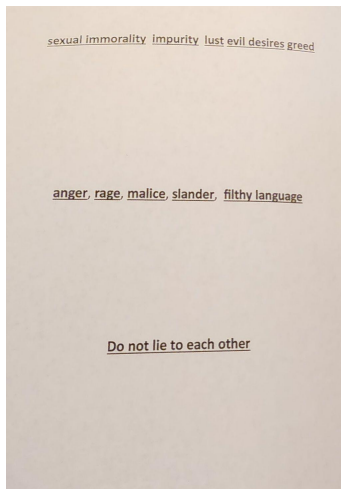


## Prayer Series #3

# Confession

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This is a series of how to pray: Today I want to give you a paper to hold on to. We will work on this together.



**Acts 2:38** Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter is inviting people to repent: sometimes we think repent = confession. But biblical repentance can mean both a state of being **or** a practice.

In **Mark 3:2** Jesus invites people to repent: “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” What is Jesus inviting them to do? Josephus, a high level Saducee and historian, said Jesus was saying, “Follow my way, turn from your rebellion.”

What Peter was talking about in **Acts 2:38** was *belief* and a *marking of the Holy Spirit*: when we follow Jesus, we are in a state of repentance. I am not in a repentant relationship with you if I have my back to you. Jesus is saying, “Turn around and face me.” This is a state you are in and cannot be changed: Once you are a follower of Jesus, you can’t unfollow Jesus. **But you can act as if you weren’t**. Example: When my kids were little I told them they could act like a Cepin or not but it wouldn’t change that they are my children. Likewise, we can act in repentance and turn our direction towards light or we can act as if that is not who we are.

Today, we're going to talk about how CONFESS in the context of prayer. This is the way of repentance: we are people of confession, which is counter to our culture. We are people who confess:

Google Definition: **To confess** is to admit or state that one has committed a crime or is at fault in some way.

We might think confession is like it is in the movies: a criminal is forced to confess his crime under interrogation.

Three common approaches to confession:

- The idea of confession actually brings a lot of shame. We might become compulsive confessors to try to get rid of our shame.
- Or we might have trouble finding things in our life to confess because we want to get rid of the shame. (Maybe I went 5 miles over the speed limit this week?)
- We might be dutiful and therefore come up with acceptable things to confess

There are **3 types of confession:**

**1. A statement of sin:** What you are saying about me is true. I agree with reality.

**I John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

**James 5:16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Lord's Prayer assumes that we have sin:

**Matt 6:12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

**2. A statement of allegiance:**

In the Lord's Prayer, when you make a statement about God's kingdom, you say He is the ruler.

**Matt 6:9** "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
**10** your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

### **Rom 10:9-10**

**9** If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Confession is something you do with your mouth, not in your head.

### **3. A statement of praise:**

Hallowed be Thy name: you are very very special: you are confessing who God is in reality.

**Matt 6: 9** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

**Heb 13:15** Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.

We are people who confess Jesus’s name and say who he is: we pour light on him.

*It’s hard to confess:* we try not to talk about it too much yet the invitation is to do it all the time.

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus says “**And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.**”

In the first century, they understood the burden of debt and the effect of owing people money on a person. You could lose your freedom for a lifetime. The Lord’s Prayer is asking for forgiveness for the sins that produce a heavy burden on us and we do the same for others. ***It’s the SINEW of community: It’s me giving up my demand that you pay for what you did.*** I lift the burden of your sin from you and I no longer have that expectation on you.

I’m not talking about forgiving someone who has abused you and agreeing to do it again. You lift the demand and create a boundary knowing that you are not the one who gets to say “You will pay for this.” This makes for a healthy community: The burden of me punishing you won’t be held against you.

Having sins we are unwilling to talk about is difficult to carry.

**I John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

John is not saying that if you don’t confess your sins, you won’t be forgiven for them. He wants you to know that the reality is that when you entered the kingdom of God, you have confessed

and are cleansed. But sin has become a burden for you as a human at this time: to have power over it, we must speak it outloud and know we are cleansed from all unrighteousness. Confession says “I agree that I am broken and that you know about it and that you have cleansed me even though in this moment I have chosen to go against my state as a repentant person.”

James says that confession in community looks like this:

**James 5:16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

It's not that we only speak it to God. In Matt 6, Jesus says we are not to pray in public because the relationship you have with Jesus will be the relationship you have with the people you are speaking in front of. This is not relationship, this is you trying to pull intimacy from other people. Therefore Jesus was you to go into you prayer closet alone and talk with God.

But there is a place for corporate prayer: we are called into the corporate space most of the time. Healing from sin comes when we confess to each other and pray for each other. Healed = physical healing. If you are struggling with being tired and feeling unhealthy, I'm not saying that unconfessed sin is the cause. But if you are chronically overwhelmed and exhausted, it may be rooted in shame and unwillingness to confess sin and lead a life of confession. Maybe there is pride and religious discipline underneath? But James says if you want relief, you need to lead a life of confession with God and His people. The prayer of a righteous is powerful and effective.

How do we do this?

We must be gospel rooted in confessing our identity in Jesus. What Jesus did for us tells us who we are: we need to sit in this in order to be people of confession and forgiveness.

### **Col 3:1-4**

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

One of my favorite lines in these verses is **Christ, who is your life**. We are hidden in Christ, not hidden in anyone else. We can stand on our cleanness in Christ, we are raised with him, we are his child: these make all of life rich.

The prayer of a righteous person (someone who is deeply rooted in their ID in Christ) has a power for transformation. We cannot live a life of confession if we have shame and guilt and arrogance and pride and confusion about confession. We have to put everything aside and know

that I AM HIDDEN IN CHRIST. I am cleansed from all unrighteousness. Look at what the next verse in Colossians 3 says:

**Col 3:5-8**

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: (the nature that is not facing Christ)

sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6** Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **7** You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8** But now you must also rid (CONFESS) yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

I'm not talking about being in an accountability group here... any habit you create as an adult, you have to manually manage this. Maintaining a diet for a lifetime is too difficult. This is not about white-knuckling through a habit. This is about living a life of confession and being prayed for by others: It's inviting God to do something in you. Confession is owning these things and beginning the process of what is happening by speaking them out loud to one another.

If you want to be a community of confession:

**Col 3:9** Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

When you confess and I pray for you, you are invited into a life of confession, not just confession of sin but also confession of allegiance and praise. My challenge is not to be accountable (diet better!) but to praise God more and state your allegiance to Him more.

**Psalm 32:3-4**

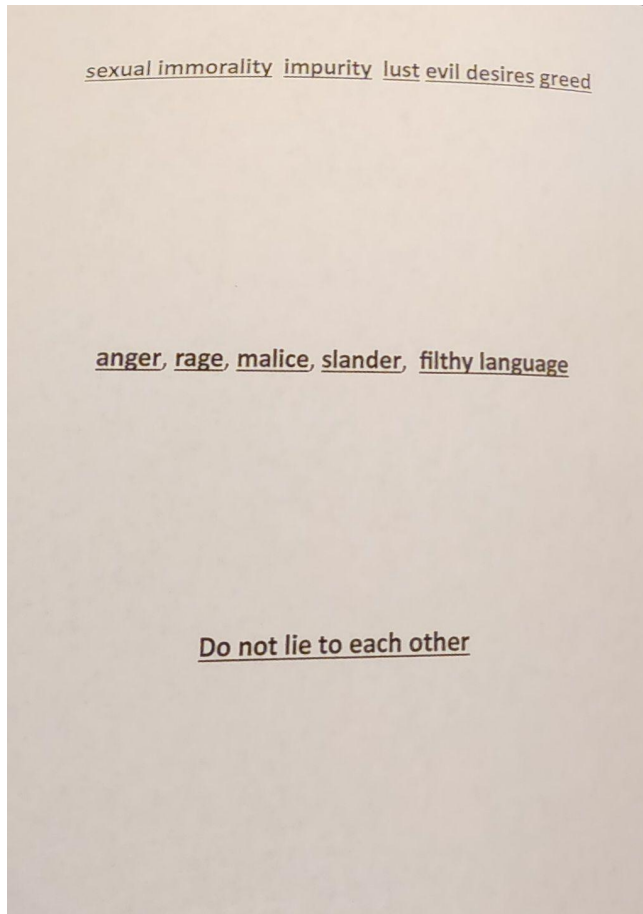
**3** When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. **4** For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

Sin is like an onion: we confess and move forward into holiness and a big chunk is peeled off but a life of repentance and confession is peeling layers off. No matter where you are spiritually, there are parts you aren't talking about The hand of God weighs on you. David tell you how to do this in Psalm 32. There are things for all of us, including me, that we are wrestling about and that we don't want to tell anyone about: maybe we fear being ashamed or having to do something about it...or maybe someone will minimize it. Nevertheless, it weighs on you and affects relationships and community with God and one another.

## Psalm 32:5-6

Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."  
And you forgave the guilt (burden) of my sin.

I didn't cover up my sin or try to minimize: I agreed it was wrong and God forgave me.



This is a list of things to avoid from Colossians 3: It's a hard list but not a complete list: a lot of sin boils down to trying to be in control of things.

I invite you to put your name on this list. Take 4-5 minutes and put a check by certain words; you can even write down details.

Then I invite you to take this list to someone you trust: a spouse, someone in your Pilgrim Group, and tell them you want to go through this list with them and have them pray for you.

I will give you about 5 minutes to go through this and then we'll have time for questions.