

Spiritual Trainer Series

*Confess &
Repent*

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Confess & Repent

What is Confession?

Therefore, confess your sins to one another ...
(James 5:16 NASB)

A Truth to Enjoy!

An honest confession to God is the best eraser in the world.

There are Two Types of Confession of Sin:

1. Confession of sin to claim eternal sonship with Jesus

Christ: This confession of sin is a one-time act that initiates your salvation. It is linked to the concepts of *Confession unto Salvation* and *Confession of Faith* because it is when you come to the realization that you are a sinner and you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your only Savior. This is when you are welcomed into the family of God as a believer in Jesus Christ and are saved from eternal death.

*...your sorrow led you to repentance. For you
became sorrowful as God intended....*

*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to
salvation and leaves no regret,
but worldly sorrow brings death.*
(2 Corinthians 7:9b-10)

2. Confession of sin to restore fellowship with Jesus Christ:

This confession of sin refers to your desire, as a believer living in a “fallen” world, to be forgiven for a sin you have committed and to restore a broken relationship with Jesus.

*Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven,
whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those
whose record the Lord has cleared of sin,
whose lives are lived in complete honesty!*

(Psalm 32:1-2 NLT)

**This booklet will focus on the second type of confession,
which restores fellowship with Jesus Christ.**

The word *confess* literally means “to say the same thing” or “agree with.” Confession is your agreeing with God that you have sinned. In the New Testament (1 Peter 2:5 NLT), Peter says that as a believer in Jesus Christ, you are one of God’s holy priests. That means you have direct access to God for your confession of sin; you are part of the priesthood of all believers. Peter goes on to say:

*...for you are a chosen people. You are a kingdom of priests,
God’s holy nation, his very own possession. This is so you can
show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the
darkness into his wonderful light.*

(1 Peter 2:9 NLT)

So... when you agree with God that you have sinned and you personally ask Him to forgive you, He does!

Here’s a Practical Way to Understand Confession. It’s like having your household garbage pile up, until you decide it is wise to put it outside for your trash collector to haul off.

More pungent than that household garbage, though, is the **personal trash** that mounts in your heart and mind. Some of your trash (like anger, bitterness, jealousy, coveting, gossip, hatred, or lust) is obviously putrid. But did you know that even your good deeds can smell to God like rotten garbage if they are contaminated by selfish pride? God calls all of this inner garbage *sin*.

Thankfully, “God’s Garbage Collection” is not limited to a one-day-a-week “Pick-up” at church. It is available 24/7 by asking God to forgive you and take away your guilt.

- ❖ From God’s perspective, why is it important for believers to confess their sins?

Worth Remembering

Confession is an admission of weakness and a sign of real strength of character.

What is Repentance?

Repentance is to be so sorry for your sin that you are willing to give up the sin and “make right” any wrong that you caused!

A lot of repentance today is no more than bargaining with God. You tell the Lord that you will change a sin pattern in your life, if He will get you out of a troubling situation. Others give repentant lip service to God with a superficial, worldly sorrow simply because they were caught in sin. True repentance involves godly sorrow for your wrongdoing, a deep sorrow that causes you to change. In fact, the Greek word translated repent literally means “to change one’s mind or purpose, to change one’s opinion.” Biblical repentance involves a...

1. Change of Mind. It is a change in your thinking; a turning from sin and turning toward God. It is an ongoing choice that you make each time you sin. You have a “change of mind” because you see your sin as wrong.

❖ Is there anything in your life for which you suspect you may need a “change of mind”?

2. Change of Heart. It is a feeling of deep regret, not because you got caught or faced tough consequences, but because you are truly sorry for your sinful action. It is having a contrite (repentant) heart that feels remorse concerning your wrong behavior.

Prayer: Pray right now for a changed mind and heart toward persistent sins in your life. Ask specifically for a contrite heart.

3. Change of Lifestyle. It is a new direction taken that shows a visible difference in your actions.

*Prove by the way you live that you have really turned
from your sins and turned to God.
(Matthew 3:8 NLT)*

Something to think about: God’s remedy for your sin includes both confession and repentance. Another way to say this is:

True Confession Implies Repentance!

Confession without a change of mind, heart, and lifestyle is simply wasted breath. Your confession must manifest itself in future behavior. When you realize you have sinned and have confessed it, the awareness of that sin should become so acute

in your life, that you say, “Now I see it more clearly; I recognize it as sin; I choose to change my ways.”

You not only need to “agree with God” about what He calls *sin* in your life, but you also need to take the necessary steps that will lead to eliminating that sin forever.

Confession without the intent to repent!

Two shipwrecked sailors had been drifting hopelessly for days on a lifeboat. In desperation, one of the two men began to pray, “Lord, I confess that I haven’t lived a good life. I’ve lied, cheated, stolen, and done many other horrible things. But, if You rescue us, I promise I’ll....”

“Whoa! Don’t say another word,” interrupted his companion. “Look! There’s land ahead. You can stop promising!”

- ❖ What does this illustration reflect about how some people approach confession?

Why Don’t I Confess and Repent of My Sins?

1. You fail to recognize how serious your sin is to God.
2. Your pride makes it difficult to admit your sins, especially those recurring ones.
3. Your sin might be pleasurable and self-gratifying; it probably gives you a physical, mental, egotistical, or emotional high.

4. Your self-indulgent bad habits can be so deeply ingrained that you resist even the most sensible thing to do. (You feel “stuck in your ways.”)

5. You think...

I'm not really so bad!
What I'm doing isn't hurting anyone!
Everybody's doing it!


No matter how you may rationalize it, the Bible does not agree with you. Sin is so serious to God that it cost Him the death of His one-and-only Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for your sins.

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us,
in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
(Romans 5:8 NKJV)

- ❖ Of the five reasons listed above, which one can you relate to the most? Why?

What are the Benefits of Confession and Repentance?

1. **You enjoy restored fellowship with God.** Think about how bad you feel when you know you have unconfessed sin in your life. Well, by confessing and repenting of your sin, you “restore the joy of your salvation,” which means you remember and feel the joy of the close relationship you had when you first confessed your sins and acknowledged Christ as your only Savior.

-  Read Psalm 51, which is King David's confession to God after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband killed. Particularly notice verse 11:

Do not cast me from your presence.
(Psalm 51:11)

- ❖ What is obvious from your reading of Psalm 51 about what King David learned?

- 2. Your sins are forgiven and forgotten forever.** Yes, it's true! When you confess and repent of your sins, God chooses to forgive and forget them. He no longer charges them to your account.

...if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.
(1 John 1:9 NLT)

For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.
(Hebrews 8:12)

God will never mention your deeds again!

"He will provide us with opportunities to show how truly we have repented of the indiscretions of the past and how much we long to serve Him in the decisions to come. He will never mention the deeds by which we've shamed others and ourselves; once repented of, they are **forgiven and forgotten forever**. He will give us a place to begin again – to love, to serve, to touch others profoundly and eternally for His sake. This is the measure of our Father's forgiving love."

– David Roper, author of *Jacob: The Fools God Chooses*

- 3. You have freedom from guilt.** Once you have been personally “convicted” of a sin in your life – which causes you to confess it and repent of it – there is no need for guilt or self-condemnation because God does not condemn you; instead, He dismisses the case against you.

Case Dismissed!

A 92 year-old woman, worn out with guilt for more than 46 years, finally decided that she had to confess a crime. She said to a judge, “This thing has been hanging over my head for half my life. It has gotten so heavy that I can’t stand it any longer. I admit that am guilty.”

With compassion and mercy in his voice, the judge replied, “Criminal charges, in this specific case, are not warranted. Case dismissed!”

- ❖ Think of a time in your life when confession and repentance has been liberating.

- 4. You receive God’s mercy.**

*He who conceals his sins does not prosper,
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*
(Proverbs 28:13)

- 5. God hears your prayers.**

*Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you
what He did for me. For I cried out to Him for help,
praising Him as I spoke. If I had not confessed the sin
in my heart, my Lord would not have listened. But God did
listen! He paid attention to my prayer. Praise God, who
did not ignore my prayer and did not withdraw
his unfailing love from me.*
(Psalm 66:16-20 NLT)

- 6. You operate with your full strength**, with no repressed shame that can make you physically and emotionally ill.

When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long.... My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.

(Psalm 32:3-4 NLT)

How Do I Confess and Repent of My Sins?

Someone has written:

Repentance means I leave the sin
That I had loved before
And show that I am grieved by it
By doing it no more.

Biblical Pattern for Confession

Psalm 32:5 NLT

*Finally, I confessed all my
sins to you (God) and
stopped trying to hide them.
I said to myself, "I will confess
my rebellion to the Lord."
And You forgave me!
All my guilt is gone.*

Steps of Confession

Agree with God about sins.

Don't try to hide your sins.
Confess your wrongdoings.

Receive forgiveness.
Live guilt-free.

- ❖ Spend some time asking the Holy Spirit to reveal anything you need to confess.

Biblical Pattern for Repentance

2 Corinthians 7:11 NKJV

Indicators of Repentance

For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner:

What diligence it produced in you

Earnest to do what is right.

What clearing of yourselves

Eager to clear yourself
through apology.

What indignation

Indignant against sin.

What fear

Fearful of God, showing Him
reverence.

What vehement desire

Intensely desirous to lead a
better life.

What zeal

Zealous to correct what
is wrong.

What vindication!

Ready to see the sin
absolved.

In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

No such thing as partial repentance...

Perhaps, you read the newspaper story about the man who, due to a guilty conscience, sent the following letter to the Internal Revenue Service:

“I haven’t had a good night’s sleep in ages. Last year, when I filed my income tax, I didn’t report all of my earnings. Please find enclosed a check for \$500.

P.S. If I still can’t sleep, I’ll send you the rest.”

Call to Action

Action Steps Bathed in Prayer

Prayer: Tell God that you know you can't undo the past and that you are sorry for the sin you committed. (Then, privately name the specific sin.) Ask Him to give you the strength of character to live in a way that reflects a real and honest change of mind, heart, and behavior.

Job said humbly to God:

*I had heard about you before, but now I have
seen you with my own eyes.
I take back everything I said, and I sit
in dust and ashes to show my repentance.
(Job 42:5-6 NLT)*

Circle one or two of the Action Steps below that you will take:

1. Commit to praying daily for two weeks about a persistent sin in your life.
2. In regard to a sin you have already confessed or would like to confess now, think about a specific way you can show your repentance.
3. Get an accountability partner in the area of your greatest weakness.

4. The Bible has many examples of true confession and repentance. On your own, explore one or more of the following stories:

David 2 Samuel 11-12; Psalm 32

Ninevites Book of Jonah

3,000 at Pentecost Acts 2:37-41

Paul Acts 9:1-22

Peter Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72;
Luke 22:54-62; John 18:16-18, 25-27

5. Read the “Spiritual Trainer Challenge” on page 14 to see if you are being prompted by the Holy Spirit to disciple someone on this topic of confession and repentance.

Great Resource

Jacob: The Fools God Chooses by David Roper (Grand Rapids: Discovery House) 2002.

In unfathomable love, God chooses foolish, self-serving human beings and fits them for His divine purposes. In Jacob's case, God transformed His "fool" into a great nation in spite of Jacob's many flaws and his devious, manipulative, and selfish ways. With chapter titles such as "The Birthright," "Jacob's Ladder," and "The Cleansing Flame," Roper offers candid snapshots of God's handiwork in the life of this schemer-turned-patriarch.

Spiritual Trainer Challenge

Is the Holy Spirit encouraging you to be a Spiritual Trainer to another Christian in the area of confession and repentance? Is someone in your family, small group, or ministry ready to take the next step in his or her spiritual walk? Would you like to share this booklet with a parent, child, sibling, friend, neighbor, or co-worker? If so, here are simple steps you can take:

Things You Can Do to Prayerfully Prepare for a Spiritual Training Appointment

1. Pick up a copy of *Life Training: Spiritual Habits* and read through it. This booklet will give you a good understanding of why it is important to develop spiritual habits like time alone with God, confession and repentance, prayer, Scripture memorization, worship, contentment, praying the names of God, etc. It will also give you some excellent advice on how to be a great trainer/discipler.
2. Ask someone if he/she (same-sex as yourself, unless it is a family member or your fiancé) would like you to disciple him/her using this booklet, *Confess and Repent*. Pick up a copy for that person. Set a date and time for a one-hour meeting—with a reminder to bring a Bible.
3. Re-read this booklet, *Confess and Repent*, paying special attention to how it is organized and what sections helped you the most.

Things to Do During the Appointment

Important Note: This lesson has six sections, each of which will take approximately eight minutes. So, you will probably need 48 minutes to cover the content of the lesson. **Please allow 60 minutes for the entire discipleship session, including fellowship and prayer requests.**

1. Open with a brief prayer and a few minutes of fellowship.
2. Read through the booklet with your trainee, taking turns sharing the reading. Ask your trainee the questions as you work through the material. Take your time: don't rush.
3. For the “Call to Action” section, slow the pace as you pray, answer any questions, and discuss the action steps.

Notes:

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Thank you for using the Saddleback Church Spiritual Trainer Series materials entitled *Confess and Repent*. We hope that this has been a beneficial experience and has provided you with an opportunity to draw closer to God.

If you are interested in exploring more of the Saddleback Spiritual Trainer Series tools, please call the Maturity Team at Saddleback Church, (949) 609-8201.
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