

Confession

To Whom You Should Confess and Why

Points to Consider

1. Confess to God
2. Confess to People You've Sinned Against
3. Confess to People Who Know about and/or are Affected By Your Sin

Confess to God

Ps 51:1-4 *Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight — That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.*

All sin is primarily against **God**.

God's forgiveness is the only forgiveness that effects our eternal **salvation**.

God is the **only** one who can blot out our transgressions, wash us from our iniquities, and cleanse us from our sins.

Ps 51:10-12 *Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.*

God is the only one who can create in us a **clean** heart, renew our steadfast spirit, and restore the joy of **His** salvation.

2 Sam 24:3-4 *And Joab said to the king, "Now may the Lord your God add to the people a hundred times more than there are, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king desire this thing?" 4 Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. Therefore Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel.*

David failed to listen to wise council.

Joab and the captains of the army did not have the **courage** to refuse David's command.

2 Sam 24:10 *And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly." NKJV*

When David felt guilty about his sin, the **first** one he went to was God.

David knew that God was the **only** one who could take away his iniquity.

Even though David's sin affected others, his primary concern was always **God's** forgiveness.

1 Sam 12:16-19 *"Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes: 17 Is today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the Lord, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking a king for yourselves." 18 So Samuel called to the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. 19 And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves."*

When the people realized that they had sinned by asking for a king, they asked Samuel to pray to **God** for their forgiveness.

Ezra 9:5-15 *At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God. 6 And I said: "O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens. ... 9 For we were slaves. Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. 10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, 11 which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land, with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from one end to another with their impurity. 12 Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons; and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and leave it as an inheritance to your children forever.' 13 And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, since You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such deliverance as this, 14 should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations? Would You not be angry with us until You had consumed us, so that there would be no remnant or survivor? 15 O Lord God of Israel, You are righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as it is this day. Here we are before You, in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this!"*

Ezra knew that it was God's forgiveness that the people **needed**.

Dan 9:3-6 *Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4 And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.*

Daniel prayed and made **confession** to God for the sins of the nation. (see also Neh 9)

Acts 8:20-23 *But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! 21 You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."*

Peter told the sorcerer that he needed to pray to **repent** and pray to God in order to be forgiven.

Confess to the People You've Sinned Against

Matt 5:23-24 *Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

Before you can worship the Lord you must be reconciled to your brother.

Num 12:9-13 *So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them, and He departed. 10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. 11 So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. 12 Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!" 13 So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!"*

Aaron turned to **Moses**, the one they sinned against, and asked for forgiveness. Moses then turned to God and asked that He heal Miriam. This illustrates point #1. All sin is against God.

Luke 15:17-19 *"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."'*

This young man knew he had sinned against God and his father. He had to ask **both** for forgiveness.

2 Sam 16:5-8 *Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came. 6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. 7 Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! 8 The Lord has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the Lord has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!"*

2 Sam 19:18-20 *Now Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan. 19 Then he said to the king, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart. 20 For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."*

Shimei knew that he should **immediately** seek David's forgiveness once the Lord blessed him with victory.

Luke 17:3-4 *Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."*

In order to get forgiveness seven times in a day you have to **ask** seven times.

Philem 10-14 *I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, 11 who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me. 12 I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel. 14 But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.*

By example, Paul taught that Onesimus had to **return** to the one he wronged and get his permission to leave.

We are not told what Onesimus said to Philemon, but by taking the letter and returning we learn the value God places on confessing to the one you sinned against.

Confess to the People who Know about and are Affected By Your Sin

Josh 7:20-21 *And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: 21 When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."... 25 And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.*

The **entire** nation needed to know about Achan's sin, because they were all affected by it.

The man in Corinth had to make it known to acknowledge his sin to **all** the saints since they all knew about his sin. His sin was bringing reproach on the whole church.

1 Cor 5:4-5 *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

Paul insisted that the rebuke be made in front of **everyone** because the sin was evident to all.

Points We Considered

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Others Lessons We've Learned

1. Humility must **accompany confession**.
2. At times it is helpful to have others pray for you. (i.e. the people when they asked for a king and the sorcerer).
3. Repentance, and at times restitution, must **accompany confession**.