
Confession of Sin

The presence of the Sin Nature in the soul guarantees that the Christian believer will have a problem with active personal sin for the rest of his life on earth. This personal sin causes a deep disturbance in the believer's personal relationship with the Lord. The Holy Spirit is said to be personally "grieved", and His work "quenched" by a Christian's sin, or by his attempt to live outside of the will of God.

While you do not lose your salvation each time you sin, your personal growth and effectiveness are stifled as long as there is a rift in your fellowship with God. This rift is healed when you personally confession to God the sin which caused the breach.

Confession of sins is not the basis of salvation. Jesus Christ was judged once for our sins, on the Cross; and He does not need to be judged repeatedly for our sins. The basis of salvation is your personal trust in Christ and His work, rather than confession or any other act which you might perform to try to win the favor of God. ACTS 16:31; JOHN 1:12; EPH. 1:13,14; 2:8,9; 1 PET. 2:24; 2 COR. 5:21.

A Christian is always "in Christ". EPH. 1:3,5,7. So confession of personal sin is extremely important to the personal spiritual relationship that you have with God.

God requires confession of sin as the means of maintaining a close personal walk with Himself. He requires a continual acknowledgement of His rulership; and confession of sin is the means by which you express your yieldedness and surrender to the sovereign will of God on a moment by moment basis. The Lord wants you to have a very useful and happy life, and part of His plan for providing this sort of life is confession of sin.

Etymology of the Word Confession

The word "confession" in 1 John 1:9 is the Greek verb **ohologew (homologeō)**. This word, and its derivatives, is a common term in ancient Greek and Hellenic speech, in the Septuagint Greek of the Old Testament, and in the New Testament

Koine Greek. It means, literally, "to say the same thing; to agree in statement."

Xenophon uses the phrase **homologoi genesthai**, "to agree in statement." Herodotus, similarly, has the phrase **glossan homologeōin**, "to speak the same language." The word also appears quite often in the passive voice to say such things as "all men are agreed on the statement."

So in reviewing the ancient usages, there are found a number of such defining statements, for example:

- "to agree to the statement of another
- to confirm the receipt of money
- to agree to a proposal
- to agree to or accept a promise
- to agree with or to adopt social customs

So **homologeō** or **homologia** imply consent to something felt to be valid, and in such a way that the agreement is followed by definite resolve and action, by ready attachment to a cause.

Kittel: "The aim in **homologia** is not a theoretical agreement which does not commit us but acceptance of a common cause." And, "**homologeō** means that "I agree with someone on something; and it embraces both the fact and event along with the act and action in which I bear witness to the agreement."

Thus, in the Christian's life, confession of sins is based on an established agreement and personal acceptance of God's divine sovereignty, which includes His right as Creator and Father to set the standards by which Christians must live.

The Lord Encourages Confession

A novice believer may not be aware that it's possible to live out of fellowship and that he needs to confess sin. 1 JOHN 1:6; 2:9,10; 2 PET. 1:9. God both commands and pleads with us to judge ourselves, to confess, and then to forget sins. ISA. 43:26; 1 COR. 11:28,31; 1 JOHN 1:9; PHIL. 3:13,14; PROV. 1:23. Any person who reads the Bible quickly becomes aware of God's intentions in this matter.

Some Christians willfully ignore the commands to confess, leading God to employ more persuasive measures to encourage compliance. These methods include:

- Loss of inner peace, PHIL. 4:6,7
- Chastening (discipline), HEB. 12:6
- Pricking of conscience, HEB. 13:18
- Sorrow for sin, PSALM 32.

A few Christians manage to ignore even severe chastening for a long time, leading to God's administering the "sin unto death." The alternative to confession is discipline. HEB. 12:1-5.

The Mechanics of Confession of Sin

Confession does not provide you with a license to sin. The idea that "I can sin and confess repeatedly because God will always forgive" is sinful in itself because it indicates that he believer does not actually think the same about his sin that God does. That is, there is no real repentance or confession.

And confession of sin does not remove the buildup of callousness or hardness in the soul of the person who has lived apart from God for a long time. This removal of scar tissue is accomplished through edification, the Biblical system for understanding and applying the Word of God.

Confession of sin does not give you emotional experience, nor is it accompanied by an emotional reaction. God's forgiveness is based on His promise to cleanse, not on how a person feels. And, confession does not always remove the pain or suffering which is the result of the sin itself or which came as a result of divine discipline. Although the cursing is turned to blessing, the suffering may continue; but the suffering may be endured to the glory of God instead.

Some Christians try to get on God's good side through some means other than the confession which is prescribed by God. Sometimes a person thinks that a demonstration of sorrowfulness is called for, or that weeping will impress God with one's contrition. Others "compensate" for their sin by increasing their religious activities. Some will pray more often and longer and read their Bibles more. Some will try to bribe God with additional tithes and offerings, or with acts of self-denial, sacrifice, or service. Some will present

themselves in re-dedication services and attend church functions more often. But these things cannot be substituted for confession of sin. God is interested only in a person's mental attitude toward the sin.

The word "confession" in the New Testament is taken from the Greek word ὁμολογέω (homologeō), meaning "to cite", "to name", "to classify in the same manner", "to agree with", "to say the same thing as". Confession acknowledges God's rulership in the matter and agrees with His judgment.

This is a method of dealing with the disharmony caused by sins which causes no merit to accrue to the person who confesses. It is strictly a Grace provision in which God makes a promise and carries out the function of cleansing. The Christian must (1) confess the sin, 1 John 1:9; (2) forget the sin, Phil. 3:13,14; and (3) isolate the sin, Heb. 12:15.

Since prayer is made only to God the Father (Mark. 2:7), confession is made only to God the Father. Upon the condition of confession, forgiveness is guaranteed and cleansing from all unrighteousness is administered (1 John 1:9). The word "cleanse" refers to the removal of the guilt of the sin. Therefore, the cleansed individual is removed from the condition of discipline, chastening is no longer being administered, and the hindrances to the ministry of the Holy Spirit are removed.

There are several synonyms in the Bible for the word "confess", as follows":

- To "yield" means to confess. ROM. 6:13.
- Putting off the old man", is tantamount to confession. EPH. 5:14.
- Judging oneself is confession, or leads to it. 1 COR. 11:31.
- Presenting one's body is analogous to confession. ROM. 12:1.

Principles Derived from the Doctrine of Confession

Walking closer to God is, in reality, an activity in which you are more consistent in your relationship with the Lord, more consistent in your confession of sin. While confession does not, in itself, cause one to grow in Christ, there can be no growth in

the Spirit as long as one is out of fellowship because of unconfessed sin. Therefore, confession sets the stage for progress in the Christian life. The ministry of the Holy Spirit depends on uninterrupted fellowship. So Christian growth depends on the unhindered work of the Holy Spirit.

Confession takes the believer out of the sphere where he is producing callous and scar tissue on his soul, and it puts him back in the sphere of the Holy Spirit's control. You can thus produce "gold, silver, and precious stones" rather than "wood, hay, and stubble".

As you learn more about the true doctrine of confession, you will increase normally in your discernment about your own status of fellowship. You will know whether you are controlled by the Holy Spirit; and you will know what to do about it when you are not. You will also learn to recognize carnality in others; but you will be more tolerant of other people because you realize better how your own standing depends entirely on the Grace of God.

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