

The Importance of Confession and Repentance

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Jason Kovacs

jason@gospelcarecollective.org

1. The Need for Confession and Repentance

- **Luke 13:3-5** "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."
- **Acts 3:19** "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."
- **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."

Our Purpose = relationship with God and one another
Our Problem = Sin, guilt, judgment, and death.
Our Provision = Repentance restores us into relationship with God in Christ.

Repentance is a saving and sanctifying grace for the whole of life.

Martin Luther's 1st Thesis: "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent,' he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

"Repentance brings us into fellowship with God — and to be near God and to have God near us is the whole purpose of human life." - Jack Miller

2. The Heart of God Towards Confession and Repentance

Our heart vs God's heart

- **Genesis 3:6-13** "6 Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise. So she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 And their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. 8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' 10 And he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the

garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate.""

- **Romans 2:4** "It is God's kindness that leads us to repentance."
- **Hebrews 12:6** "The Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives"
- **Galatians 6:1** "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."
- **Matthew 6:9-13** While the Lord's Prayer doesn't directly say "confess your sins," the line about forgiveness ("Forgive us our debts...") can be seen as an allusion to acknowledging our wrongdoings and seeking God's pardon.

3. The Gift of Repentance

Repentance is a gift that God gives us by His Spirit, through His Word (the law and gospel) and His people

- **Ezekiel 36:26** "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." you
- **Jeremiah 13:23** "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil."
- **Acts 5:31** "God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and for the forgiveness of sins."
- **1 Corinthians 3:6-7** "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."



- **2 Tim 2:25** "God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth..."
- **Jer 23:29** "Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"
- **Romans 7:7-9** "Was the law then sin? Certainly not! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known what sin was. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law sin lies dead."
- **Galatians 3:10** "For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not persist in all the things written in the book of the Law."
- **Jer 31:18** "I hear Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an untrained calf, and I have been disciplined. Turn me back, and I will be turned; for you are the Lord my God.'"
- **Zech 12:10** "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn."
- **Acts 3:19** "Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"
- **2 Corinthians 5:20-21** "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him who knew no sin to become sin for us, that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

4. The Practice of Confession and Repentance

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God,
that he may exalt you in due time." - 1 Pet 5:6

"Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them
finds mercy." - Proverbs 28:13

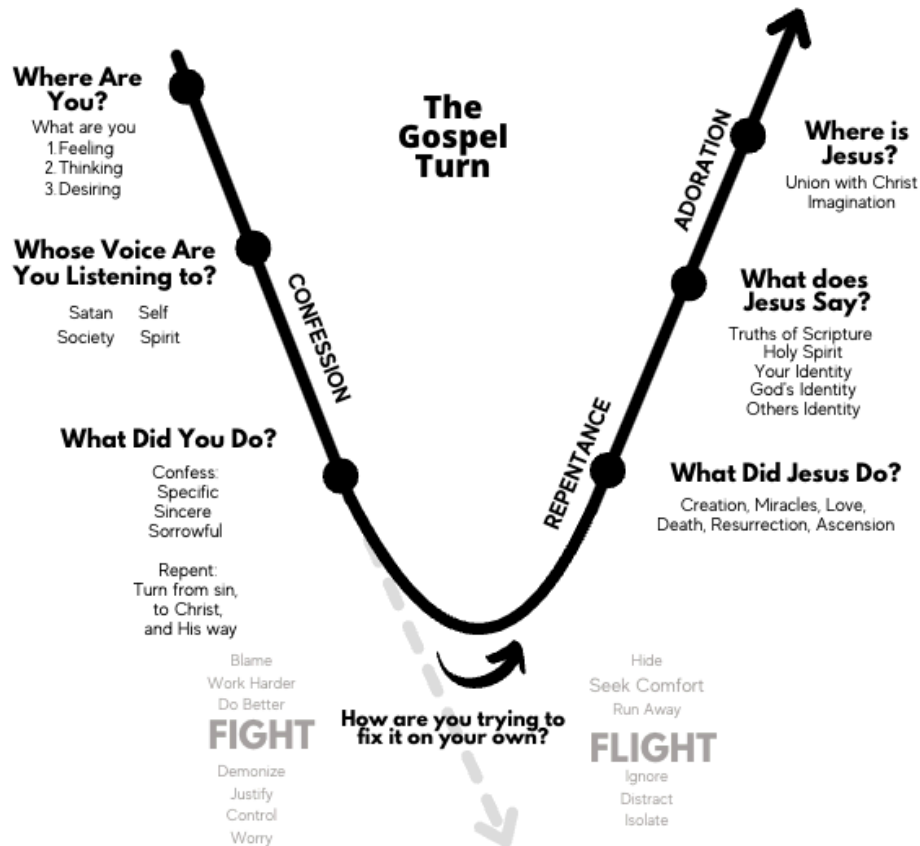
1. Confession

- i. Awareness of what I have done - Recognition (1 John 1:9)
- ii. Acknowledge the impact - Responsibility (2 Cor 7:10)
- iii. Agreement with God - Reveal (Psalm 51)

2. Repentance

- i. Turn from sin (Hate, Forsake, Mortify) - Re-orientation (Ez 14:6; 2 Tim 2:19; Ps 34:14; Ps 119:113; 128; Rom 8:13)
- ii. Trust in God's grace in Christ - Receive (1 John 1:9)
- iii. Act in accordance with repentance - Righteous living (Lk 19:8)

3. Adoration



5. The Fruit of Confession and Repentance

- i. **Freedom from the Law:** Paul argues that following the Mosaic Law is not the path to salvation. Instead, repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is what sets us free from the burden of trying to earn God's favor through following rules (Gal 3 & 4).
 - ii. **Freedom from Sin:** Through Christ's sacrifice, we are freed from the power of sin and its consequences (Gal 5:1).
 - iii. **Freedom to Live a New Life:** This freedom is not a license to sin, but rather the ability to live according to the Holy Spirit's guidance. This new life is characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23).
 - iv. **Freedom with Responsibility:** We are called to use our freedom to serve others in love (Gal 5:13).
 - v. **Freedom in Relationship:** Through repentance we experience freedom in our relationship with God and with one another (Rev 3:19-20; Ps 34:18; Ps 51:17)
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- **Galatians 5:1:** "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."
 - **Galatians 2:16:** "Yet we know that a person is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we have placed our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one is justified."
 - **Galatians 5:22-23:** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."
 - **Revelation 3:19-20** "'Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.'"
 - **Psalm 34:18** "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the contrite in spirit."
 - **Psalm 51:17** "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, these, O God, you will not despise."

Continual Repentance

Valley of Vision

O GOD OF GRACE,

Thou hast imputed my sin to my substitute,
and hast imputed his righteousness
to my soul,
clothing me with a bridegroom's robe,
decking me with jewels of holiness.
But in my Christian walk I am still in rags;
my best prayers are stained with sin;
my penitential tears are so much impurity;
my confessions of wrong are so many
aggravations of sin;
my receiving the Spirit is tintured with
selfishness.

I need to repent of my repentance;
I need my tears to be washed;
I have no robe to bring to cover my sins,
no loom to weave my own righteousness;
I am always standing clothed in filthy garments,
and by grace am always receiving change of
raiment,
for thou dost always justify the ungodly;
I am always going into the far country,
and always returning home as a prodigal,
always saying, Father, forgive me,
and thou art always bringing forth
the best robe.

Every morning let me wear it,
every evening return in it,
go out to the day's work in it,
be married in it,
be wound in death in it,
stand before the great white throne in it,
enter heaven in it shining as the sun.
Grant me never to lose sight of
the exceeding sinfulness of sin,
the exceeding righteousness of salvation,
the exceeding glory of Christ,
the exceeding beauty of holiness,
the exceeding wonder of grace.

Resources:

- Life Together, Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- All of Life is Repentance by Tim Keller
- The Whole Christ by Sinclair Ferguson
- The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification by Walter Marshall
- Repentance: A Daring Call to Real Surrender by C. John Miller
- The Heart of a Servant Leader by C. John Miller
- Confess Your Sins: The Way of Reconciliation by John Stott
- Repentance by Thomas Boston
- The Doctrine of Repentance by Thomas Watson
- The Valley of Vision: Collection of Puritan Prayers
- Streams of Mercy: Prayers of Confession and Celebration by Ian Duguid
- Everyday Prayers by Scotty Smith and Every Season Prayers by Scotty Smith

Quotes:

Corporate confession of sin ought to be ordinary in the church and be used extraordinarily in a special way, whenever it happens that the people are guilty of some transgression in common... [It does not] matter if sometimes a few in one congregation be innocent, for when they are members of a feeble and diseased body they ought not to boast of health. Nay, they cannot but contract some contagion and also bear some part of the guilt.

Besides the fact that ordinary [corporate] confession has been commended by the Lord's mouth, no one of sound mind, who weighs its usefulness, can dare disapprove it. - John Calvin, Institutes, 3.4.11

You can hide nothing from God. The mask you wear before men will do you no good before Him. He wants to see you as you are, He wants to be gracious to you. You do not have to go on lying to yourself and your brothers, as if you were without sin; you can dare to be a sinner. Thank God for that; He loves the sinner but He hates sin. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together

Mutual, brotherly confession is given to us by God in order that we may be sure of divine forgiveness. But it is precisely for the sake of this certainty that confession should deal with concrete sins. People usually are satisfied when they make a general confession. But one experiences the utter perdition and corruption of human nature, in so far as this ever enters into experience at all, when one sees his own specific sins. Self-examination on the basis of all Ten Commandments will therefore be the right preparation for confession. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together

Therefore when I admonish you to confession I am admonishing you to be a Christian. - Martin Luther, Large Catechism

In the presence of a psychiatrist I can only be a sick man; in the presence of a Christian brother I can dare to be a sinner. Wherever the message concerning the Crucified is a vital, living thing, there brotherly confession will also avail. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together

Christ's blood is the laver of initial cleansing but it is also the fountain to which the believer must continuously repair. It is at the cross of Christ that repentance has its beginning; it is at the cross of Christ that it must continue to pour out its heart in the tears of confession and contrition. - John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished*

You cannot love God if you are under the continual, secret suspicion that he is really your enemy! You cannot love God if you secretly think he condemns and hates you. This kind of slavish fear will compel you to some hypocritical obedience— such as what Pharaoh did when he let the Israelites go against his will. However, you will never truly love God if you are compelled only by fear. Your love for God must be won and drawn out by your understanding of God's love and goodness towards you. - Walter Marshall

The guilt ridden son was calculating on the basis of his sin, rather than on the basis of his father's character...The reality of the love of God for us is often the last thing in the world to dawn upon us. As we fix our eyes upon ourselves, our past failures, our present guilt, it seems impossible to us that the Father could love us. Many Christians go through much of their life with the prodigal's suspicion. Their concentration is upon their sin and failure; all their thoughts are introspective." Sinclair Ferguson, *Children of the Living God*

Repentance and praise - both forms of sanity. Repentance is a return to God as my center. Praise is the lifting up of God in honor as my center. But to move out away from the center without repentance and praise is to be eccentric, irrational, and insane. But what a simple thing it is to humble the heart and return to sanity by repentance and praise. - Jack Miller, *Heart of a Servant Leader*

There is no greater joy than leaving our idols at the cross and walking away freed of these cruel bondages. Expect, welcome, and treasure repentance in yourselves and others. - Jack Miller, *Heart of a Servant Leader*