

WEEKLY REFLECTION

If we're being completely honest, how often do we confess our sins to each other? How often do we confess them to God? How often do we confess them at all?

What usually happens when we sin is that we feel guilt and / or shame over having done so. Then we try to run away or hide from God, being convinced that He is angry at us and wants to punish us. Adam and Eve, the first people to sin, did exactly this. After sinning against God, they hid themselves from His face because they were afraid of Him. (Gen. 3:8) They set the pattern for what we would do, and we have been doing it ever since.

But Psalm 51 paints a beautiful picture of confession and repentance. David's sins were rebuked and revealed, but instead of running away from God, David goes to Him and pleads for mercy. (v.1) Unlike Adam and Eve, who throw blame around (Gen. 3:11-13); David takes responsibility for his actions. He acknowledges not just the actions themselves (Ps. 51:3-4), but that he is at his core a sinner. He cannot help but sin (v.5), and there is only One who can make him clean. (v.7)

The very heart of confession is presented in verse 17, where David writes that "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart..." Indeed, if we would only take responsibility for and acknowledge our own sinfulness, how delighted would God be to welcome us back and to restore us! (v.14-16) Hebrews 12:6 reminds us that the Lord disciplines those whom He loves. David understood this very well—even amid his confession, he cries out, asking that the bones God had broken would rejoice (v.8) because there is profound freedom in being known so fully (v.12).

Would you join David, church? Would you allow yourself to be fully known and embraced by God?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

What comes to mind when you hear the word “confession”?

Have you confessed your sins to a trusted friend or mentor in your life before? If so, what did the process look like? How did it make you feel, and how did it impact your relationship with God and with others?

QUESTION TWO:

There are four components to the Confession Prayer in Psalm 51 that we can model. The first is admitting the extent of our sin; the second is addressing the One to whom we are accountable; the third is accepting the costs and consequences of our sin; and the fourth and last is to invite God to change our hearts fully.

How did David go through all four steps in Psalm 51? Why are these four components essential to the discipline of confession?

QUESTION THREE:

As we practice the discipline of confession and train ourselves up to be a church where this is commonplace, let us remember to be people who can keep things confidential; who have empathy and understanding; who are able to listen without our own agendas or a desire to “fix” the other person; and who are willing to pray for the person afterwards.

Let us also examine our own lives in regards to confession. Are there sins that God is calling us to confess and repent of, or confessed sins that we don’t feel released from fully? Is there hurt, misery, and bitterness still festering within? If so, we encourage you to take this opportunity to confess them to the members of your life group, as we pray that God would pour His love onto you through one of His children.