

**“Out of the Depths”:**  
***Praying Through Confession***  
*Sermon Notes*

- **Few areas of our devotional lives stand in such obvious need of assistance as our prayers of confession**

*\*Confession goes best when we know where to look, so when confessing your sin...*

1. Look up to the Lord (vv.1-4; Psalm 51:4)

2. Look in to the Word (vv.5-6; 1 John 1:9)

3. Look out to the world (vv.7-8; Psalm 40:3)

**Next Week: Psalm 1 - “Planted By Streams of Water”:**  
*Prayer & Meditation on Scripture*

**MEFC Community Group Study Guide**  
For the week of August 30th - September 5th

### Getting Started

1. Though we are all familiar with sinning against others, we are far less familiar with the practice of *confessing* our sins against others. Why is confessing our sin against others so difficult for us? A number of reasons are probably at play here. How many can you name?

### Digging Deeper

2. Among believers, robust confession and genuine forgiveness of sin are designed to be inextricably linked. Consider Jesus' words in Luke 17:3-4. His clear commands to "forgive him" and "you must forgive him" leave no room for any other option. How come? What aspects of our own indwelling sin make forgiveness challenging? At the same time, why are confession and forgiveness of sin in the local church so absolutely essential (if you need help, take a look at 1 John 1:9; 4:11 and Ephesians 4:32)?

### Open Your Bible to James 5:16...

3. James 5:16 contains the reciprocal command to "confess your sins to one another". At Mound Free Church, we are so convinced of the foundational nature of this that we've woven it into the language of our church membership covenant. According to James 5:16, what is the purpose of confessing our sins to one another? What does this mean in the broader context of James 5:13-18? At the same time (according to the same verse), what is the promise attached to confessing our sins to one another? Once again, what does this mean in the broader context of James 5:13-18?
4. In the Peacemaking Principles booklet<sup>1</sup> (that we make available in Fellowship Hall), they list seven aspects to biblically-faithful interpersonal confession of sin - "The 7 A's of Confession"). The first "A" is **Address everyone involved**. Why is this critical? When the bomb of our sin goes off, there's undoubtedly a blast radius. How do we determine how inclusive we need to draw our circle for the purposes of confession?
5. The second "A" is **Avoid if, but, or maybe**. In other words, be careful to refrain from using language that helps you to weasel out of your confession. Have you ever said something like this (or had it said to you): "I'm sorry if you were offended...", "I'm sorry but, you know...", or "I'm sorry, maybe I..."? What's the problem here? Why is it important to simply confess our sin straight up?
6. The third "A" is **Admit specifically**. We tend to dress up our confessions, don't we? We use generalized language that has the effect of softening our sin. Can you think of examples of this in your life? Why is getting particular about the exact nature of our sin so helpful in the process of confession (both for you and the other person)?

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cmalliance.org/resources/publications/peacemaking\\_principles\\_pamphlet.pdf](https://www.cmalliance.org/resources/publications/peacemaking_principles_pamphlet.pdf) . Accessed 8/28/30 @ 12:45pm.

7. The fourth and fifth “A’s” are ***Acknowledge the hurt and Accept the consequences***. Pain and fallout are inevitable when sin occurs. What might happen if we recognize and articulate to the other person our awareness of the grief we’ve occasioned by our sin? Furthermore, why is it mission-critical that we learn to deal with reality on the other side of our sin? What are some common (hard) consequences of our interpersonal sin with which we are wise to come to grips?
8. The final two “A’s” of confession are ***Alter your behavior and Ask for forgiveness***. Altering our behavior is another way to speak of repentance. Often, we don’t require repentance of others in order to forgive them. Is this right? Does God require it (1 John 1:9)? Look carefully at Jesus’ teaching here. Does he expect that we ought to require it (Luke 17:3-4)? If we are to forgive as we’ve been forgiven (Ephesians 4:32) wouldn’t that include linking these last two aspects of confession together? Why is altering our behavior of church shattering importance if we are to expect the forgiveness of others?
9. The “Peacemaking Principles” booklet also describes what they call the “Four Promises of Forgiveness”. The promises are: *I will not dwell on this incident, I will not bring this incident up and use it against you, I will not talk to others about this incident, and I will not allow this incident to stand between us or to hinder our personal relationship*. Trusting that these are an accurate reflection of biblical forgiveness. Have you ever considered that (if you’re a believer) this is how God forgives you? If so, is this the way you forgive others?