

“We Have Sinned Against You”:
Confessing Our Sins in Prayer With Nehemiah
Sermon Notes

➤ **If we want to kill our sin, we must learn to confess our sin**

**Confession may be hard, but it's not complicated...*

1. Tell God what you've done (vv.4-7)

2. Take God at his word (vv.8-10)

3. Trust God and get going (v.11)

Next Sunday: Jonah 2 & 4 - “I Knew That You Are A Gracious God”:
Jonah & the Prayers of the Proud

Community Group Study Questions

For the Week of June 20th-26th

Last August, when we studied Psalm 130, we included a Community Group Study Guide that helped us to explore the biblical command to “confess your sins to one another” (James 5:16). This week, we’re going to consider a faithful pattern for confessing your sins to the Lord.

Getting Started

1. What sort of a rhythm of personal confession of sin to the Lord do you have in your life of prayer? Compared to other biblical pathways for prayer (Adoration, Thanksgiving, Supplication, Intercession), how often does confession emerge in your conversation with God? Why? Does the broader context of Jesus’s instructions in Matthew 6:11-13 give us any sense of how often confession ought to emerge in our walk with the Lord? If so, how?

Digging Deeper

2. The first step we need to take in confession is to **address everyone involved**.¹ Though our sin obviously frequently involves and often impacts other people, it’s critical to remember that our sin *always* involves and *always* impacts our Lord. Consider how David confesses his sexual abuse of Bathsheba and homicidal designs for Uriah before the Lord in Psalm 51:4. What does he mean by “Against you, you only, have I sinned...”?

Open Your Bible to 1 John 1:9...

3. 1 John 1:9 says: “If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”. That presupposes we truly know what it means to confess our sins. A second important step in confessing our sins is to **avoid “if”, “but”, or “maybe”**. These are weasel words that ruin our confession. So, “Father, I’m sorry *if* I...”, or “Lord, I regret that I did that, *but*...”, or “God, *maybe* I shouldn’t have...” are off limits in a biblical confession. Have you ever been guilty of praying this way? Have you ever been guilty of confessing your sin to others this way? Share an example if you can think of one.
4. The third step in confession is to **admit specifically**. This can be tough, even when it’s just you and the Lord. Why is this sometimes the case? If you want an example of a prayer of confession that provides an excellent model of dealing in specifics, read through Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9:3-19. How many particular instances of sin does he confess in this prayer?
5. Fourth, we want to **acknowledge the hurt**. This typically isn’t difficult to discern when it

¹ This first step (and the six that follow) are known as “The Seven A’s of Confession” and they’re taken from the *Peacemaking Principles* booklet available in Fellowship Hall. If you’d like a digital version, click [here](#).

comes to confessing our sins to other people, but how about in relation to God? What do passages such as Ephesians 4:30 and Hebrews 10:29 contribute to our understanding of the emotional life of our God and how he responds to the sin of his people?

6. The fifth step in confessing our sin to the Lord is to **accept the consequences**. We probably don't give this one nearly enough thought. While God promises to forgive us when we confess our sin (1 John 1:9), he does not promise to remove all consequences of our sin. What are some examples of consequences of our sin simply in our relationship with the Lord? Of course, there are consequences in relation to others as well. What might be some of those? How many can you name?
7. A further all-important step in confessing our sin to God is to **alter your behavior**. This is repentance. When repentance is biblical, it's growing on at least four levels. For example, in true repentance we're developing *awareness* of our sin, we experience *sorrow* over our sin (2 Corinthians 7:9-10), we come to *hate* our sin (2 Corinthians 7:11), even to the point of learning to *hunt* our sin and to put it to death (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5). Why is repentance a non-negotiable essential to a true confession of our sin to the Lord? Are all four levels of repentance active in your life and relationship with God when it comes to the greatest battles of your life? Which are weakest? How might you seek to address this?
8. The final step in confession is to **ask for forgiveness**. Again, sounds straightforward enough, but how often do you actually ask God for his forgiveness? Beyond 1 John 1:9, there are some other key Scriptures that help us get a sense of the scope and importance of not only asking God and others for their forgiveness, but being prepared to offer it as well. Take a look at Matthew 6:14-15, Luke 17:3-4, and Ephesians 4:32. The *Peacemaking Principles* booklet also outlines what are called "The Four Promises of Forgiveness". What this means is that whether we are offering or receiving forgiveness, this is what's being said: *1. I will not dwell on this incident. 2. I will not bring this incident up and use it against you. 3. I will not talk to others about this incident. 4. I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.* Can you see why all genuine forgiveness is ultimately rooted in the gospel, and (furthermore) why all genuine forgiveness is absolutely impossible without it?