Class 1: Confession-Prayer of Surrender

## Week 4: School of Spiritual Formation

In Class 1 we will discuss Confession of Sin and in Class 2 we will discuss the importance of Declaration (Confessing good things and biblical truths).

## The Art of Confession

* 1. Confession is seldom talked about and rarely practiced today.
  2. The New Testament writer of 1 John promised, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NIV)
  3. Confession is a bedrock foundational truth of Christianity. It should be a natural part of our daily life.
  4. It needs to be a daily cycle or rhythm.
  5. Confession is the first step to repentance.
  6. Confession is the act of announcing our sins to God and asking for forgiveness.
     1. The reality is that confession is more for us then it is for God. He already knows what our sins are. The process of confession is really a spiritual cleansing or daily spiritual bath.

1. How do churches practice confession today?
   1. Catholics, Anglicans and more liturgical movements practice three types of confession.
      1. One confessing to a Priest or Pastor
      2. Two confessing as a group in a church service
      3. Three confessing to God alone in private
   2. Charismatic, independents and Pentecostal protestants believe that man does not need another human as a mediator between them and God so they practice only two types of confession
      1. Congregational: Rarely happens
      2. Private: a little more common
   3. It must be noted that in the modern era of revival and grace, teaching the idea of confessing sin is rare and even frowned upon by some movements. They believe that Christ died for our sins and therefore there is no need to identify nor confess those sins.
      1. Confession has become a touchy subject in the grace community.
      2. The Bible and church history sets a clear mandate to confess sin regardless of current church culture.

# Psalm 32:2-4(NLT) Removing the Mental weight of Sin

# **“**Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt,whose lives are lived in complete honesty! When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. *Interlude PAUSE*

* 1. Confession removes the heavy hand of hidden sin and allows freedom to live life the way God intended.
  2. It allows us to live in complete honesty with God.

## Psalm 32:5-7 NKJV Confession is the key to greater levels of Help

## “*I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will* ***confess*** *my transgressions to the Lord,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.* For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to YouIn a time when You may be found;Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.You are my hiding place;You shall preserve my from trouble;You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.”

* 1. The next verse says that God will instruct us and guide us. But confession of sin is required before walking with God in that level.

1. SELAH (Pause to Meditate)
   1. The Selah is a pause after this section of scriptures for you to stop and reflect or contemplate on this scripture and to confess sin before moving on.
   2. Psalm 24:3-4 NLT, *“Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.”*
   3. Repentance and confession are not only practical and healthy, they are Biblical.
2. Why We Confess
   1. For Christians, confession of sin, ultimately, is applying the gospel.
   2. Confession is part of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. That’s why Bonhoeffer says that “confession is discipleship” (115).
   3. Authentic confession of sin is a mingling of humble contrition before God, faith-filled appropriation of the grace of reconciliation, and heartfelt gratitude for the satisfaction that has been accomplished in the cross of Christ. “The Christian way,” writes Martin Luther, “essentially consists in acknowledging ourselves to be sinners and in praying for grace” ([Luther’s Large Catechism](http://www.amazon.com/Luthers-Large-Catechism-Contemporary-Translation/dp/0570035392/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1403734161&sr=8-1&keywords=Luther%E2%80%99s+Large+Catechism%3A+A+Contemporary+Translation+with+Study+Questions&tag=desigod06-20))**.**
   4. As we confess our sins daily we are entering into transformation process of Romans 12:2, The Renewing of our minds.
   5. But we are taking it one step farther, we are transforming our soul which is the greater part of discipleship.
3. Why is confession important?
   1. “It is fitting,” writes John Calvin, “that by the confession of our own wretchedness, we show forth the goodness and mercy of our God, among ourselves and before the whole world**”** ([Institutes](http://www.amazon.com/Calvin-Institutes-Christian-Religion-Classics-ebook/dp/B00IYW227A/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1403734386&sr=1-1&keywords=institutes+of+the+christian+religion+mcneill&tag=desigod06-20)**,** III.IV.10).
   2. Prayer for confession of sin is important because God has called us to come to Him, seeking His forgiveness. Sin separates us from God;
   3. “If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts” ([1 John 1:8-10](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=1%20John%201%3A8-10&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.allaboutprayer.org/bible.htm)).
4. Confession is taking responsibility for YOU
   1. “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me (Psalm 51:7-11, NIV).
   2. After confessing his sin, David makes a catalog of requests:
   3. We judge ourselves not others: “By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are.” ― [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/29333.Dietrich_Bonhoeffer), [The Cost of Discipleship](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2723088)
5. The daily cycle of repentance.
   1. God affords us every opportunity to confess our sins, to be instantly forgiven, and to reap eternal rewards. In fact, He says we should take up our cross daily ([Luke 9:23](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=Luke%209%3A23&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.allaboutprayer.org/bible.htm)).
   2. As He forgives us, we should also be forgiving others ([Matthew 6:12](http://ebible.com/query?utf=8%E2%9C%93&query=Matthew%206%3A12&translation=ESV&redirect_iframe=http://www.allaboutprayer.org/bible.htm)).

Class 2: Declaring-Enforcing the Contract

1. What is Declaring?
   1. A Declaration is a formal statement of a position or condition
   2. Declaring and Confession are two different things
   3. Confession of sin is cleansing you and allowing you to declare the truth of who you are through a clean filter
   4. A declaration is either enforcing a contract that God has established with you or it is stating who you are according to the Bible (which stirs up the passion and truth within you).
2. Declaring is a vital part of who we are as Christians
   1. Romans 10:9 (NLT), “If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
3. The Power of a Contract
   1. God is a covenant-keeping God. He does not reward the casual seeker. He will not unlock the deep mysteries of the kingdom to the man who is unwilling to pray. God still operates His kingdom based on covenant promises.
   2. These are special agreements that He has contracted with us. He agrees to fulfill His end of the bargain when we fulfill ours. God has always been clear and straightforward concerning the specifics of this contract. He has not hidden an escape clause in the fine print, nor has He masked His real intentions with double-talk. He means what He says, and He is loyal to His word.
4. The Contract is Always Valid
   1. Any person or church that decides to pray and seek God's heart will see revival and awakening. Why? Because God is always true to His word. He says in 2 Chronicles 7:14 that if we pray, He will heal our land and forgive our sins. That is a covenant promise. If we do our part, He will do His.
   2. Listen, God only needs a handful of people to change the world. He has always used the remnant to impact the majority. My point is this. Don't allow excuses, justifications, and issues to keep you from experiencing God today. The world is full of what-ifs, could-have-been, and didn't-know types of people. Kingdom people are better than that. They are do-it-now, pray-hard, and make-no-excuse warriors. God's promises are available to you right now. All you need to do is learn what they are, live them, out and cement them into your life through prayer and daily declaration.
5. God's Contracts
   1. **The** **Revelation Contract:** Jeremiah 33:3—if I cry out to God, He agrees to show me great and mighty things.
   2. **The Revival Contract**: Jeremiah 29:13—if I seek God with all my heart, He agrees to reveal His presence to me.
   3. **The Impact Contract**: 2 Chronicles 7:14—if I humble myself and pray and ask for His forgiveness, He agrees to forgive my sins and heal my land.
   4. **The Burn Contract**: Jeremiah 20:9—if I burn with passion for God, He agrees that His Word will burst out of my soul and impact my community.
   5. **The Money Contract**: Malachi 3:9–12—if I give tithes and offerings, God promises to pour out uncontainable blessings.
6. Daily Declarations you can use
   1. I am a new creature in Christ: old things have passed away, behold, all things are new.  
      — 2 Corinthians 5:17 KJV
   2. I am dead to sin and alive unto righteousness. — Romans 6:11 KJV
   3. No weapon that is formed against me shall prosper, but every tongue that rises against me in judgment, I shall show to be in the wrong. — Isaiah 54:17
   4. I prosper in everything I put my hand to. I have prosperity in all areas of my life–spiritually, financially, mentally, and socially. — John 10:3-5;14-16, 27; John 14:15
   5. I take every thought captive unto the obedience of Jesus Christ, casting down every imagination, and every high and lofty thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. — 2 Corinthians 10:5
   6. As a man thinks in his heart, so is he; therefore, all of my thoughts are positive. I do not allow Satan to use my spirit as a garbage dump by meditating on negative things that he offers me. — Proverbs 23:7 KJV
   7. I am always a positive encouragement. I edify and build up; I never tear down or destroy.  
      — Romans 15:2
   8. I am a believer not a doubter. — Mark 5:36 KJV
   9. I am slow to speak, quick to hear, and slow to anger. — James 1:19

Prayers of Confession

* Almighty God, who does freely pardon all who repent and turn to Him, now fulfill in every contrite heart the promise of redeeming grace; forgiving all our sins, and cleansing us from an evil conscience; through the perfect sacrifice of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen. (*The Book of Common Worship*, 1946)
* Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen. (From the PCUSA Book of Common Worship Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993; p. 88)
* **Psalm 103.8,10-12**, “The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He has not dealt wit us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.
* Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen. (Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*)
* Our hearts are hard, O God – **Soften them with your love.** Our hands are clenched, O God –  
  **Open them with your grace.** Our feet are planted too firmly, O God – **Invite us to dance with you.** Our lives are not our own, we know – **Let us live and move and have our being in you, O God. Amen.**