

A 60-day plan of transformation into Christlikeness.

Day #24: Spiritual Discipline #4: Confession of sin (part 1)

For the latest pdf edition of this article, see Day 24– Confession at <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-24.pdf>

A. SOLITUDE WITH GOD.

1. Take at least 30 minutes of solitude to reflect on God, His grace, and His plan for your life. Write down things you are thankful for. Express your love for Him. Ask Him to help you today as you deal with those areas which tend to trip up your spiritual life.
2. Journaling. Some Christians love journaling and some hate journaling. I love it because it keeps me on track with regard to God and where I am on a daily basis with regard to His plan for me to be Christformed. In the past, I have provided a journal page along with this plan of transformation based on my daily life. But it may work better for you to start each day with a blank page where you can write about your daily life with the Lord. For other ideas on journaling, see <https://www.regnareproject.com/why-journaling-is-central-to-spiritual-formation/>

B. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE #4: CONFESSION OF SIN.

1. All spiritual disciplines are designed to enable believers to access, receive, and partake of the grace of God in one way or another—a grace that is absolutely required for Christformation. The fact that a believer does something to receive the grace of God strikes some as works-mingled-with-grace endeavor, i.e., a human action that receives grace, a grace that is supposed to totally depend upon God’s mercy, not human endeavor.
2. The disparagement of spiritual disciplines and the thinking that growing in grace is a passive endeavor is a relatively new phenomena. Historically, the spiritual disciplines were viewed by Christians as means of grace for Christ-like character formation. Spiritual disciplines are opportunities for believers to submit to God and His Word by the power of the Holy Spirit. To ignore them is to ignore God’s means of grace, which is always ruinous as one is left to his own devices/flesh.
3. The necessity of human activity to get grace and the ruinous consequences of rejection of God’s designated means of grace can be seen most clearly in the spiritual discipline of confession. Consider: **1 John 1:9**, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;” **Proverbs 28:13**, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.” The receiving of God’s grace of forgiveness, cleansing, and mercy are contingent upon the spiritual discipline of confession. Human action is required to received God’s grace.
4. The spiritual discipline of confession allows us to access the grace and mercy of God in such a way as to receive and experience forgiveness and healing for the sins of the past. Forgiveness points to objective righteousness that is involved in restoring right

relationship to God. This restoration is based on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Healing points to subjective experiential relationship with God. In healing we are freed from the feelings of guilt and unworthiness. Through confession, we are objectively forgiven completely and subjectively we enjoy freedom from being dominated by our past sins and guilt.

5. It is the cross of Jesus Christ that makes both forgiveness and healing a reality. Without the cross, the discipline of confession would only be psychologically therapeutic. When Jesus was judged on the cross for all sins, he took on Himself all of the sin and all of the evil of all humanity: **1 John 2:2**, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world;” **2 Corinthians 5:21**, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him;” **Galatians 3:13**, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree ”); **1 John 2:1**, “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
6. The Bible teaches that confession is both private (1 Jn 1:9) and communal (Js 5:16). In private confession we are able to be released from our past sins and from feelings of guilt and shame. God does not want us to go around feeling guilty about sins which we have confessed, and He has forgiven. He does not want us to go around beating ourselves up regarding our evil past. To doubt God’s forgiveness is to doubt God’s grace and goodness—indeed, His very Word, which teaches us that upon confession He cleanses us from all unrighteousness: **1 John 1:9**, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
7. Confession is not just about forgiveness, it opens the door to renewed communion with God. It opens the window into the greatness, goodness, and life of God.
8. Confession is a spiritual discipline that should be a regular part of our daily spiritual walk with the Lord. It should not be reserved for the end of the day or after we have done something “really bad.” As a spiritual discipline, it not only brings objective righteousness with God and subjective feelings of freedom from guilt, it also instills such virtues as humility, accountability, honesty, and orientation to God’s righteousness and mercy. What a different society we would live in if more Christians had the character to admit when they were wrong.
9. Recommendation: if you do not practice the spiritual discipline of confession as a daily part of life (it is my understanding that some contemporary Christians never even think about confession of sin as a daily discipline 😞), start with planning on taking a few minutes 2-3 times a day to pray to God and reflect on that day. As you reflect on God, His grace, and your life, confess any sins that come to mind. As this becomes a habit/virtue, you will find yourself confessing instantly any time you sin and asking God to change your character (disordered passions).

10. In the next article, we will examine the spiritual discipline of confession in light of David's sin as recorded in 2 Sam 12; Psalm 32 and 51.

C. SCRIPTURE MEMORY.

1 John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Transformation of the mind, heart, and emotions into Christlikeness

Day 1 – A life that lacks nothing (Psalm 23), <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-1.pdf>
Day 2 - Satan, the enemy (1 John 2:15-16), <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-2.pdf>
Day 3 – Review, reflect, journaling, and Psalm 19, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-3.pdf>
Day 4 – The six areas of inner transformation, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-4.pdf>
Day 5 – The Word of God, Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-5.pdf>
Day 6 – 2 warnings & promise of transformation, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-6.pdf>
Day 7 - Solitude, Disciplines, Transformation, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-7.pdf>
Day 8–VIM (Vision-Intent-Means) & transformation, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-8.pdf>
Day 9–Solitude with God and Christ's transformative yoke, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-9.pdf>
Day 10– Discipleship-1, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-10.pdf>
Day 11– Discipleship-2, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-11.pdf>
Day 12– The Life-giving Power of the Holy Spirit, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-12.pdf>
Day 13– The Spirit vs. the Flesh (Part 1), <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-13.pdf>
Day 14– The Spirit vs. the Flesh (Part 2), <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-14.pdf>
Day 15– The Spiritual Disciplines, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-15.pdf>
Day 16– The Spiritual/Psychological Disease of Hurriedness, <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-16.pdf>
Day 17—Spiritual Discipline #1: Solitude (Part 1): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-17.pdf>
Day 18—Spiritual Discipline #1: Solitude (Part 2): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-18.pdf>
Day 19—Spiritual Discipline #2: Meditation (Part 1): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-19.pdf>
Day 20—Spiritual Discipline #2: Meditation (Part 2): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-20.pdf>
Day 21—Spiritual Discipline #3: Prayer (Part 1): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-21.pdf>
Day 22—Spiritual Discipline #3: Prayer (Part 2): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-22.pdf>
Day 23—Spiritual Discipline #3: Prayer (Part 3): <http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/day-23.pdf>
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*An apprentice of Christ,
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