



Spiritual Disciplines Toolbox

04 Confession

“I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.”
— Psalm 38:18

What are Spiritual Disciplines?

At some point we all get stale, stuck, or start searching for more. Most often all we need is the right tool to break through in our relationship with God. Spiritual disciplines are the biblical tools Christians have been using for centuries to draw closer to God. We use the disciplines because we need help, not because we are so holy. Experiment with the tools to find out what helps you connect with God the best.

What is Confession all about?

We sure spend a lot of time hiding behind our fig leaves—covering up, rationalizing, posturing and pretending. But the reality is, saints sin (1 John 1:8). That’s why we need a Savior. And we have one in Jesus Christ. His blood has the power to forgive every sin in your lifetime (Col. 1:14).

Authentic confession means that we come into the presence of God without any of our usual pretenses and intentionally deal with our sin. Our sin is personal to God (Ps. 51:4), and sincere sorrow is appropriate when we come to God with it (James 4:7-10). Regular confession is one of the greatest acts of faith. It takes a lot to honestly bring the parts of yourself you are least proud of to God. And then to believe that not only will God forgive you, but will still completely love you—but He does.

Where do I start?

1 John 1:9. One of the hardest realities to face is that saints don't have to sin—they choose to sin (1 Cor. 10:13). Try using 1 John 1:9 as a template for confessing your sin to God. Here's how it works: (1) Name it: Name the sin honestly. (2) Claim it: Take full responsibility for it. (3) Confess it: Ask for forgiveness and the strength to forsake it. (4) Forget it: Accept the purifying promise of God that when you confess your sin you are clean.

What other ways can I use this tool?

Confess to One Another. When you've sinned against someone else, you need to go to them and humbly confess your sin and make it right. This kind of transparency creates a powerful culture of grace. But there are also times when we need to go to another person and ask them to pray for us because we are struggling with sin—and those prayers are powerful too (James 5:16).

The Purge. Deal with that backlog of sin that weighs you down like baggage. Give yourself some time away from everyone. Read Colossians 2:13-15 about how all of your sin was dealt with at the cross. All means all: past, present, and future. Then recount your sins to God. For some, this is best expressed verbally. For others, you may want to write it down. When you are done, mark the day as the time when you confessed your sin, and God forgave you. You don't have to carry it anymore. Jesus bore your sins on the cross. If you wrote it down, burn it. The record of your sins was destroyed at the cross.

Face Your Blind Spots. We all have blind spots. The thing about blind spots is that everyone else can see them. Take advantage of the insights of others to deal with the sin you cannot see. Ask those close to you questions like, "What do I do that hurts you?" and "How can I love you better?" Accept their responses without being defensive. Ask for forgiveness. By facing your blind spots, you are courageously setting a culture of humility and grace.

"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