



STILL STANDING
WEEK 4: The Power In Confession

And having prepared everything...take your stand.
(Ephesians 6:13b)

Week 1: Standing Defined – Installing a parameter (Paul in Acts 19-20). LIVING FOR THE WILL OF GOD. Measuring its success by Results = Miracles, Attacks, Salvations, Baptisms, DISCIPLESHIP happening because we are standing not because we organized an event to create some hoopla.

A VERB (gerund(derived from a verb but behaves as a noun – ends with ing) or present participle)
An Action Word

Maintain an upright position supported by one's feet.

Upright. Rise. Rise to one's feet. Pick oneself up. Find one's feet. Be upstanding. Get up. Get to one's feet. Arise.

Put. Set. Set up. Upend. Place. Position. Locate. Situate. Prop. Lean. Plant. Stick. Install. Arrange. Deposit. Park.

Be situated. Be located. Be positioned. Be set. Be found. Be sited. Be established. Be perched. Sit. Perch. Nestle.

Remain in force. Remain valid. Remain effective. Remain operative. Remain in operation. Hold. Obtain. Apply. Prevail.

Exist. Be in use.

Be in a specified state or condition.

Withstand. Endure. Bear. Put up with. Take. Cope with. Handle. Sustain. Resist. Stand up to. Tolerate. Abide. Suffer.

Support. Face. Stick. Stomach.

Week 2: The Nature of Standing: WHO STANDS

As **God** Stands (who bequeathed it to Jesus)

The **Enemy's** Stand (that is allowed because of our gift of free will)

Our Right to Stand (the gift from our Heavenly Father when we were conceived = Freewill)

[Dominion will be covered later]

The Nature of Standing in: **RULERSHIP** (What gives us the right to)

- God rules because He was, He is, He is to come.
- Enemy rules because we were created with free will.
- We rule in two ways: 1. From the gift of Free Will created in us during our creation AND

[2. we were given DOMINION in Gen 1:28...not included in week 2. Waiting for discussion on Authority as modeled in Parable **Luke 19:11-27** (Parable of the ten minas (reap what you did not sow, ten minas))

The Nature of Standing in: **CHARACTER** (Defining WHO we are)

The Nature of Standing in: **MANIFESTATIONS** (The behavior of, the results, the growth, the signs of)

Week 3: The Fruit of Where One Stands

**Week 4: The Power in Confession**

Definition of:

The word confession is a combination of two Greek words, *homos*, meaning “same,” and *leg* meaning “to say.” In its truest form, confession is **“to say the same”** or **“to agree.”** Believers are called to say the same thing about sin God says—to see sin as God sees it.¹

Confess, Confession. The biblical concepts expressed by the words “confess” and “confession” have in common **the idea of an acknowledgment of something.** This is the root idea of the two verbs that lie behind the great majority of occurrences of the words “confess” and “confession” in the English Bible: **Hebrew *yādā***, (in the hiphil root) and **Greek *homologeō***. English versions such as the NIV therefore sometimes translate these verbs as “acknowledge.” From this common root **emerge two distinct theological senses:** the acknowledging or confessing of faith (in God, Christ, or a particular doctrine), and the acknowledging or confessing of sins before God.

Moo, D. J. (1996). [Confess, Confession](#). In *Evangelical dictionary of biblical theology* (electronic ed., pp. 111–113). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

I. The Power in CONFESSION begins with Salvation

Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.* (Do I believe this?)

Romans 10:8-10

⁸ *But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);* ⁹ *because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*¹⁰ *For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

- **Does the absence of the practice of ongoing confession show a lack of faith?**
- **What shows that we only believe confession is necessary for conversion/salvation?**
- **What role does belief play in Confession?**
- **What is the opposite of Confession? (Denial)**

This is where the supernatural power of confession is unlocked in our life: Plugging into Jesus through Salvation and then....Continual Usage Of

II. The Role of Confession in Repentance**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.

- **Can you confess without repentance? (Admit but it is not a problem nor a sin.)**

Sin (Gk. *hamartia*, lit. “to miss the mark”) falls short of attaining God’s standard.

Proverbs 3:5-7

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

¹ Thomas Nelson, I. (1995). *The Woman’s Study Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.



STILL STANDING

WEEK 4: The Power In Confession

6 *In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

7 *Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.*

Proverbs 14:12 *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death*

“I know better than God in this matter.” Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:3-6)
(Antinomianism)

- **What role does confession play within friendship/relationships?**
- **What are signs of repentance?**

Acts 19:18 *Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and **divulging their practices.***

1 Corinthians 2:5 *so that your faith might **not rest in the wisdom of men** but in the power of God.*
(supernatural)

2 Corinthians 6:7 *by **truthful speech**, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;*

1 John 1:5-10

5 *This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, **we lie and do not practice the truth.** **7** But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say 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. **10** If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

- **These verses are usually used for a beckoning to a new life commitment = Salvation. But what was John after? Once and done or a life style practice?**

III. Characteristics of Confession

Declaration (public) & Acknowledgement (assent/acceptance/agreement)

James 5:13-16

13 *Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. **14** Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. **15** And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ **Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.***

☞ Does CONFESSION open our life to healing, restoration? Physical. Emotional. Spiritual. Intellectual.
CONFESSION: Agreeing with God. “Yes, LORD!”

Proverbs 28:13

*Whoever conceals his transgressions **will not prosper**, but he who confesses and forsakes them will **obtain mercy.***



STILL STANDING
WEEK 4: The Power In Confession

1 John 3:18

*18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in **deed** and in **truth**.*

Ephesians 4:11-16 (Living Transparent)

*11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, **12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. **15** Rather, **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

Colossians 3:9

9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

Zechariah 8:16-17

*16 These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; **17** do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord.”*

IV. Examples of Confession:

Who do you say David is? How would you describe him?

- David

Psalm 32:5

*I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity;
I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.*

Psalm 51

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!
³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.
¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.
¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.
¹⁴ Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.
¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.
¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
¹⁸ Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem;
¹⁹ then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

- Peter

Mark 8:29

And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.”

Matthew 16:15-17



STILL STANDING

WEEK 4: The Power In Confession

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

John 21:15-17

¹⁵ When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶ He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.

John 6:67-69

⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹ and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

V. Confession as Worship

Romans 14:11 (Isaiah 45:23)

for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess (shall give praise) to God.”

Isaiah 45:23

By Myself I have sworn; from My mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.

Hebrews 6:13 The Certainty of God’s Promise

¹³ For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself,

Philippians 2:10-11

so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

2 Chronicles 6:12; 24-25

¹² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands. (WORSHIP)

²⁴ “If Your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against You, and they turn again and **acknowledge** (CONFESS) **Your name** (WORSHIP) and pray and plead with You in this house, ²⁵ then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your people Israel and bring them again to the land that You gave to them and to their fathers.

KINGDOM DYNAMICS “Yadah”
2 Chron 6:12 Solomon’s Prayer of Dedication
12 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and **spread out his hands**.
6:24 The Meaning of “Faith’s Confession,” FAITH’S CONFESION. In Solomon’s prayer of dedication, he points to the importance of



confessing the Lord’s name (v. 24). The power-packed word “confess” opens a great truth concerning God’s hearing and answering prayers. It is an appropriate word in Christian tradition, historically used to describe a position-in-faith or belief, as, for example, “The Augsburg Confessions.” To confess belief is to say, “I openly receive God’s promise and choose to take my stand here, humbly, on God’s promises and in worship of His Person.”

Yadah, the **HEBREW** word for “confess,” contains and supports this idea.

Derived from *yad*, meaning “an open or extended hand,” the focus is **on reaching to take hold of**.

Just as a closed hand or fist may represent struggle or rebellion, an open hand indicates peace, submitted service or surrender. As Solomon comes with lifted, open hands (v. 12), he comes in **peaceful submission to God**.

Yadah also involves **worship**, with open, extended hands, in a worship-filled confessing of God’s faithfulness with thanksgiving and praise. This is the true spirit of the idea of “faith’s confession of God’s Word”:

- 1) to take a stand on what God says;
- 2) to speak what is believed with worship and praise;
- 3) to do so in the humble spirit of faith in God’s Person and promise.

Such a stance will never be loveless or arrogant, and neither Earth nor hell can successfully protest this confession of faith in heaven’s power.²

CONFESSION unlocks something in the supernatural.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

CONFESSION:

☞ What the LORD has done on the **INSIDE** of your life, He will ask you to **SHARE** it on the **OUTSIDE** of your life.

CONFESSION SUMMARY:

- Begins at Salvation.
- Use the tool all throughout our human existence (reminds us we are NOT Christ).
- A form of Worship.
- Portal into the supernatural.
- Develops Christian maturity in us.
- Confession is living scripture.
- Done in community.
- We need a community to practice it in.
- PRACTICE it!

2 Chronicles 16:9 *“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”*

What part does CONFESSION have in:

- Matthew 10:32-33

32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

² Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Spirit filled life study Bible* (electronic ed., 2 Ch 6:12). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



STILL STANDING

WEEK 4: The Power In Confession

☞ Is CONFESSION acknowledgement of who the Father and the Son is? Is CONFESSION the anti-deny?

What part does CONFESSION have in:

- 1) Confess to the LORD in your Prayer Practice
- 2) Share your confession with a trusted Christian
- 3) Confess Him with your life and words what the LORD has done in you.

Confess to the LORD in your Prayer Practice • Share your confession with a trusted Christian • Confess Him with your life and words

WHAT PART DOES CONFESSION PLAY IN LIVING TRANSPARENT?

I KNEW WHAT WAS GOOD BECAUSE I LOOKED AT THE GOOD ALL DAY LONG AND WHEN SOMETHING DENTED OR BROKEN WENT BY, I COULD TELL IT JUST DIDN'T LOOK RIGHT.

- Romans 3:10-18

¹⁰ As it is written:

¹⁰ “There is none righteous, no, not one;
¹¹ There is none who understands;
 There is none who seeks after God.
¹² They have all turned aside;
 They have together become unprofitable;
 There is none who does good, no, not one.”
¹³ “Their ^mthroat is an open ⁴tomb;
 With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;
¹⁴ “The poison of asps is under their lips”;
¹⁴ “Whose ^omouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”
¹⁵ “Their ^pfeet are swift to shed blood;
¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways;
¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known.”
¹⁸ “There ^qis no fear of God before their eyes.”

- Jeremiah 31:34

³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for ^bthey all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For ^cI will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

- Matthew 26:28

For ^ythis is My blood ^zof the ⁴new covenant, which is shed ^afor many for the ⁵remission of sins.

- Ephesians 1:7

⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to ^kthe riches of His grace

- 2 Corinthians 5:21

²¹ For ^zHe made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become ^athe righteousness of God in Him.

- 1 Timothy 2:5

⁵ For *there is* one God and ^bone Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,

- 1 John 2:1

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, ^awe have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² And ^bHe Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but ^calso for the whole world.

- Luke 15:11-24



STILL STANDING

WEEK 4: The Power In Confession

Parable of the Lost Son

¹¹ Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to *his* father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*.’ So he divided to them ^h*his* livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with ⁴prodigal living. ¹⁴ But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵ Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the ⁵pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

¹⁷ “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”’ ”

²⁰ “And he arose and came to his father. But ^jwhen he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven ^kand in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² “But the father said to his servants, ⁶“Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. ²³ And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴ ^lfor this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

- Matthew 16:19, 18:18

⁹ ^qAnd I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth ⁸will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

¹⁸ “Assuredly, I say to you, ^swhatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

- John 20:23

²³ ^yIf you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.”

My definition of CONFESSION: _____

A/DA “Confession is a tool used by God to make His presence and forgiveness real to us.”

What happens in a confessional?

- 1.) Reality therapy (1 John 3:9)

Whoever has been ^oborn of God does not sin, for ^pHis seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

5:17-18¹⁷ ^wAll unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

¹⁸ We know that ^xwhoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God ^ykeeps ⁶ ⁷himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

- 2.) Absolution -- forgiveness is expected (1 John 1:9)

⁹ If we ^qconfess our sins, He is ^rfaithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to ^scleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- 3.) Penance – (If viewed as a way to earn forgiveness = watch out!

If viewed as a tool used to pause and consider the seriousness of our sin = repentance. See Jeremiah 44:4)

⁴ However ^hI have sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*, saying, “Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!”

“For a good confession three things are necessary: An examination of conscience, sorrow and a determination to avoid sin.”

Who do I confess to?

What qualities should they have?



STILL STANDING

WEEK 4: The Power In Confession

"It is God who does the forgiving, but often He chooses human beings as the channel of His forgiving grace."

Forgiveness is not: Pretending an injury doesn't matter.

Forgiveness is not: Ceasing to hurt.

Forgiveness is not: Forgetting.

Forgiveness is not: Pretending that the relationship is just the same as it was before the offense.

The principle of confession is clearly established in Old Testament law as well as New Testament teaching. Leviticus 5:5 specified that when a person was guilty of violating God's law "he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing." While the passage went on to call for a sin offering, it is clear that confession is the first step in becoming reconciled to God.

The Old Testament Law does not give the wording of such a confession. Instead, the command assumes that a person is capable of expressing an appropriate confession in his or her own words.

Significant elements in the prose prayers of confession in the Old Testament support this conclusion. It seems clear that God's people understood that a person must specifically acknowledge his or her fault. While other elements are seen in some prose prayers of confession, a specific acknowledgment of fault is essential.

JUDGES 10:10, 15

"We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals."

God had punished the Israelites by permitting the Philistines to oppress them. Finally, His people turned to Him and confessed their sin. God reminded them that they had sinned before and when they cried out to Him, He had delivered them. He then challenged them to pray to the gods they had chosen.

This challenge from the Lord brought additional confession. "We have sinned! Do to us whatever seems best to You: only deliver us this day, we pray."

The text tells us that the Israelites then "put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD" (Judg. 10:16). This demonstrated the sincerity of the Israelites' confession, leading to God's intervention for His people.

It is easy to say "I was wrong" or "I'm sorry." But the sincerity of our words, whether addressed to another person or to God, can only be measured by our subsequent actions.

1 SAMUEL 7:6

"We have sinned against the LORD."

Samuel had told the Israelites, "If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines" (7:3).

The Israelites did as Samuel directed, putting away their idols and serving God only. Then Samuel called the people together to pray for relief. At that great assembly, the people fasted and confessed their sins and Samuel prayed for them.

In this case, confession of sin followed rather than preceded repentance and change. But in this case as in Judges 10, the sincerity of the confession was displayed by a sincere return to the Lord.

1 SAMUEL 12:10, 19

Near the end of Samuel's life, Israel demanded a king. Samuel reminded the Israelites of their history in the land. This had involved repeated cycles of sin and oppression from foreign enemies, followed in turn by confession, repentance, and deliverance by the Lord. First Samuel 12:10 summarizes historic prayers of confession.

When Nathan confronted him, David acknowledged his great sin.

In his sermon, Samuel pointed out that the motive of the Israelites in asking for a king had been wrong (see 1 Sam. 8:7-19). Moved, the people begged Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves" (1 Sam. 12:19).

2 SAMUEL 12:13

"I have sinned against the LORD."

David had sinned by committing adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of one of his army officers. When she became pregnant, David attempted to cover up his guilt. He ordered his military commander to send that officer on a mission where he would be killed.

Only when the prophet Nathan confronted David did the king confess his sin. Second Samuel quotes only David's admission to Nathan. But David's confession to God, recorded in Psalm 51, reveals true sorrow and repentance.

NOTES:**FUTURE TOPICS FOR STANDING:**

1. Our manifestation of where we have yielded can be measure by the **Fruit of the Spirit in our life.** [Fruit of the Spirit as one week?]
2. Dominion: [Understanding the Authority in where you Stand?]
3. **Prayer**

This we know: 2 Tim. 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Praying Always (Eph. 6:18): Prayer opens the channels between us and God. In the midst of battle, we as believers must keep in constant communication with our Leader for directions and encouragement. Our prayers for one another are important and effectual

4. Understanding the **WORD** (Devotions tie in here)
5. **Confession as a standing tool.**

This we know: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

Ephesians 2**One in Christ**

¹¹ Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. ¹⁷ And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens,^[d] but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by^[e] the Spirit.

13. Israel's fault: God's dismay over her disobedience

10:1–21

Chapters 9–11 of Romans all address the problem of Jewish unbelief. In chapter 9 the emphasis was on God’s purpose according to election; the emphasis of chapter 10, however, is on the human factors, on the need for an understanding of the gospel (5–13), for the proclamation of the gospel (14–15), and for the response of faith (16–21). With chapter 10 Paul turns from the past to the present, from his explanation of the Israelites’ unbelief to his hope that they will yet hear and believe the gospel. This vision for the future he will elaborate further in chapter 11.

1. Israel’s ignorance of the righteousness of God (1–4)

Paul begins this chapter, as he began the last, with a very personal reference to his love and longing for ‘them’. In the Greek sentence they are not specified, but NIV is certainly right to insert *the Israelites*. There are several similarities between the openings of the two chapters. In both Paul mentions his heart: his heart’s sorrow and anguish because the unbelieving people of Israel are lost (9:2f.), and his *heart’s desire and prayer to God ... that they may be saved* (1). J. B. Phillips catches the earnestness of the apostle’s cry: ‘My brothers, from the bottom of my heart I long and pray to God that Israel may be saved!’ At the beginning of chapter 9 he expresses the hypothetical wish that he himself might be cursed if thereby they could be spared (9:3); at the beginning of chapter 10 he expresses an ardent, prayerful wish for their salvation. Moreover, as his pain is increased by their combination of privilege and prejudice (9:4f.), so his longing is increased by their combination of zeal and ignorance (2).

Paul has no doubt of their religious sincerity. He *can testify about them* from his own experience *that they are zealous for God*. And he knows what he is talking about, because he himself in his pre-conversion life was ‘extremely zealous’ in his religion, as seen in his persecution of the church.² Indeed he was ‘just as zealous for God’ as any of his contemporaries, and could even describe his zeal at that time as an ‘obsession’.⁴ So he is obliged to say of the Israelites that *their zeal is not based on knowledge* (2). Yet Scripture says that ‘it is not good to have zeal without knowledge’. Sincerity is not enough, for we may be sincerely mistaken. The proper word for zeal without knowledge, commitment without reflection, or enthusiasm without understanding, is fanaticism. And fanaticism is a horrid and dangerous state to be in.

Having asserted their general condition of ignorance, Paul now particularizes in two negatives: *they did not know the righteousness that comes from God* and *they did not submit to God’s righteousness*. Instead, they *sought to establish their own* (3). Recent commentators who have accepted Professor E. P. Sanders’ thesis of ‘covenantal nomism’ offer an interpretation of this verse which is very different from the traditional understanding. Professor Dunn, for example, argues that the Jews were right to see ‘righteousness’ as obedience to the law and so loyalty to the covenant (the meaning of ‘covenantal nomism’), but wrong to construe it in terms of circumcision, sabbath observance, dietary regulations and ritual purity. This understanding of the law was not only ‘too superficial’ but also ‘too nationalistic’,⁷ because it disenfranchised the Gentiles whom God wanted to include. ‘Their own righteousness’, therefore, meant a righteousness which was peculiarly and exclusively their own, and was being contrasted not with God’s but with other people’s. And their attempt to ‘establish’ this righteousness of their own was an act not of creation (producing something out of nothing) but of confirmation (preserving what was already in existence, namely their covenant membership and righteousness). What Paul objected to was ‘Israel’s attempt to maintain a claim of national monopoly to that covenant righteousness’.⁹ What then does it mean that *Christ is the end of the law ...* (4)? What Christ terminated was not the law as the way of attaining a righteous standing before God, but ‘the law seen as a way ... of documenting God’s special regard for Israel, of marking Israel out from the other nations ...’.

What disturbs me about this attempted reconstruction, I confess, is not so much what is being affirmed (for the Jews were ethnically exclusive), but what is being denied. For example, the statement that ‘their own righteousness’ is not being contrasted with God’s is plainly not so in 10:3, and more plainly still in Philippians 3:9. I think the Jews (like all human beings) were more self-righteous than Professors Sanders and Dunn allow. As Calvin justly commented, ‘the first step to obtaining the righteousness of God is to renounce our own righteousness’.

To other commentators the assertion that the Jews *did not know the righteousness that comes from God* means that they had not yet learned the way of salvation, how the righteous God puts the unrighteous right with

himself by bestowing upon them a righteous status. This is ‘the righteousness of God’ which is revealed in the gospel, and is received by faith altogether apart from the law, as Paul has written earlier (1:17; 3:21). The tragic consequence of the Jews’ ignorance was that, recognizing their need of righteousness if they were ever to stand in God’s righteous presence, they *sought to establish their own*, and *they did not submit to God’s righteousness* (3).

This ignorance of the true way, and this tragic adoption of the false way, are by no means limited to Jewish people. They are widespread among religious people of all faiths, including professing Christians. All human beings, who know that God is righteous and they are not (since ‘there is no-one righteous, not even one’, 3:10), naturally look around for a righteousness which might fit them to stand in God’s presence. There are only two possible options before us. The first is to attempt to build or establish our own righteousness, by our good works and religious observances. But this is doomed to failure, since in God’s sight even ‘all our righteous acts are like filthy rags’. The other way is to submit to God’s righteousness by receiving it from him as a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ.¹³ In verses 5–6 Paul calls the first *the righteousness that is by the law* and the second *the righteousness that is by faith*.

The fundamental error of those who are seeking to establish their own righteousness is that they have not understood Paul’s next affirmation: *Christ is the end (telos) of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes* (4). *Telos* could mean ‘end’ in the sense of ‘goal’ or ‘completion’, indicating that the law pointed to Christ and that he has fulfilled it. Or it could mean ‘end’ in the sense of ‘termination’ or ‘conclusion’, indicating that Christ has abrogated the law. Paul must surely mean the latter. But the abrogation of the law gives no legitimacy either to antinomians, who claim that they can sin as they please because they are ‘not under law but under grace’ (6:1, 15), or to those who maintain that the very category of ‘law’ has been abolished by Christ and that the only absolute left is the command to love. When Paul wrote that we have ‘died’ to the law, and been ‘released’ from it (7:4, 6), so that we are no longer ‘under’ it (6:15), he was referring to the law as the way of getting right with God. Hence the second part of verse 4. The reason Christ has terminated the law is *so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes*. In respect of salvation, Christ and the law are incompatible alternatives. If righteousness is by the law it is not by Christ, and if it is by Christ through faith it is not by the law. Christ and the law are both objective realities, both revelations and gifts of God. But now that Christ has accomplished our salvation by his death and resurrection, he has terminated the law in that role. ‘Once we grasp the decisive nature of Christ’s saving work’, writes Dr Leon Morris, ‘we see the irrelevance of all legalism.’

2. Alternative ways of righteousness (5–13)

Paul has already stated three antitheses—between faith and works (9:32), between God’s righteousness to which we should submit and our own righteousness which we mistakenly seek to establish (3), and between Christ and the law (4). Now he draws out the implications of the latter by contrasting *the righteousness that is by the law* (5) with *the righteousness that is by faith* (6). He does so by appealing to Scripture, quoting a text on each side. He thus sets Moses against Moses, that is, Moses in Leviticus against Moses in Deuteronomy.

On the one hand, *Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: ‘The man who does these things will live by them’* (5). The natural interpretation of these words is that the way to life (*i.e.* salvation) is by obedience to the law. This is how Paul himself understood the sentence when he quoted it in Galatians 3:12. But ‘clearly’, he added in that context, ‘no-one is justified before God by the law’, because no-one has succeeded in obeying it. The weakness of the law is our own weakness (8:3). Because we disobey it, instead of bringing us life it brings us under its curse, and that would be our position still if Christ had not redeemed us from the law’s curse by becoming a curse for us. It is in this sense that ‘Christ is the end of the law’. Righteousness is not to be found that way.

So, on the other hand, *the righteousness that is by faith*, which Paul now personifies, proclaims a different message. It sets before us for salvation not the law but Christ, and assures us that unlike the law, Christ is not unattainable, but readily accessible. The passage Paul quotes (from Dt. 30) begins with a stern prohibition, which the righteousness by faith endorses: ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?” (that is, to bring Christ down) (6) or “Who will descend into the deep?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)’ (7). To ask such

questions would be as absurd as they are unnecessary. There is no need whatever for us to scale the heights or plumb the depths in search of Christ, for he has already come, died and risen, and so is accessible to us.

What, then, is the positive message of the righteousness of faith? *What does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart', that is, Paul explains, the word of faith* (the message requiring a response of faith, *i.e.* the gospel) which we (apostles) *are proclaiming* (8). Taking his cue from the reference to the people's 'mouth' and 'heart' in Deuteronomy 30:14, just quoted, Paul now summarizes the gospel in these terms: *That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' (the earliest and simplest of all Christian creeds), and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved* (9). Thus heart and mouth, inward belief and outward confession, belong essentially together. 'Confession without faith would be vain ... But likewise faith without confession would be shown to be spurious.' *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved* (10). The parallelism is reminiscent of Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament, and the two clauses in verses 9–10 are to be held together rather than separately. Thus, there is no substantive difference here between being 'justified' and being 'saved'. Similarly, the content of the belief and that of the confession need to be merged. Implicit in the good news are the truths that Jesus Christ died, was raised, was exalted, and now reigns as Lord and bestows salvation on those who believe. This is not salvation by slogan but by faith, that is, by an intelligent faith which lays hold of Christ as the crucified and resurrected Lord and Saviour. This is the positive message of 'the righteousness that is by faith'.

But is Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 legitimate? Or is he guilty of an unprincipled allegorization, and of reading into Scripture what is not there? We begin by noting that his only actual quotation (as opposed to allusion) is Deuteronomy 30:14, which is reproduced almost exactly in verse 8: *'the word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart'*. There Paul stops, for the Deuteronomy text goes on to say that the reason the word was near them was 'so that you may obey it', whereas Paul calls it 'the word of faith'. How then can Paul take a verse about the law which is to be obeyed and apply it to the gospel which is to be believed? It sounds a fundamental contradiction, especially while he is commending 'righteousness by faith'. But it is not.

How does Paul use the Deuteronomy passage? He is not claiming either that Moses explicitly foretold the death and resurrection of Jesus, or that he preached the gospel under the guise of the law. No. The similarity he sees and stresses between Moses' teaching and the apostles' gospel lies in their easy accessibility. He knows that Moses began this part of his speech (although he does not quote it) by telling the Israelites that his teaching was neither 'too difficult' for them nor 'beyond their reach'. Moses went on, using dramatic imagery, that it was neither up in heaven nor beyond the sea—remote, unrevealed and unknown—so that they would have to find someone to ascend into heaven or cross the sea in order to bring it to them. On the contrary, his teaching was very near them. They knew it already. Far from being above or beyond them, it was actually inside them, in their hearts and in their mouths.

What Moses had said about his teaching, Paul now affirms about the gospel. It is neither remote nor unavailable. There is no need to ask who will ascend to heaven to bring Christ down or descend to Hades to bring Christ up. Storming the ramparts of heaven and potholing in Hades, in search of Christ, are equally unnecessary. For Christ has come and died, and been raised, and is therefore immediately accessible to faith. We do not need to do anything. Everything that is necessary has already been done. Moreover, because Christ himself is near, the gospel of Christ is also near. It is in the heart and mouth of every believer. The whole emphasis is on the close, ready, easy accessibility of Christ and his gospel.

Verses 11–13 build on this. They stress that Christ is not only *easily* accessible, but *equally* accessible to all, to *anyone* (11) and to *everyone* (13), since *there is no difference* (12), no favouritism. All three verses refer to Christ and affirm his availability to faith, although each describes in different terms both the nature of faith and how Christ responds to believers. In verse 11 we 'trust in him' and will *never be put to shame*. In verse 12 we *call on him*, and he *richly blesses* us. In verse 13 we *call on the name of the Lord* and are *saved*. Let us now consider the three verses separately.

First, verse 11: *As the Scripture says, 'Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.'* This is a second quotation of Isaiah 28:16, the first having been in 9:33. The designation of saving faith as 'trust' shows that the 'belief' and the 'confession' of the two previous verses (9–10) are not to be understood as a mere subscription to credal formulae.

Secondly, verse 12: *For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.* It is a marvellous affirmation that through Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Of course there is a fundamental distinction between those who seek righteousness by the law and those who seek it by faith. But between those who have been justified by faith and are now in Christ, all distinctions, not only of race, but also of sex and culture, are not so much abolished (since Jews are still Jews, Gentiles Gentiles, men men and women women) as rendered irrelevant. Just as there is no distinction between us because in Adam we are all sinners (3:22f.), so now there is no distinction between us because in Christ, who is *Lord of all*, all who call on him are richly blessed. Far from impoverishing us, we all receive his ‘unsearchable riches’.

In the third verse (13) both our calling on him and his blessing of us are elaborated. To *call on him* is, more precisely, to call *on the name of the Lord*, that is, to appeal to him to save us in accordance with who he is and what he has done. *Everyone* who thus calls on him, we are assured, *will be saved* (13). In the first place this is a quotation from Joel 2:32. But Peter cited it on the day of Pentecost, transferring the text from Yahweh to Jesus, which is also what Paul does here. Indeed, this appeal to Jesus for salvation became so characteristic of Christian people that Paul could describe the worldwide community as ‘those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ’.²¹

What then, according to this section, is necessary to salvation? First the fact of the historic Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified, risen, reigning as Lord, and accessible. Secondly, the apostolic gospel, *the word of faith* (8), which makes him known. Thirdly, simple trust on the part of the hearers, calling on the name of the Lord, combining faith in the heart and confession with the mouth. But still something is missing. There is, fourthly, the evangelist who proclaims Christ and urges people to put their trust in him. It is of Christian evangelists that Paul writes in the next paragraph.³

Confess, Confession. ~~The biblical concepts expressed by the words “confess” and “confession” have in common the idea of an acknowledgment of something. This is the root idea of the two verbs that lie behind the great majority of occurrences of the words “confess” and “confession” in the English Bible: Hebrew *yādā*, (in the hiphil root) and Greek *homologeō*. English versions such as the NIV therefore sometimes translate these verbs as “acknowledge.” From this common root emerge two distinct theological senses: the acknowledging or confessing of faith (in God, Christ, or a particular doctrine), and the acknowledging or confessing of sins before God.~~

Confession of Faith. Those who are in relationship with God have the joy and responsibility of publicly acknowledging that relationship and the beliefs that are part of it. Solomon alludes to such public profession of commitment to God in his prayer at the dedication of the temple: “When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and confess your name, ... then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel” (1 Kings 8:33–34; cf. v. 35; 2 Chron. 6:24, 26). But the reference to Israel’s sins suggests that confessing God’s name here involves also the acknowledgment of sin before him. The two biblical ideas of confession are here, therefore, united.

It is in the New Testament that confession in the sense of acknowledging allegiance to the faith becomes prominent. Confessing God’s name (Heb. 13:15) or the “name of the Lord” (2 Tim. 2:19) is the mark of a believer. And, since God has revealed himself and his truth decisively in Jesus Christ, confessing Christ becomes the hallmark of genuine Christianity. Jesus taught that “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven” (Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8; cf. Rev. 3:5). Reflected here is the secular Greek use of the word to denote solemn and binding public testimony in a court of law. Confession of Christ, then, is no private matter, but a public declaration of allegiance. Such claims can, however, be spurious, and are revealed by a lifestyle incompatible with a genuine relationship to Christ (Titus 1:16).

Confessing Christ, then, requires both a matching Christian lifestyle and a matching Christian theology. In what is perhaps the most characteristic New Testament use of the language, the writers stress that Christian confession includes adherence to certain truths about Christ. This doctrinal sense of the word can be seen generally in Luke’s reminder that the Pharisees acknowledge the teachings about the resurrection and the spiritual realm (Acts 23:8). Central to New Testament doctrine, of course, is the truth about Jesus Christ, and this is the point continually stressed by the New Testament writers. Perhaps the earliest and most basic of Christian confessions was the

³ Stott, J. R. W. (2001). [The message of Romans: God’s good news for the world](#) (pp. 279–285). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

simple assertion that “Jesus is Lord” (Rom. 10:9–10). Paul here makes “confessing with the mouth” parallel to “believing in the heart” as a means of salvation. He does not mean by this that public confession is a means of salvation in the way that faith is, for his choice of wording is dictated by the allusion to the heart and the mouth in his earlier quotation of Deuteronomy 30:14 (v. 8). But the text does highlight the fact that genuine faith has its natural result in a public confession of adherence to Christ.

A variation of the formula “Jesus is Lord” that is probably just as early is the confession “Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah.” John tells us that the Pharisees refused to confess that Jesus was the Messiah (12:42), and forced out of the synagogue all Jews who did make such a confession (9:22). Here also we see the way in which public confession of Christ could lead to persecution. It is perhaps because Timothy faces such persecution that Paul urges him to imitate his Lord’s example before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate by making “your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12; cf. v. 13).

As the church was exposed to more and more alien influences, Christian doctrinal confessions had to become more specific and detailed. Contesting heretics who denied the reality of Jesus’ humanity, John insists that only those who confess that Jesus had come in the flesh could claim to know God (1 John 2:23; 4:2–3, 15; 2 John 7). Similarly, the author to the Hebrews exhorts his wayward readers to “hold fast our confession” (4:14, RSV; 10:23), a confession that is focused on the identity of Christ (see 3:1). This New Testament use of the language of confession led to the later church’s use of the word “confession” to denote a summary of what Christians believe (e.g., “The Augsburg Confession,” “The Westminster Confession of Faith”). From the beginning, the church found it necessary to define what it meant to be a Christian by formulating statements of Christian belief that could be recited publicly. First Timothy 3:16, introduced by the words “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion” (RSV), may be just such an early confession; and scholars have suggested that other such early confessions or creeds may be found in texts such as Romans 1:3–4, Colossians 1:15–20, and Philippians 2:6–11.

Confession of Sins. If confession of faith is more prominent in the New Testament, confession of sins is found more often in the Old Testament. The word that is most often used in such contexts is the Hebrew verb *yādā*, which can mean either to praise or give thanks to God or to confess sins before God. Indeed, in some verses (Josh. 7:19), it is not clear which is meant. Confession of sin in the Old Testament often comes in the context of the offering of sacrifices. Leviticus 5:5 makes confession of sin the intermediate step between awareness that a sin has been committed (vv. 3–4) and the offering of an atoning sacrifice (v. 6). Here we see the idea of confession as a conscious and public acknowledgement that God’s holy law has been transgressed (see also Lev. 26:40; Num. 5:7). The Old Testament also stresses the way in which representative figures among the people of Israel can publicly confess sins on behalf of the people as a whole (the high priest on the Day of Atonement [Lev. 16:21]; Ezra [Ezra 10:1]; Nehemiah [Neh. 1:6; 9:2–3]; Daniel [Dan. 9:4, 20]). This acknowledging before God of the sins of the nation as a whole (an acknowledgment in which individual Israelites were to take part) was a necessary prerequisite for God’s mercy and restoring grace in the midst of judgment. The confession needed, of course, to be sincere. Jeremiah’s call on the people to acknowledge their guilt (3:13) leads only to an insincere confession (14:20) that the Lord does not heed. One way in which the sincerity of confession can be tested is by accompanying acts of repentance. In Ezra’s day, for example, confession of sin in taking foreign wives was to be followed by a putting away of those wives (Ezra 10). But the Old Testament also recognizes the importance of individual confession of sins and in contexts not obviously tied to the sacrificial system. David reflects, “I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’—and you forgave the guilt of my sin” (Ps. 32:5). David experienced the principle stated in Proverbs 28:13: “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

Confession of sins in the New Testament (usually expressed with the compound word *exomologeō*) is mentioned in only five passages. This is not, however, to minimize its importance, as confession is certainly included in the widespread call to “repent” from one’s sins. Thus, John the Baptist’s call for repentance is met by the people’s confession of their sins (Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:5). Perhaps the most familiar text on confession is 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” Making forgiveness conditional on confession raises theological problems for some. For does not Christ’s sacrifice wipe out for the believer the guilt of all sins—past, present, and *future*? Perhaps it is best to distinguish between the judicial basis for the forgiveness of sins—the once-for-all work of Christ—and the continuing appropriation of the benefits of that sacrifice—through repeated repentance and confession of sins.

Secured for us eternally in our justification by faith, forgiveness is always provided, but we are to ask for it (Matt. 6:12, 14), as we confess our sins.

The setting of the confession of sins in the Old Testament is frequently public. This raises the question about whether confession should be private or public. James suggests the importance of public confession: “Confess your sins to each other” (James 5:16; cf. also Acts 19:18). This exhortation was a key scriptural basis for the early “methodist” lay gatherings, in which public confession of sin played a large role. Even in public confessions, of course, it is the Lord who is the primary “audience,” for all sin is ultimately sin against him, and all confession must be directed ultimately to him. Moreover, public confession of sin does not seem to be a standard feature of New Testament church life. While its biblical basis is not completely clear, therefore, there is wisdom in the principle that sin should be confessed to those whom it has directly harmed. When the whole church has been affected, the whole church should hear the confession. When one other person has been harmed, we should confess to that person. But when the sin is a “private” one, we may well keep the confession between ourselves and God. Certainly there is no New Testament warrant for the later Roman Catholic insistence on auricular confession to a priest. Although “elders” are mentioned in James 5:14, the exhortation to confess sins to “one another” in verse 16 clearly has in view the entire Christian community.

DOUGLAS J. MOO

See also FORGIVENESS; MOUTH.

Bibliography. O. Cullmann, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*; O. Michel, *TDNT*, 5:199–220; V. H. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*; J. R. W. Stott, *Confess Your Sins: The Way of Reconciliation*.⁴

Confess

See also: *confessing*, p. 39

Greek expression: *homologeō*

Pronunciation: *haw maw law GEH oh*

Strong’s Number: 3670

KEY VERSES

Mark 1:4–5; Romans 10:9–10; 1 Timothy 6:12; 1 John 1:9; 4:2

“Confess, confess!” Sounds like an interrogation scene, doesn’t it? The word does have this negative connotation, but it also has a positive one. Confess means to declare affirmatively what one believes in. The Greek word *homologeō* literally means “saying the same thing”—that is, affirming one’s agreement with a particular spiritual reality. We confess that we are sinners, and we confess (affirm) that Jesus is the Savior. These two kinds of confession occur in the Bible. First, individuals confess that they have sinned and are therefore guilty before God. Second, they confess that Jesus is Lord. One confession often leads to the other.

In the first kind of confession, one agrees or acknowledges that he has broken God’s law and therefore deserves punishment (Rom. 6:23). Those who were baptized by John the Baptist publicly confessed their sins and repented (Mark 1:4–5). All Christians, in fact, must agree with God that they are sinners (1 John 1:8), and they are encouraged to confess their sins to God (1 John 1:9). James said that when a Christian is sick, the elders are to visit that person and give him an opportunity to confess any sins. In the same passage, James urged Christians to confess their sins to one another (Jas. 5:13–16).

The second, more positive meaning of the word, occurs frequently in the New Testament with respect to affirming one’s faith in Christ. When Christians confess, they declare as a matter of conviction and allegiance that Jesus is the Christ and that they belong to Him. Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32, κϒν). Refusal to confess Christ is the same as denying Him (Matt. 10:33; Luke 12:8; 2 Tim. 2:11–13; Rev. 3:5). The Christian life therefore begins with a confession of faith, a public declaration before witnesses (Rom. 10:9–10; 1 Tim. 6:12). An additional dimension of the Christian’s confession is provided in 1 John 4:2. One must confess that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.” A

⁴ Moo, D. J. (1996). [Confess, Confession](#). In *Evangelical dictionary of biblical theology* (electronic ed., pp. 111–113). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

person must not only acknowledge that Jesus “has come” and confess belief in Jesus’ divinity and preexistence as the Son of God, but also that He has come “in the flesh”—that is, confess belief in Jesus’ incarnation.

In the world today there are religions based on false prophets, the Bible tells us this is so, but some believers find it difficult to ascertain truth when the values and morals being taught by these religions seem to be in accordance with the Bible. However, as shown above, we can discern whether people have the spirit of God or not depending on their ability to proclaim that Jesus is indeed the Son of God (1 John 4:15).⁵

CONFESSION Admission, especially of guilt or sin; also, a statement of religious belief. “To confess” can mean to agree, to promise, or to admit something.

Two types of confession occur in the Bible. First, individuals confess that they have sinned and are therefore guilty before God, often confessing a particular sin (Lv 5:5; 1 Jn 1:9). In such confession one agrees or acknowledges that he or she has broken God’s law (Ps 119:126), that its penalty is justly deserved (Rom 6:23), and that in some specific way God’s standard of holiness has not been met (Lv 19:2; Mt 5:48).

In OT times the high priest would confess the sins of the whole nation (Lv 16:21); the nation of Israel was expected to confess when it had rebelled against the law of God (Lv 26:40; 2 Chr 7:14). Pious Jews were quick to confess; Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah confessed their nation’s sins, agreeing with God that his punishment of the people (including themselves) was just, yet praying for God’s mercy and deliverance (Dn 9:20; Ezr 10:1; Neh 1:6).

Second, individuals confess that God is God and that he rules the world (1 Chr 29:10–13), that he is faithful in showing his love and kindness (Ps 118:2–4), and that he has helped his people (Ps 105:1–6). Such confession or agreement, expressed publicly in worship or song (Ps 100:4), is spoken of in the OT as “blessing the Lord.”

The two types of confession are often combined in the Bible, producing many psalms of thanksgiving. In general those psalms contain some or all of the following ideas: (1) I have sinned; (2) I became ill and nearly died; (3) I prayed to God, who delivered me; and (4) now I offer this song of confession, which I promised him (Pss 22; 30; 32; 34; 40; 51; 116). The same Hebrew word means both “praise” and “confession of sin”; the two meanings were part of a single concept. The psalmist began by admitting sin and God’s justice, and he ended by confessing God’s forgiveness and delivering power.

Both those meanings also occur in the NT. Christians confess (that is, they declare as a matter of conviction and allegiance) that Jesus is the Christ and that they belong to him. “Whoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Mt 10:32, KJV). Not to confess Christ is the same as denying him (Mt 10:33; Lk 12:8; cf. 2 Tm 2:11–13; Rv 3:5). The Christian life therefore begins with a confession of faith, a public declaration before witnesses (Rom 10:9–10; 1 Tm 6:12). An additional dimension of the Christian’s confession is provided in 1 John 4:2: one must confess that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh,” that is, acknowledge Jesus’ divinity and preexistence as the Son of God (that he “has come”; see also 1 Jn 4:15) as well as Jesus’ humanity and incarnation (that he has come “in the flesh”). The Greek word “confession” literally means “saying the same thing.” The Christian’s “good confession” is modeled after the pattern of Christ’s confession (1 Tm 6:12–13).

In only a few passages does the NT discuss confession of sin. Those being baptized by John the Baptist publicly admitted their sins and repented (Mk 1:4–5). All Christians, in fact, must agree with God that they are sinners (1 Jn 1:8–10). James presented a fuller picture: when a Christian is ill, the elders are to visit and give the person opportunity to confess any sins. As in the Psalms, forgiveness and healing (the moral and the physical) are tied to confession. Recalling that principle, James urged Christians to confess their sins to one another.

See *also* Conversion; Forgiveness; Repentance.⁶

Discipleship Shared: Whatever God Does In You He Wants To Do Through You Prayer: Practice His Presence Through Confession as Proactive Warfare

RF: Meditation *Prayer *Fasting *Study *Simplicity *Solitude *Submission *Service *Confession* Worship *Guidance *Celebration

⁵ Carpenter, E. E., & Comfort, P. W. (2000). In *Holman treasury of key Bible words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew words defined and explained* (p. 257). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁶ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (pp. 307–308). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

PJH: ~~Committing to Hear God's Voice~~ • Water Baptism • Communion • Forgiveness (walking in the Spirit of) • Feeding on the Word of God • Maintaining Integrity of Heart • Abiding in the Spirit • ~~Living in Submission~~ • Practicing Solitude • Living as a Worshipper

Hearing God **John 10:27** “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*”

1.) Listen: **1 Samuel 3:9** *Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.*

2.) Know: **Ephesians 1:15-23** *15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers,*

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might 20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. 22 And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

3.) Do: **James 1:21-25**

21 *Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

PREPARING TO LIVE PROACTIVELY: THE DISCIPLINE OF CONFESSION

Recap:

Eph. 6:10–18

10 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the **sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.** 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.*

Take the Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17): The Word of God, the only offensive weapon in this armor, was used by the Lord Jesus against Satan (**Luke 4:1–13** The Temptation of Christ).

This we know: **Heb. 4:12** The living Word is powerful, effective, and instructive.

2 *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

This we know: **2 Tim. 3:16-17**

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Praying Always (Eph. 6:18): Prayer opens the channels between us and God. In the midst of battle, we as believers must keep in constant communication with our Leader for directions and encouragement. Our prayers for one another are important and effectual

This we know: **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

3 *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*

This we know: **1 Corinthians 2:5**

5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Do we KNOW this: (Is this a way to do proactive warfare)

2 Corinthians 6:7

*7 by **truthful speech**, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;*

1 John 1:5-10

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say 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. **10** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

READ: **2 Chronicles 6** Prayer of Dedication (notice the aspects of confession and repentance)

KINGDOM DYNAMICS “Yadah”

2 Chron 6:12 Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

12 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and **spread out his hands**.

6:24 The Meaning of “Faith’s Confession,” FAITH’S CONFESSION. In Solomon’s prayer of dedication, he points to the importance of **confessing the Lord’s name (v. 24). The power-packed word “confess” opens a great truth concerning God’s hearing and answering prayers.** It is an appropriate word in Christian tradition, historically used to describe a position-in-faith or belief, as, for example, “The Augsburg Confessions.” To confess belief is to say, **“I openly receive God’s promise and choose to take my stand here, humbly, on God’s promises and in worship of His Person.”** **Yadah, the HEBREW word for “confess,” contains and supports this idea.**

Derived from *yad*, meaning “an open or extended hand,” the focus is **on reaching to take hold of.**

Just as a closed hand or fist may represent struggle or rebellion, an open hand indicates peace, submitted service or surrender. As Solomon comes with lifted, open hands (v. 12), he comes in **peaceful submission to God.**

Yadah also involves worship, with open, extended hands, in a worship-filled confessing of God’s faithfulness with thanksgiving and praise. This is the true spirit of the idea of “faith’s confession of God’s Word”:

- 1) to take a stand on what God says;
- 2) to speak what is believed with worship and praise;
- 3) to do so in the humble spirit of faith in God’s Person and promise.

Such a stance will never be loveless or arrogant, and neither Earth nor hell can successfully protest this confession of faith in heaven’s power.⁷

GREEK: The word confession is a combination of two Greek words, *homos*, meaning “same,” and *leg* meaning “to say.” In its truest form, confession is “to say the same” or “to agree.” Believers are called to say the same thing God says

¹ Thomas Nelson, I. (1995). *The Woman’s Study Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

What part does CONFESSION have in:

- **Philippians 2:12-13**

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out** your own salvation with fear and trembling, **13** for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Oswald Chambers **“Work out in the expression of your life the salvation God has worked in.”**

⌘ What the LORD has done on the INSIDE of your life, He will ask you to SHARE it on the OUTSIDE of your life.

What part does CONFESSION have in:

- **Phil 2:5-8**

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus Steps to Self Emptying: (Jesus’ 7 Steps to Self Emptying: Thomas Nelson, I. (1995). *The Woman’s Study Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.)

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus:

6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
HE SET ASIDE HIS REPUTATION

7 but emptied himself,
HE TOOK HIS POWERS AND HUNG THEM UP IN HEAVEN

by taking the form of a servant,
HE TOOK HIS IDENTITY AND SUBMITTED IT ‘TO GOD’

being born in the likeness of men.
HE BECAME A MAN, PUTTING ON A NEW IDENTITY THAT WAS NOT EVEN CLOSE TO WHAT HE SUBMITTED

8 And being found in human form,
HE LIVED AS HUMAN, NO GODLY POWERS IN HIM
GODLY POWER WAS AVIALABLE VIA HOLY SPIRIT

he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,
HE CHOSE TO STAY SUBMISSIVE THROUGH DEATH (OBEDIENCE)

⁷ Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Spirit filled life study Bible* (electronic ed., 2 Ch 6:12). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

even death on a cross.
DISREPUTABLE DEATH AT THAT

No reputation, Form of a bondservant, Likeness of man, Appearance of man, Humbled Himself, Obedient to Death, Death on the cross

The Father's Response:

Phil 2:9-11

9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

9 Therefore God has highly exalted him
GOD HAS RESTORED HIM TO HIS PREINCARNATE POSITION

and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,
BECAUSE OF HIS OBEDEINCE (SUBMISSION) HIS NAME IS NOW SUPERIOR TO ALL

10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven
ALL BEINGS IN HEAVEN SUBMIT TO HIM

and on earth
ALL BEINGS ON EARTH SUBMIT TO HIM

and under the earth,
ALL BEINGS UNDER THE EARTH SUBMIT TO HIM

11 and every tongue confess
EVERYTHING/EVERY ONE

that Jesus Christ is Lord,
THAT JESUS DESERVES THIS

to the glory of God the Father.
AND THIS WILL GLORIFY OUR FATHER

God exalted Him, Gave Him a name, Those in Heaven will bow, Those on earth will bow, Those under the earth will bow, Every Tongue will confess, Jesus is LORD

☞ If we empty ourselves through CONFESSION, will the LORD meet us in a like response?

What part does CONFESSION have in:

- **Matthew 10:32-33**

32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

☞ Is CONFESSION acknowledgement of who the Father and the Son is? Is CONFESSION the anti-deny?

What part does CONFESSION have in:

- **1 John 1:5-10**

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say 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. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

James 5:13-16

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

☞ Does CONFESSION open our life to healing, restoration? Physical. Emotional. Spiritual. Intellectual.

CONFESSION: Agreeing with God

1st Recognizing Sin is the 1st step to Confession:

Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

Sin (Gk. *hamartia*, lit. "to miss the mark") falls short of attaining God's standard. Sin is often identified as deeds, such as stealing, murder, adultery, or lying (Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:1-21). However, a more fundamental attitude deep within the human heart underlies all "sins" and is expressed as

Proverbs 3:5-7

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

Proverbs 14:12 *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death*

“I know better than God in this matter.” Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:3-6)
(Antinomianism)

2nd Repentance is the 2nd step of Confession

2 Corinthians 7:10

10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

3rd Accepting His Forgiveness is the 3rd step of Confession:

Philippians 3:13-14

*13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, **14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

Forgiveness is God’s Extended Mercy

Psalm 51

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.*

*2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!*

*3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.*

*4 Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.*

*5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

*6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.*

*7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

*8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.*

*9 Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.*

4th Living Transparent is the 4th Step:

Ephesians 4:11-16

*11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, **12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, [c] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, **14** so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. **15** Rather, **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

1 John 3:18

18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Colossians 3:9

9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices

Zechariah 8:16-17

*16 These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace; **17** do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate, declares the Lord.”*

- 4) Confess to the LORD in your Prayer Practice
- 5) Share your confession with a trusted Christian
- 6) Confess Him with your life and words what the LORD has done in you.

Confess to the LORD in your Prayer Practice • Share your confession with a trusted Christian • Confess Him with your life and word
WHAT PART DOES CONFESSION PLAY IN LIVING TRANSPARENT?

I KNEW WHAT WAS GOOD BECAUSE I LOOKED AT THE GOOD ALL DAY LONG AND WHEN SOMETHING DENTED OR BROKEN WENT BY, I COULD TELL IT JUST DIDN'T LOOK RIGHT.

▪ Romans 3:10-18

¹⁰ As it is written:

- ¹⁰There is none righteous, no, not one;
¹¹ There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after God.
¹² They have all turned aside;
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one.”
¹³ “Their ^mthroat is an open ⁴tomb;
With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;
ⁿ“The poison of asps is under their lips”;
¹⁴ “Whose ^omouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”
¹⁵ “Their ^pfeet are swift to shed blood;
¹⁶ Destruction and misery are in their ways;
¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known.”
¹⁸ “There ^qis no fear of God before their eyes.”

▪ Jeremiah 31:34

³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for ^bthey all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For ^c‘I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’”

▪ Matthew 26:28

For ^ythis is My blood ^zof the ⁴new covenant, which is shed ^afor many for the ⁵remission of sins.

▪ Ephesians 1:7

⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to ^bthe riches of His grace

▪ 2 Corinthians 5:21

²¹ For ²He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become ^athe righteousness of God in Him.

▪ 1 Timothy 2:5

⁵For *there is* one God and ^bone Mediator between God and men, *the Man* Christ Jesus,

▪ 1 John 2:1

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, ^awe have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² And ^bHe Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but ^calso for the whole world.

▪ Luke 15:11-24

Parable of the Lost Son

¹¹ Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to *his* father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*.’ So he divided to them ^b*his* livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with ⁴prodigal living. ¹⁴ But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵ Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the ⁵pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

¹⁷ “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, ⁱI have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’”

²⁰ “And he arose and came to his father. But ^jwhen he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven ^kand in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’”

²² “But the father said to his servants, ⁶‘Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. ²³ And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴ ^lfor this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

▪ Matthew 16:19, 18:18

⁹ And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth ⁸will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

¹⁸ “Assuredly, I say to you, ^swhatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

▪ John 20:23

²³ ^yIf you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.”

My definition of CONFESSION: _____

A/DA “Confession is a tool used by God to make His presence and forgiveness real to us.”

What happens in a confessional?

1.) Reality therapy (1 John 3:9)

Whoever has been ^oborn of God does not sin, for ^pHis seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

5:17-18

¹⁷ ^wAll unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin *not leading* to death.

¹⁸ We know that ^xwhoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God ^ykeeps ⁶ ⁷himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

4.) Absolution -- forgiveness is expected (1 John 1:9)

⁹ If we ^aconfess our sins, He is ^ffaithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to ^ccleanse us from all unrighteousness.

5.) Penance – (If viewed as a way to earn forgiveness = watch out!

If viewed as a tool used to pause and consider the seriousness of our sin
= repentance. See Jeremiah 44:4)

⁴ However ^hI have sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*, saying, “Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!”

“For a good confession three things are necessary: An examination of conscience, sorrow and a determination to avoid sin.”

Who do I confess to?

What qualities should they have?

“It is God who does the forgiving, but often He chooses human beings as the channel of His forgiving grace.”

Forgiveness is not: Pretending an injury doesn't matter.

Forgiveness is not: Ceasing to hurt.

Forgiveness is not: Forgetting.

Forgiveness is not: Pretending that the relationship is just the same as it was before the offense.

Why we testify: John 4:42 English Standard Version (ESV)

42 They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”

PROSE PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

The principle of confession is clearly established in Old Testament law as well as New Testament teaching. Leviticus 5:5 specified that when a person was guilty of violating God's law “he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing.” While the passage went on to call for a sin offering, it is clear that confession is the first step in becoming reconciled to God.

The Old Testament Law does not give the wording of such a confession. Instead, the command assumes that a person is capable of expressing an appropriate confession in his or her own words.

Significant elements in the prose prayers of confession in the Old Testament support this conclusion. It seems clear that God's people understood that a person must specifically acknowledge his or her fault. While other elements are seen in some prose prayers of confession, a specific acknowledgment of fault is essential.

JUDGES 10:10, 15

“We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals.”

God had punished the Israelites by permitting the Philistines to oppress them. Finally, His people turned to Him and confessed their sin. God reminded them that they had sinned before and when they cried out to Him, He had delivered them. He then challenged them to pray to the gods they had chosen.

This challenge from the Lord brought additional confession. “We have sinned! Do to us whatever seems best to You: only deliver us this day, we pray.”

The text tells us that the Israelites then “put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD” (Judg. 10:16). This demonstrated the sincerity of the Israelites' confession, leading to God's intervention for His people.

It is easy to say “I was wrong” or “I'm sorry.” But the sincerity of our words, whether addressed to another person or to God, can only be measured by our subsequent actions.

1 SAMUEL 7:6

“We have sinned against the LORD.”

Samuel had told the Israelites, “If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines” (7:3).

The Israelites did as Samuel directed, putting away their idols and serving God only. Then Samuel called the people together to pray for relief. At that great assembly, the people fasted and confessed their sins and Samuel prayed for them.

In this case, confession of sin followed rather than preceded repentance and change. But in this case as in Judges 10, the sincerity of the confession was displayed by a sincere return to the Lord.

1 SAMUEL 12:10, 19

Near the end of Samuel's life, Israel demanded a king. Samuel reminded the Israelites of their history in the land. This had involved repeated cycles of sin

and oppression from foreign enemies, followed in turn by confession, repentance, and deliverance by the Lord. First Samuel 12:10 summarizes historic prayers of confession.

When Nathan confronted him, David acknowledged his great sin.

-----◆-----

In his sermon, Samuel pointed out that the motive of the Israelites in asking for a king had been wrong (see 1 Sam. 8:7–19). Moved, the people begged Samuel, “Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves” (1 Sam. 12:19).

2 SAMUEL 12:13

“I have sinned against the LORD.”

David had sinned by committing adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of one of his army officers. When she became pregnant, David attempted to cover up his guilt. He ordered his military commander to send that officer on a mission where he would be killed.

Only when the prophet Nathan confronted David did the king confess his sin. Second Samuel quotes only David’s admission to Nathan. But David’s confession to God, recorded in Psalm 51, reveals true sorrow and repentance.

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

BIBLE BACKGROUND:

THE DYNAMICS OF CONFESSION OF SIN DAVID

Psalm 51

Comment

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your
lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of
Your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my
iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

*David's only hope was that
God would be merciful. He
realized that he had no
other basis on which to
appeal for forgiveness.*

For I acknowledge my
transgressions,
And my sin is always before
me.
Against You, You only, have I
sinned,
And done this evil in Your
sight—
That You may be found just
when You speak,
And blameless when You
judge.

*David took full respon-
sibility for his actions.
He admitted that he had
violated God's moral law,
and that his sin had been
against God first and
foremost.*

Behold, I was brought forth
in iniquity,
And in sin my mother
conceived me.
Behold, you desire truth in
the inward parts,
And in the hidden part You will
make me to know wisdom.

*David's self-examination
made him realize that
acts of sin were not the
main problem: David was a
sinner by nature.*

Purge me with hyssop, and I
shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be
whiter than snow.
Make me hear joy and
gladness,

*Only God could cleanse David
from guilt, and change him
within.*

That the bones you have
broken may rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my
iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart,
O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit
within me.
Do not cast me away from
Your presence,
And do not take Your Holy
Spirit from me.

*David continued to appeal
for a changed heart. Only
God's active presence in
his life could keep David
from sinning again and
again.*

Restore to me the joy of
Your salvation,
And uphold me by Your
generous Spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors
Your ways,

*Restored by God's grace,
David displayed the
joy of salvation, and by
his example showed sinners
the way back to God.*

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

And sinners shall be converted
to You.

Deliver me from the guilt of
bloodshed, O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing
aloud of Your righteousness.
O LORD, open my lips,
And my mouth shall show
forth Your praise.
For You do not desire
sacrifice, or else I would
give it;
You do not delight in burnt
offering.
The sacrifices of God are a
broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite
heart—
These, O God, You will not
despise.

*As a sinner, David had to
rely on God for salvation
and forgiveness. Broken-
hearted and humbled, David
could only plead for a mercy
he did not deserve, but
which he would celebrate
for the rest of his life.*

*David did not repudiate
sacrifice, but realized
that what God yearns for
are hearts fully
submitted to Him—a heart
now like David's own.*



Even more significantly, the superscription of Psalm 51 tells us that David delivered Psalm 51 to the nation's chief musician, to be used in public worship! David's sin had become public knowledge; his confession must have been public as well.

Psalm 51 is no spontaneous utterance. It is a carefully crafted poem, revealing how shaken David was by his own behavior and how deeply he had thought about his sin. This psalm is Scripture's most penetrating exploration of personal sin and of the restoration available to the believer through confession. While not a prose prayer, Psalm 51 helps to explain the dynamics of confession in our personal relationship with God.

2 SAMUEL 24:10, 17

"I have sinned greatly in what I have done."

King David decided to conduct a census to determine the number of fighting men in Israel. For some reason not explained in the text, this was a sin. After the process had begun, "David's heart condemned him" (2 Sam. 24:10). David confessed his sin and asked for forgiveness. But this time God gave David a choice of one of three punishments that were national rather than personal in nature. David chose a three-day plague.

During the plague, David had a vision of an awesome angel who was striking the people and their livestock, and he appealed to God again. "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house."

The prophet Gad instructed David to offer a sacrifice on what would be the site of Solomon's temple. There David prayed for the land, "and the plague was withdrawn from Israel" (2 Sam. 24:25).

It is important in reading this story and its parallel in 1 Chronicles 21 to note 2 Samuel 24:1, which introduces the account. There we read that "the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel." While David's sin was the occasion for the plague, the people of Israel were not as innocent as David supposed.

Within the story itself, we should notice that David's confession and request for forgiveness were heard. David was forgiven. But forgiveness did not imply freedom from consequences. A person who commits adultery can confess the sin and be forgiven. But God's forgiveness doesn't mean there will be no price to pay. A marriage may be destroyed, a disease may be sexually transmitted, or an unwanted pregnancy may occur.

Those who reason, "I'll do what I want now and confess my sin later," don't understand that every act of ours has consequences. God can and will forgive. But forgiveness does not free us from the burden of the consequences of the choices we make.

1 CHRONICLES 21:8

(See the discussion of the parallel passage in 2 Sam. 24, above.)

EZRA 9:6–15

"O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens."

Ezra was a man trained in the Old Testament. He came to Judah to teach God's Law to the little Jewish community that had returned there after the Babylonian captivity. On Ezra's arrival, he discovered that God's people had intermarried with pagans in the area and were being pulled back into idolatry (Ezra 9:1, 2).

Ezra's first reaction was not to condemn the guilty but to tear his robe as a sign of deep distress and contrition. Then, weeping and

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

confessing, he uttered the public prayer recorded here. Several aspects of this prayer of confession are especially significant.

Ezra said “we” and “our” (Ezra 9:6). It is a temptation when others sin to distinguish between “me” and “them.” But throughout this prayer, Ezra identified himself with his people. Ezra understood that he was an integral part of the community of faith. He bore some responsibility for the actions of others, even if he didn’t participate in them.

Ezra recalled history (Ezra 9:7–9). The faith community of Ezra’s day was one with that of past generations. The present has been shaped by God’s grace shown toward the fathers, despite the forefathers’ sins. The captivity was a consequence of the iniquity of earlier generations. But God showed His mercy in preserving His people and bringing back the group that had resettled the homeland.

Ezra confessed inexcusable iniquities (Ezra 9:10–14a). In spite of the lessons of history and in spite of God’s mercy, the present generation was repeating the same sins which had brought judgment on the nation. In view of God’s past judgment and mercy, this was both inexcusable and inexplicable.

Ezra’s public confession of Israel’s sin led to a revival.



Since You our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such deliverance as this, should we again break Your commandments, and join in marriage with the people committing these abominations? (Ezra 9:13, 14a).

Ezra submitted to God’s judgment (Ezra 9:14a, 15). God had every right to be angry, and even to consume the remnant. All Ezra could do was admit guilt and submit to God’s justice.

Ezra’s public confession of sin moved God’s people deeply. Soon he was joined by a “very large assembly” (Ezra 10:1) weeping and confessing with him. They were joined by those who had offended by marrying pagan wives. The entire community joined in a public commitment to stop the practice, while those who had married pagans divorced them.

While personal and private confession of sins to God is important, we need to understand that public confession of sin is called for at times. David’s private sin was confessed publicly, because it had become a matter of common knowledge. In this situation, where sins had infected and corrupted the faith community, public confession was also called for.

The pattern of confession in Ezra 9 has been duplicated often in church history. Many revivals have begun with confession of sins. When God begins a purifying work in the community of faith, this work nearly always involves public confession of sins.

NEHEMIAH 1:4–11

“Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them ... yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.’”

Nehemiah, a high Jewish official in the court of the Persian king, was a contemporary of Ezra. Like Ezra, Nehemiah was deeply aware of the sins of his people, and he confessed these sins to the Lord. The prayer recorded here was stimulated by a report that Jerusalem’s walls were still in ruins. Nehemiah sensed a strong conviction that he was called by God to restore the honor of his homeland. While Nehemiah confessed Israel’s sins, he also quoted God’s promise to restore His people when they returned to Him.

Nehemiah’s prayer reminds us of the New Testament promise found in 1 John 1:9. If we confess our sins, God is gracious and just to forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

DANIEL 9:4–19

“O LORD, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed iniquity.”

Daniel had read the promise in the book of Jeremiah that after 70 years God would permit His people to return to their homeland from their captivity in Babylon. Daniel, a high Jewish official in the administration of the Babylonian and Persian empires, turned to God to “make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes” (Dan. 9:3). These three actions—fasting, dressing in sackcloth, and sitting in ashes—were ways in which Old Testament people showed the sincerity of their grief over sin.

Daniel’s prayer was a mixture of confession and petition. He was deeply aware that exile from the land was a just punishment for his people’s sins. At the same time, Daniel counted on God to keep His promise of a return:

O LORD, hear! O LORD, forgive! O LORD, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name” (Dan. 9:19).

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION: A SUMMARY

Genesis portrayed the reaction of Adam and Eve after they ate the forbidden fruit and became aware of their guilt. Genesis 3:8 tells us that when they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden, Adam and Eve “hid themselves.” A awareness of sin made them flee from God.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the personal and public prayers of confession in the Old Testament is that when these saints became

Still Standing Week 4: The Power in Confession

aware of their guilt, they turned to God and sought Him out.

What a revelation of the trust that believers can have in the God of Scripture.

With David, we know that “You, O LORD, are

a God full of compassion and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth” (Ps. 86:15). Without diminishing the seriousness of our sins, we know that if we come to God in repentance, confessing our sins and failures, He will be gracious to us and forgive.

Paul does not say, Work out something that will tell for your salvation; he says, **Work out in the expression of your life the salvation God has worked in.** If we think for a moment we shall soon know how much we are saved—What does our tongue say? what kind of things do our ears like to listen to? what kind of bodily associates do we like to be with? These things will always tell not only other people but ourselves what kind of salvation God has worked in. In regeneration God works us into relation with Himself that by our bodily expression we may prove Whose we are. If you are trying to be a Christian it is a sure sign you are not one. Fancy trying to be the daughter of your mother! you cannot help being her daughter. But try and be the daughter of someone else’s mother! Unless God has worked in us we shall hinder Him all the time by trying to be His children; we cannot, we have to be born from above (rv mg) by the will of God first, be regenerated; then our working is not working to help God, **it is working to let God express through us what He has done in us** so that we may prove we are the children of our Father in heaven (see Matthew 5:43-48⁸).

Matthew 5:43-48 English Standard Version (ESV)

Love Your Enemies

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ **44** But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **45** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. **46** For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? **47** And if you greet only your brothers, [a] what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? **48** You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

So many of us put prayer and work and consecration in place of the working of God; we make ourselves the workers. God is the Worker, we work out what He works in. Spirituality is what God is after, not religiosity. The great snare in religion without genuine spirituality is that people ape being good when they are absolutely mean. There is no value whatever in religious externals, the only thing that is of value is spiritual reality, and this is spiritual reality—that I allow God to work in me to will and to do of His good pleasure, and then work out what He has worked in, being carefully careless about everything saving my relationship to God.⁹

FORGIVENESS: GOD’S EXTENDED MERCY

All human beings are sinners and thus the victims of sin’s deadly consequences (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8–10). Ultimately sin breaks the fellowship between God and mankind. God’s forgiveness is the divine means of removing sin and restoring fellowship. His forgiveness is complete (Ps. 103:12; Is. 1:18; Mic. 7:19); it is everlasting (Is. 44:22; Jer. 31:34; Heb. 10:17); it is always available (Ps. 86:5; 1 John 1:9). Various terms are used to describe this process, including cleansing, purifying, purging, and washing (Ps. 51:4–9; Is. 1:16, 43:25; Jer. 33:8). Those who fail to seek God’s forgiveness are subject to being “blotted out” of God’s Book of Life (Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5).

Although priestly functions related to forgiveness are prescribed in the Bible (Lev. 4:26), forgiveness is ultimately granted solely by God. Sacrifices are a means of obtaining forgiveness for inadvertent errors (Num. 15:22–29) but do not cover blatant contempt of God (Num. 15:30, 31; Mark 3:29). All rituals related to forgiveness in the Bible are expected to be accompanied by contrition and compassion, as well as penitence and confession (Lev. 5:5, 6; 16:21; Num. 5:6, 7). Rituals and sacrifices alone, however, do not bring forgiveness. We must humble ourselves, acknowledge our wrongs, and resolve to depart from sin (1 Kin. 21:27–29; Is. 1:16, 17; Joel 2:12, 13). When we do this, God gives each one of us a new heart and spirit—a desire and an ability to keep His statutes (Ezek. 36:24–27).

An emphasis is always placed on the translation of true remorse into a positive course of action. Those forgiven cease to do evil (Ps. 15; 24:3–5), begin to do good (Is. 1:17; Jer. 7:3), incline their hearts to the Lord (Josh. 24:23), and, in sum, turn from sin and embrace righteousness. This is “repentance.” When we repent, God forgives (Num. 14:18–20; 2 Chr. 7:14; Is. 55:7; 1 John 1:9). He pardons sin (Mic. 7:18), removes it completely (Ps. 103:12), and remembers it no more (Ps. 25:7). Jesus’ death on the cross provides redemption to all who will accept what He has done on their behalf (Eph. 1:7, 8; Col. 1:14).

See also Ps. 32; 103:11–17; Jer. 31:34; Lam. 3:22, note; Luke 24:47, note; notes on Attributes of God (Ex. 33; Deut. 4; 32; 2 Chr. 19; Job 23; 42; Ps. 25; 90; 102; 119; Is. 6; 65; Jer. 23; Rom. 2; Eph. 1; 1 John 5); Forgiveness (Luke 17)¹⁰

CONFESSION: AGREEING WITH GOD

Confession is a significant element in the worship of God in both Old and New Testaments. Declaration and acknowledgment are a part of the believer’s confession of faith. Scripture convicts the individual to acknowledge sin and receive forgiveness (Ps. 32:5; Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9). James admonished believers to confess sin to others and restore fellowship (James 5:16). Jesus offered confession of faith and commitment to God (Matt. 10:32, 33; Luke 12:8). Confession is a necessary part of reconciliation and restoration; its opposite is denial of wrongdoing, which leads to alienation within a relationship.

The word confession is a combination of two Greek words, *homos*, meaning “same,” and *leg*—meaning “to say.” In its truest

⁸ Richards, L. (1998). *Every prayer in the Bible* (pp. 39–44). Nashville: T. Nelson.

⁹ Chambers, O. (1996). *If thou wilt be perfect: talks on spiritual philosophy*. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott.

¹⁰ Thomas Nelson, I. (1995). *The Woman’s Study Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

form, confession is “to say the same” or “to agree.” Believers are called to say the same thing about sin God says — to see sin as God sees it. A theological understanding of confession includes both an acknowledgment of specific sins and a recognition that sin needs to be forgiven.

When the believer confesses personal sin and professes faith in Christ, then God will faithfully and justly forgive sin and cleanse unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Confession is essential to the believer’s relationship with God and to a fellowship with other people.

See also Luke 24:47, note; Rom. 3:23, note; 10:9, 10; notes on Forgiveness (Ps. 51; Luke 17); Salvation (Eph. 2¹¹)

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: STRATEGIES

The Strategies of Nehemiah

The Ploys of His Enemies

He took up the work of God (Neh. 2:6–9).

They ridiculed him (Neh. 2:19).

He prayed, acknowledging God’s sovereignty and noting the illegitimacy of his enemies (Neh. 2:20).

They mocked him (Neh. 4:1, 2).

He prayed, asking God to take note of his reproach and to refuse to forgive his enemies (Neh. 4:4, 5).

They conspired to attack and create confusion (Neh. 4:7, 8).

He prayed and set a watch (Neh. 4:9), taking necessary precautions (Neh. 4:13), reminding people to fight for their families (Neh. 4:14).

They used oppression from within, the fruit of their own unrighteousness (Neh. 5:1–5).

He led the people to confess, repent, and make restitution (Neh. 5:1–19).

They plotted to harm the leader (Neh. 6:1, 2).

He showed singlemindedness (Neh. 6:3).

They created a distraction (Neh. 6:4) and circulated slander to create fear (Neh. 6:5–7).

He refuted their slander (Neh. 6:8) and prayed for strength (Neh. 6:9).

They developed an insider plot to discredit the leader (Neh. 6:10).

He modeled righteousness (Neh. 6:11), received God’s discernment (Neh. 6:12), and prayed, asking God to remember them (Neh. 6:14).

They used covert connections as Tobiah sent letters to frighten Nehemiah and desensitize the people (Neh. 6:19).

He suggested precautions for protecting the gates (Neh. 7:3).

They established insider alliances; Eliahshib gave room to Tobiah (Neh. 13:4, 5).

He expelled the household goods of the enemy (Neh. 13:8).

They continued acts of unrighteousness (Neh. 13:10, 15, 16).

He contended with unrighteousness (Neh. 13:11, 17, 25, 28).

They used compromise, especially in intermarriage (Neh. 13:23–25).

Spiritual warfare begins when the enemy (Satan) perceives that someone is trying to seek God’s purposes or to protect the well-being of God’s people. Nehemiah drew the attention of his enemies, Sanballat and Tobiah, who were “deeply disturbed” when he began the

¹¹ Thomas Nelson, I. (1995). *The Woman’s Study Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. They employed a variety of strategies to divert Nehemiah from his task. These strategies of the enemy have been used through the generations, even until now. Nehemiah's counterstrategies helped him to persevere and to finish his task.

See also Eph. 6:10–19; notes on Adversity (Acts 5); Perseverance (Rev. 14); Spiritual Warfare (Eph. 6); Temptation (Heb. 2).

12

6:11 Satan's wiles or schemings are directed against the church corporately (Eph. 4:2, 21, 31–32; 5:5) and believers personally (Acts 5:3; 10:38; 1 Tim. 4:1–5). The devil lives up to his name through falsely accusing believers before God (1 John 2:1, 2; Rev. 12:9) and maligning God before believers (Gen. 3:1), as well as through stirring up turmoil in the world by his accusations (James 3:13–16; chart, Names for Satan; A Portrait of the Adversary).

An Expanded Exegesis on Ephesians 6

6:14 The picture of God's armor is of a Roman soldier's tunic, pulled up and tucked into his belt so that he could fight or work unhindered. Living a life of honesty and integrity enables the Christian to be one in purpose with Jesus Christ, who is the Truth, and to be unhindered in the battle against Satan, who is a deceiver and liar (see chart, A Portrait of the Adversary). The breastplate covered the body from neck to thigh and was usually made of bronze. **Believers do not need to seek protection or right standing with God through works of their own; they can confidently stand in what Christ has done in their behalf (2 Cor. 5:21).**

6:15 The soldier wore sandals with cleats made of sharp nails designed to give firm footing on even the most rugged terrain. "Preparation" may have the sense of readiness to share the gospel to others at a moment's notice. "Preparation" may also refer to a prepared foundation that consists of the gospel of peace with God (Eph. 2:17).

6:16 This long, oblong, or oval shield was crafted from two layers of wood covered with linen or animal hides, bound together with iron. When fighting side by side, soldiers could hold these shields together to form a long wall. Soaked in water, they served as adequate defense against the enemy's "fiery darts"—arrows that had been dipped in pitch and ignited. The shield of faith offers God's unlimited resources of power and wisdom (3:16–21) to resist the fiery darts of distressing circumstances and temptation to evil (1 Cor. 10:13).

6:17 The soldier's bronze helmet had leather attachments to hold it in place. Christians can experience protection from Satan's attacks as they rest confidently in their position as members of God's family (John 1:12, 13), set apart for His purposes (Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13). Further, they can know God's present work of sanctification in their lives, experiencing deliverance from sin (Gal. 5:16; Phil. 2:12, 13; Col. 1:10) and having the guarantee of future, eternal deliverance from every kind of evil (1 Thess. 5:8). The short, two-edged sword enabled the heavily-armed soldier to attack deftly and defeat his enemy at close range. The believer's sword may be understood to be either "supplied by the Spirit" or "used by the Spirit." Paul further identified this sword as "the word of God" (see Heb. 4:12). "Word" (Gk. *rhema*) most probably refers to specific sections of Scripture the Holy Spirit brings to mind to meet a particular need. Jesus' use of specific sections of Deuteronomy in His encounter with Satan in the wilderness exemplifies this (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10).

6:18 Prayer is not listed as a separate weapon of warfare but is rather given an all-encompassing status. Prayer is to be constant (1 Thess. 5:17) as the Christian prepares for battle, engages in it, and rests from it. All kinds of prayer are to be offered through the power of the Holy Spirit¹³

Ephesians 6

Our next passage is one of the best known in all of Scripture, Ephesians 6:10–20. In this passage the apostle Paul is not writing about demonization but about warfare between the power of the Devil and power of God in the life of believers.

The conviction that Ephesians 6 is *the* manual on victorious spiritual warfare is not new to our age. All through the history of the church, believers, both theologians and lay Christians, have turned to this passage for help, especially in those hours when all the powers of hell seem to have been released against them.

The church fathers continually referred to this passage. A look at the Scripture indexes for the writing of the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene fathers will reveal how often they turned to these words of Paul. Ephesians 6 was also commented on continually by the great Puritan divines.

First, I want to examine the passage critically. This will mean a somewhat in-depth and almost word-by-word study, where necessary and if space permits. Second, I want to be pastoral. How does Paul's teaching about the spirit world here affect our Christian life? How do we put it into practice? Third, I want to focus on evangelism. How does Paul's teaching enlighten us in the effective evangelization of those blinded by evil spirits against the truth of the Gospel?

In Ephesians 6:10–20 *Paul is bringing together all of his warfare teachings*. He has brought his readers to the point where they are now ready for his most important teaching on warfare in the entire epistle. Here is the practical application of all he has been saying in Ephesians until

¹² Thomas Nelson, I. (1995). *The Woman's Study Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹³ Thomas Nelson, I. (1995). *The Woman's Study Bible* (Eph 6:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

now. As Arnold says, Ephesians 6 is Paul's "call to acquire divine strengthening for the purpose of engaging the spirit-forces of evil (Eph. 6:10–20). It is not an irrelevant appendix to the epistle. It is a crucial part of the paraenesis to which the rest of the epistle has been pointing."

Arnold next makes an important comment. He says that this

is the only place in the Pauline corpus where believers are explicitly called upon to struggle against the "principalities and powers." The "struggle" is not merely mentioned as a parenthetical aside. It is taken up by the author and elaborated on in ten verses integrally connected with the foregoing paraenesis of the epistle. (4:1–6:9)

He concludes saying that in the 6:10–20 passage we discover again Paul's "significant emphasis on power." It is brought about "by the author's perception of a 'spiritual warfare' in which the readers are already engaged. This concept is present in Paul, but it is never elaborated to the degree that it is here."

Arnold then asks the question why there is such a unique emphasis on cosmic level spiritual warfare in Ephesians. The answers Arnold gives all relate directly to the spirit-magic-occult lifestyle of Ephesus and the surrounding region, centered in the worship of Artemis and the saturation of the culture of Asia Minor (indeed of the Greco-Roman world) with magic, occult, spirit practices.

Ephesians 6:10–20

Paul begins his presentation with "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might" (v. 10).

The word "finally" here is *tou loipou* in Greek, a common expression in Paul's epistles, which literally means "for the rest."

I believe it would be accurate to paraphrase Paul's words to this point something like this:

"First, I told you about your election of God (1:3–2:27) and that the Lord Jesus already reigns as Lord at the Father's right hand, above all the cosmic forces of evil you are facing. I have also said that you are raised up with him and are seated with him in the heavenlies.

"Furthermore, you have been given the task of declaring to the principalities and powers the eternal plan of God, and to bring them into submission to the Lord by exercising your delegated authority in union with Christ.

"To do this, you have been given the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Christ Himself dwells in you. You are one body in Christ.

"Now, let me put all of this in perspective. The Devil and the evil powers which war against you, while defeated by the Lord Jesus, are still free to continue to assault you, over and over again.

"There is no need to fear, however. Jesus alone is Lord. You have victory in Him. You are co-regents in the heavenlies in Him.

"You need to learn how to be strong in Him, however. While the Enemy will attack, God has provided all you need to be victorious Christian soldiers. Let me tell you how all of this is to be worked out in daily life."

"Finally" is followed immediately by three imperatives: be empowered (v. 10); put on (v. 11); and take up (v. 13). The last two refer directly to the armor of God.

The three imperatives, Arnold says, "are similar in meaning . . . (They) emphasize the need for divine strength in order to resist the enemy."

Arnold says Paul's use of the conjunction, *oun* ("therefore," vv. 13, 14) introduces the main admonition in verse 14 by making a general reference to the need for divine power because of the supernatural, powerful, and cunning nature of the enemies," revealed in verse 12. He states that "verse 12 functions as an explication of the nature of the enemy and not as the central element in the development of 6:10–20" as some commentators suggest.

Arnold gives great importance to verse 14.

The imperative *stete* ("stand firm," v. 14) has been accurately described as the chief admonition of the passage. The admonition to acquire divine strengthening and enablement has not been given by the author as an end in itself. The strength is required for a particular purpose—that the believer might be enabled to stand against the evil "powers" and successfully resist them (vv. 11, 13, 14). "Stand firm" (v. 14) then becomes the central command of the passage.

Stand Firm

After Paul gives his main command, "Stand firm" (v. 14), he follows with four imperative participles in verses 14–16: *perizōsamenoī*, "girding about, around"; *endusamenoī*, "putting on"; *hupodēsamenoī*, literally "shoeing"; and *analabontes*, "taking up."

These four are followed by the second imperative verb in the series, *analabete*, from *analambanō*, to "take up" (v. 13). Vine says it means to "receive by deliberate and ready reception of what is offered . . . taking with the hand, taking hold, taking hold of."

Arnold writes that these commands do not introduce an independent series of admonitions. They are all dependent on *stete*, "stand firm" (v. 14).

The whole of verses 14–20, then, is dependent on the main thought of verse 14—"stand!" All other thoughts are subservient to this ultimate aim. The divine armor and power are provided for the attainment of this goal. The opponents are carefully delineated so that the reader may know the nature of the enemies to be withstood. Even prayer is given with the goal of resistance in mind.

Be Strengthened

With this overview as the foundation we go back to where Paul begins in verse 10a, "Be strong." Lincoln says Paul's use of a passive command here reinforces the notion that "strength is to be drawn from an external source and corresponding to the passive in the prayer of 3:16. 'Be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man.' " He continues saying that here "the external source is 'the Lord,' and the wording is again reminiscent of the Old Testament (cf. 1 Sam. 30:6; 'David strengthened himself in the Lord his God'; Zech. 10:12. 'I will make them strong in the Lord.')

Arnold comments on 6:10 on the believer's source of power in the Lord. He says this "phrase not only describes the person with whom the readers have been brought into union, but also refers to the sphere or new set of conditions in which they live, into the domain of light (5:8ff); they are no longer subjected to the tyranny of life under the control of the prince of the authority of the air (2:2) but now live under the loving headship of Christ who is Lord."

He then says "Grundmann has fittingly commented, 'This place [in Christ] is to a great extent charged with the superior power which belongs to Christ.' For this reason the readers can be admonished to 'be strong.'"

With this in mind, Arnold writes that the source of the strength "is more specifically defined as existing in 'the strength of the Lord's might.' " These are the "same terms the author used to describe the divine power which brought about the resurrection and exaltation of Christ

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

(1:19–20).” Thus, he says, Paul “affirms that believers have access to this vast divine power which has already proved itself sufficient to overcome powerful diabolic opposition.”

Continuing with 6:10, we note the two power terms *kratos*, “might,” and *ischus*, “strength.” Arnold states that they “are linked in one place in Isaiah (40:26), which the author may have been thinking of as he penned 6:10.”

Arnold then says Paul “appears significantly indebted to Isaiah for many of his terms and metaphors, particularly with respect to the armor.” Both Arnold and Lincoln continually refer to Paul’s use of the Old Testament, particularly Isaiah, in all warfare imagery of Ephesians 6. Arnold states that the one Old Testament passage that stands out as having a significant correspondence to Ephesians 6:10ff is Isaiah 52.

Arnold comments that “the extended similarity of ideas throughout the wider context of Isaiah 52 with Ephesians (especially chap. 6) suggests that our author thought of the entire Isaianic passage as he wrote.”

The Enemy We Face

After appealing for believers to strengthen themselves with the Lord’s strength and might by putting on God’s armor, Paul comes forth with the rationale behind his battle cry in verses 11–12. He says that

1. They need “to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” (v. 11d).
2. They are not facing human foes (v. 12a).
3. They are facing a complex spiritual army-hierarchy of evil supernatural beings who have thoroughly infiltrated the heavens and exercises great control over the earth (v. 12b).

The “stand firm” of verse 14 is a repetition of his two prior “stand firm” statements (v. 11b and 13b). This repetition of “stand firm” three times strengthens the view that it is the central command around which all else flows. Eadie says the construction in Greek of “stand firm against” (v. 11b) is a military phrase “to stand in front of with the view of opposing.” He cites secular sources revealing this use. Thus it fits well the “for and against” military symbolism of Paul in these verses.

This military stance is not directed against men but against the Devil and his high level cosmic demonic powers, Paul says (vv. 11–12). His reference to the believer’s principal cosmic enemy by the name “the devil” here (v. 11) and in 4:27 is unique to his writings. He only uses “the devil” here and in Hebrews 2:14. Paul’s most frequently used title for the devil is “Satan.” He also uses “the evil one” here (v. 16) and in 2 Thessalonians 3:3. He uses “the serpent” in 2 Corinthians 11:3 and “the god of this world” in 2 Corinthians 4:3–4. Then there is “Belial” in 2 Corinthians 6:15 and “the tempter” in 1 Thessalonians 3:5. In addition, of course, are all the power words for principalities and powers which would also include the Devil since he is the chief cosmic evil principality.

We not only face the Devil, but we must also contend with his schemes (6:11). “Schemes (“wiles” in the KJV) is the Greek word *methodia*. It is always used in a negative manner in the New Testament. Vine says it means

craft, deceit (*meta*, after, *hodos*, away), a cunning device, a wile, and is translated “wiles (of error) in Ephesians 4:14 [A.V.] paraphrases it, “they lie in wait (to deceive),” . . . (with a view to) the craft (singular) of deceit.

The idea behind *methodia* is deception. The apostle is warning us that the devil’s entire system of warfare against us is based on deception. Eadie makes an excellent observation at this point. He says that the Devil has a method of warfare peculiar to himself, for it consists of “wiles.” His battles are the rush of a sudden ambush. He fights not on a pitched field, but by sudden assault and secret and cunning onslaught.

The Enemies We Face

Verse 12 is without doubt one of the most remarkable verses in the entire Bible on spiritual warfare. Paul says we struggle against high level, cosmic principalities and powers of total evil. The word for “struggle” is *palē*, a wrestling. This is the only appearance of the word in the New Testament. Wuest remarks that this Greek athletic term refers to a

contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other . . . When we consider that the loser in a Greek wrestling contest had his eyes gorged out with resulting blindness for the rest of his days, we can form some conception of the Ephesian Greeks’ reaction to Paul’s illustration. The Christian wrestling against the powers of darkness is no less desperate and fateful.

Paul’s switch from the imagery of the soldier to that of the wrestler and then back to the soldier again should not be considered surprising. At times, in hand-to-hand combat, the soldier is also a wrestler. Paul probably used the wrestler imagery primarily to bring out that point.

Up until now the apostle has been talking in general of the evil principalities and powers. First, in 1:21 he gives a five-fold classification of the powers: rule, authority, power, dominion, and name. Next, in 4:8 he refers to “captivity” (KJV), evidently also an evil power concept. Then, in Ephesians 3:10 Paul mentions “rulers and authorities,” and in 4:27 he mentions the devil for the first time. Now in Ephesians 6, Paul unites the Devil (v. 11), the Evil One (v. 16), and the rulers and the powers (v. 12) all together. For the very first time Paul clearly states what he has already implied, that our battle against the Devil is *not* with him personally or individually. It is with him only as he operates against us *through* evil, high-level, cosmic principalities and powers.

This is the third time in Ephesians the apostle uses his two primary summary words for the evil principalities and powers: *archai*, “rulers,” and *exousia*, “authorities” (1:20 and 3:10). I like John Eadie’s observation on Ephesians 1:21, where these two words are first used in Ephesians along with *dunameos*, “might,” and *kuristetos*, “lordship.” He says “what the distinction of the words among themselves is, and what degrees of celestial heraldry they describe, it is impossible for us to define.”

That is a good statement. He recognizes that Paul is not being technical. He is simply heaping up words to describe the massive and complex hierarchy of evil supernaturalism with which the believer is at war. The same is true of 6:12. Eadie’s further observations strongly support this more flexible view of these power concepts. He says the order of power in 1:21, with *archē* and *exousia* listed first as they are in 6:12 also, is reversed in Colossians 1:16. There the two are listed last. He then mentions that the last power term in 1:21, *kuriotēs*, is listed second in Colossians 1:16.

Eadie then makes an interesting comment about a possible connection between the four power terms as first used in 1:21. He says, “Whoever possesses the *archē* enjoys and displays *exousia*, and whoever is invested with the *dunamis*, wields it in his appointed *kuriotēs*.”

The apostle follows rulers and powers with a phrase which is not used anywhere else in the New Testament or in the LXX: *tous kosmokratōras tou skotous toutou*, “the world rulers of this darkness” (*Greek-English New Testament*). Arnold attempts to trace the origin of this unique phrase as do other critical commentators. Many come to the same conclusion that Arnold does, that Paul did *not* create this phrase, but only borrowed it out of the world in which these believers lived. Arnold says the evidence suggests it was “current in both the magical tradition

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

and world of astrology when the author wrote this epistle.”

The term occurs a number of times in the magical papyri, “used as one of a number of descriptive titles for various gods/spirits called upon to aid the conjurer, . . . [and] as one of the many titles of the deity Helios.” Arnold outlines some of the results of his extensive research into the religious use of this phrase in the first century B.C. He says that “the employment of *kosmokratōr* appears to be a clear example of the Ephesians’ author utilizing a term from the magical/astrological tradition. It is also a likely candidate for being one of ‘the names which are named’ (1:21).”

Next Arnold states that “the author reinterprets the meaning of *kosmokratōr* for the Christian readers. There is not one, but many (the term is plural).” He says that the “*kosmokratōr* is not considered omnipotent, but is placed alongside the principalities and ‘powers’ under the leadership of the devil! Far from being beneficial or helpful deities, the *kosmokratores* are regarded as evil spirits (*pneumatika*) of ‘this darkness.’”

Arnold next says that “the way the term is used in this context may serve as the author’s interpretation of the Ephesian Artemis.” It could also include Helios, Sarapis, or other deities claiming to possess cosmic power.

Thus, believers who formerly worshipped Artemis or adhered to magical practices now have Paul’s instruction about how they are to look at the deities or spirits in which they once put their faith. Arnold says the pagan deities “are powerful and evil emissaries of the devil himself who need to be resisted with the powerful armor of God.”

This reminds us of Paul’s treatment of idols and their demons in 1 Corinthians 10:20–21: “The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons [*daimonia*], and not to God; and I do not want you to become a sharer in demons.” Arnold makes a clear connection between idols and the spirits in Ephesians 6. He then notes that “Paul believed that a Corinthian believer would actually be joined with demonic ‘powers’ if he became involved in the table fellowship of pagan deities. . . . An offering brought to them brought one under the influence of demonic ‘powers.’ This was because the heathen cults were the instruments of the kingdom of Satan.”

Next Arnold points out that “this close association of pagan gods with ‘demons’ is also found in the LXX. Psalms 95:5 reads: ‘For all the gods of the Gentiles are demons’ (see also Deut. 32:7; Baraita 4:7; Jub. 22:16–17). The identification of the gods of the heathen with demons became even more explicit in later Judaism.”

If Paul were writing these words directly to our Western religious context today, what would he say? Today we have demons of materialism, intellectualism, self-worship, the pursuit of power, position, pleasure, and possessions. In the religious realm, we have everything they had except for the physical temple of Artemis. Taking its place, however, are the many material temples plus the mystical temple of the New Age movement. The baser, grosser sides of the religious spirit world found among the magical practitioners of Paul’s day is replicated in modern occultism and Satanism rapidly spreading in our world. A powerful minority is committed to unspeakable, religious, satanic evil.

In the Two-thirds World, the gods of the non-Christians are very similar to those of Ephesus, but with different names. The high level, cosmic powers of evil control these contemporary god-spirit-magical systems, however.

There is one more area of insight into the work of the powers among men which needs to be considered: the strategy of supernatural evil in manipulating human institutions and social structures to work evil among humanity. Walter Wink is the champion of this more socio-cultural institutional view of spirit evil. He says that we must see Paul including here in 6:12

all the *archai* and *exousiai* . . . not only divine but human, not only personified but structural, not only demons and kings but the world atmosphere and power invested in institutions, laws, traditions and rituals as well, for it is the cumulative, totalizing effect of all these taken together that creates the sense of bondage of a “dominion of darkness” (see Col. 1:13) presided over by higher powers.

Wink holds the *kosmokratores* to include all who hold mastery over the world, the spirit of empire, and

all forms of institutional idolatry, whereby religion, commerce, education, and state make their own well-being and survival the final criteria of morality, and by which they justify the liquidation of prophets, the persecution of deviants, and the ostracism of opponents.

Wink continues saying that it is the “suprahuman dimension of power in institutions and the cosmos which must be fought, not the mere human agent.” The institution will perpetuate itself no matter who the human agent “because that is what the institution requires for its survival.” Finally he says that it is “this suprahuman quality which accounts for the apparent ‘heavenly,’ bigger than life, quasi-eternal character of the Powers.”

While favorably responding from the depths of my being to Wink’s words, I must emphasize the strong personal supernatural dimension to this warfare motif as well as the social. In fact, the personal-spiritual dimension seems to be Paul’s primary focus in Ephesians 6:10–20.

Finally Paul says we are at war with the *pneumatika tēs ponerias en tois epouranios*, “the spiritual (hosts) of evil in the heavenlies” (*Greek-English New Testament*). Arnold comments that with this phrase Paul ends his list of powers with a “comprehensive designation for all the classes of hostile spirits—*ta pneumatika tēs ponerias*.” He says that the “term should probably be viewed as an alternative expression for *pneuma* [spirit] not *pneumata* [spiritual]. Believers need to be prepared to engage all the forces of evil in battle.”

Eadie contributes a remarkably inspiring and insightful observation. He says that to “rouse up the Christian soldiery, the apostle brings out into bold relief the terrible foes which they are summoned to encounter.” He says that as to

their position, they are no subalterns, but foes of mighty rank, the nobility and chieftains of the fallen spirit-world; as to their office, their domain is “this darkness” in which they exercise imperial sway; as to their essence, they are not encumbered with an animal frame, but are “spirits”; and as to their character, they are “evil”—their appetite for evil only exceeds their capacity for producing it.

Finally he says that their “nature is evil, their commission is evil, their work is evil. Evil and evil only are they, alike in essence and operation.”

This then is the foe and his forces we face in battle.

Offensive and Defensive Weapons

Many commentators and preachers affirm that all the weapons listed in Ephesians 6:14–17, with the possible exception of the sword of the Spirit, are defensive. Is that really true? No. A warrior who never attacks the enemy but only defends himself is a trapped warrior. An army that only defends but never attacks is unfit for war. A church which does not reach out to war but only stands and defends itself is already defeated. In spiritual warfare the best defense is to go on the offense.

Walter Wink comments on this question:

It is humorous to watch the statement bob from scholar to scholar that the weapons listed here are all “defensive.” . . . The Pentagon says the same about nuclear missiles. . . . The terms employed are taken straight from the legionnaire’s equipment and the metaphor is of the

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

church like the Roman wedge, the most efficient and terrifying military formation known up to that time and for some thousand years after.

Wink says Paul describes armor that is both offensive and defensive. Although the shield, helmet, breastplate, and greaves (for girding the loins) were all defensive, the other pieces of armor were offensive. The “round shield of the early [Roman] legionnaires had long since been elongated (the scutum); two-thirds covered his body and one-third covered his comrade to the left. This brilliant innovation encouraged tight ranks, since each fighter was in part dependent on his neighbor for protection.” The Roman wedge was primarily for protection while the soldiers were *on the offensive*. Paul omits the legionnaire’s *pilum* (javelin) and *pugio* (dagger), but the dagger was carried in the girdle and may be implied by “girding up the loins.” The *pilum* was more for disarming than killing the enemy. “Their absence does nothing to turn the *gladius* into a ‘defensive’ weapon. It was the centerpiece of the Roman army’s devastating military efficiency.”

In referring to Paul’s three-time repetition of “stand firm,” Wink says this “has perhaps contributed to the idea that the Christian is not on the attack so much as trying to keep from being overwhelmed.” Wink quotes Chrysostom, who was familiar with legionnaire ways, to clarify the sense of this “stand firm”: “The very first feature in tactics is, to know how to stand well, and many things will depend upon that . . . Doubtless then he (Paul) does not mean merely any way of standing, but a correct way.”

Wink himself refers to “stand firm” in verses 11 and 14 as having “the sense of the ‘drawing up a military formation for combat.’” In verse 13 the phrase

refers to the triumphant stance of the victor. In the latter verse it is linked with *katergasameno*; Bauer translates, “after proving victorious over everything, to stand ground.” The writer has no notion here of Christian life as a last-ditch, rear-guard, defensive operation; this is war with the powers of evil. *He depicts the church taking the fight to the enemy, and he expects the church to win.* (italics mine)

Finally Wink says that “against such evil the church is well advised to stand shoulder to shoulder, shields overlapping. Hence this instruction in armaments is issued in the plural throughout the paragraph.” He continues saying that

not individuals but the whole people of God is addressed. Solitary efforts may at times be necessary, but far better when many, each individually equipped thus, can struggle (pale 6:12) together and perhaps even “prove victorious over everything . . . All this, then, figures in the Church task vis-a-vis the powers.

A Look at Each Piece of the Armor

Lincoln says that Paul’s presentation of the different parts of the armor of God “shows what it means to have accomplished everything necessary for battle, and explains how it is that one stands.”

1. *Loins girded with truth* (v. 14b). The verb in the middle voice means the Christian must gird *himself* with the truth. In Luke 12:35, 37, and 17:8, girding one’s loins is a sign of readiness for service.

Lincoln feels the source of Paul’s imagery was probably the Old Testament more than the Roman soldier. “The primary influence on the writer’s choice of terminology at this point is LXX Isaiah 11:5, where the Messiah-King is said to have righteousness girding his loins and truth clothing his sides.” He next refers to E. Levine, who he says, “claims that all such references still carry allusions to the belt-wrestling practices of the ancient Near East and that the wrestling belt became symbolic of soldiers ready for battle.”

The question is often asked at this point, what is the “truth” that Paul has in mind? The two answers most often suggested are: The truth is the word of truth, that is, the Gospel and Jesus as the truth; the truth is the absence of all deceit. Lincoln says that “since in LXX Isaiah 11:5 truth referred to faithfulness and loyalty and what was said there of the Messiah is now applied to believers, it is likely that that is also the force of ‘truth’ in this verse.” Others disagree. They say that truth here is the truth of the gospel (1:13) since Paul has consistently used truth in this manner in this book.

Which is it? In light of the power motif of Ephesians, I lean towards the latter. It is the gospel which is “the power of God unto salvation.” Arnold says that “those who live under the influence of the powerful gospel and ‘walk in the light’ will live by the truth and speak truth (4:25; 5:9) and thereby resist the devil, not giving him a place (4:27).” This is truth encounter.

2. *The breastplate of righteousness* (v. 14b). Again, we have the middle voice. The putting on of the breastplate of righteousness is the task of the individual believer. We also end up with two views of righteousness. The first is that “righteous” means a righteous life. The second is that it is the righteousness provided in the gospel. Wuest says, “It is not justifying righteousness but sanctifying righteousness.”

Lincoln, taking the same position as Wuest, again borrows a metaphor out of the Old Testament. He says that “the breastplate of righteousness’ was part of Yahweh’s armor in the depictions found in Isaiah 59:17 and Wisdom 15:18 (cf. also Isaiah 11:5, where righteousness is the Messiah’s girdle).” Lincoln refers to 1 Thessalonians 5:8. He says that “Paul had made the virtues of faith and love the Christian’s breastplate, but he also depicted righteousness as necessary for the battle when he spoke of ‘the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left’ in 1 Corinthians 6:7.”

Arnold takes a different stance.

If the author of Ephesians reflects anything of Pauline tradition in his use of “righteousness,” the concept of divine power is clearly present. Paul writes that the reason the Gospel can be described as the power of God has to do with the fact that it reveals the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:16). The righteousness of God is therefore construed as divine power.

While I see truth in both views, I believe Arnold is right in his power motif. The righteousness of God, in this context, is a power term. The gift of the righteousness of God to the believer totally defeats the Enemy. This righteousness of God in turn transforms the believer’s life. The result of experiencing the divine righteousness is a life of righteousness.

3. *Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace* (v. 15). Again there are two primary views here. Some say the focus is on evangelism. As we march forward—thus the motif of the soldier’s sandals—we will be opposed. In the midst of the war, ours is the only message of peace. Lincoln puts forward the second view. Paul here refers to readiness for spiritual warfare, Lincoln says. This is consistent with the main teaching of the entire Ephesians 6:10–20 passage. He observes that Paul here is primarily influenced by the language of an Old Testament passage “which mentions feet in connection with proclaiming the gospel of peace. The text in question is LXX Isaiah 52:7, ‘as the feet of one preaching glad tidings of peace’ (cf. also Nah. 1:15).”

Lincoln mentions that “Paul has used this verse in connection with the preacher of the gospel in Romans 10:15.” He believes in Ephesians the “writer links the equipping of the feet not with the proclamation of the gospel of peace but with the *etoimasia* ‘readiness,’ of the gospel of peace.” He states that “the term nowhere actually means ‘firm footing,’ and its more usual sense is readiness, preparedness, or preparation (cf., e.g., LXX ps. 9:17; Wis. 13:12; Ep. Arist. 182; Josephus, Ant. 10:1.2, 9 V.L).”

He concludes, saying that the “reference is, therefore, not to readiness to proclaim the gospel . . . but to the readiness or preparedness for

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

combat and for standing in the battle that is bestowed by the gospel of peace (cf. also Meyer, 334–34; Abbot, 185; Hendriksen, 277).” While Lincoln may be correct, one view does not necessarily exclude the other.

4. *The shield of faith* (v. 16). Lincoln again goes to the Old Testament. He says “the shield was used as an image for God’s protection of his people (cf., e.g., Gen. 15:1; Ps. 5:2; 18:2, 30, 35; 28:7; 33:20; 35:2; 59:11; 91:4; 115:9–11; 144:1).” He then states that Paul here uses *thureos* or *scutum*, for shield. It is the “large shield, four feet in length and two and a half feet in width, which is described by Polybius 6.23.2 as the first part of the Roman panoplia and which protected the whole body.”

Lincoln then looks at the place of faith in Ephesians. “Faith takes hold of God’s resources in the midst of the onslaughts of evil and produces the firm resolve which douses anything the enemy throws at the believer (cf. also 1 Thess. 5:8, where faith is part of the breastplate, and 1 Peter 5:8, 9, where firm faith is necessary for resisting the devil).”

He next refers to Paul’s statement that “faith will enable the believer ‘to extinguish all the burning arrows of the evil one.’ Burning arrows feature in the Old Testament in Psalms 7:13 and Proverbs 26:18. They are the *malleoli*, arrows tipped with inflammable tar or pitch and shot off after being lit.” He says that “Livy (Hist. 21.8) graphically describes how these arrows, even when not hitting the body but caught by the shield, caused panic because they blazed fiercely and tempted soldiers to throw down their burning shields and become vulnerable to the spears of their enemies.”

He applies this to Ephesians 6:16. “Here the burning arrows represent every type of assault devised by the evil one, not just temptation to impure or unloving conduct but also false teaching, persecution, doubt, and despair. Faith is the power which enables believers to resist and triumph over such attacks.”

5. *The helmet of salvation* (v. 17). Paul introduces the next two pieces of armor with another change of verbs. The one verb “take” applies to both pieces of armor listed next, “the helmet of salvation” and “the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.” S. D. F. Salmond writing in the *Expositor’s Greek New Testament* says, “The verb has its proper sense here, not merely ‘take,’ but ‘receive,’ i.e., as a gift from the Lord, a thing provided and offered by Him.”

The helmet is, of course, required for the defense of the head. Paul is certainly quoting from Isaiah 59:17.

And He [God] put on righteousness like a breastplate
And a helmet of salvation on his head.

Beautiful words indeed! The helmet of salvation protects us from the most fatal of all blows to a child of God, the doubts about his acceptance “warts and all” by God.

Lincoln says that for Paul

what ultimately protects believers is that God has already rescued them from bondage to the prince of the realm of the air and seated them with Christ in the heavenly realms (cf. 2:1–10). By appropriating this salvation as their helmet, believers have every reason to be confident of the outcome of the battle.

6. *The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God* (v. 17). We have two technical words used here by Paul. One is the word for “sword,” and the other is the word for “the Word of God.” Here for the first time in Ephesians, the Holy Spirit is seen to be the power behind the Christian warrior’s use of the Word of God which is the sword God has given him for battle.

Lincoln again has a good word for us. He says that the “sharp short sword (*maxaira* opposed to *pouphaia*, the long sword) was the crucial offensive weapon in close combat.” He then mentions that this “sword stands not for the Spirit but for ‘the word of God.’” He then wisely states that the “Spirit is not so much the one who supplies the sword—both the helmet and the sword are to be received from God—but the one who gives it its effectiveness, its cutting edge . . . (cf. Heb. 4:12).”

Lincoln next mentions 2 Thessalonians 2:8. “The Lord Jesus will slay the lawless one with the breath of his mouth,” also quoting Isaiah 11:4. Then he reminds us that in Revelation “Christ wages war with the sword of his mouth, and his word reveals people’s deeds for what they are (cf. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:13, 15).”

Lincoln says that in

Ephesians, however, when the Christian soldier wields the sword of the word, it is not first of all the word of judgment but the good news of salvation. *Rema* here, not *logos*, refers to the gospel (cf. also 5:26; Rom. 10:18; 1 Peter 1:25). This is “the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (1:13), “the gospel of peace” (6:15).

Finally Lincoln states that “as the Church continues to be the reconciled and reconciling community, the gospel conquers the alienating hostile powers and brings about God’s saving purposes.”

As we close Paul’s outline of the divine armor God has provided for the Christian warrior, we discover the apostle is not finished yet (vv. 18–20). While prayer is not to be seen as an additional piece of armor, it is directly connected to all Paul has said from verses 10–17.

Prayer is not a seventh piece of spiritual armor, however. It is too grand, too foundational, too essential, too all encompassing to be listed as just another piece of spiritual armor, important as they are.

I like Arnold’s way of expressing this. He says Paul’s summons to prayer “completes his presentation of the spiritual weaponry.” The “author appears to give prayer a more prominent place than merely the seventh among a list of spiritual weapons. He says the “author maintains a structural continuity with the foregoing delineation of the weapons by employing a participle (*proseuxomenoi*) still in dependence on the main verb ‘stand’ in verse 14.”

Arnold sees Paul as wanting “his readers to understand prayer as an essential spiritual weapon, but more than a weapon.” He says “it is foundational for the deployment of all the other weapons.” Indeed, it is the key to effective warfare with high-level, cosmic powers of evil. In Ephesians 6 it is the *total context* in which spiritual warfare is engaged ¹⁴

The Stand of the Saints

¹⁴ Murphy, E. F. (1996). *Handbook for spiritual warfare* (pp. 402–412). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Still Standing Week 4: The Power in Confession

Ephesians 6:11-20

Put on the whole armour of God. . . . And, having done all, to stand. Ephesians 6:11, 13

Paul is writing from prison; he knows all about the Roman soldier whose armour he is describing, for he was chained to one of them. “I am an ambassador in chains” (rv) he says.

These verses are not a picture of how to fight, but of how not to fight. If you have not put on the armour, you will have to fight; but having put on the whole armour of God, then “stand,” says Paul. There are times when God’s servants are sent out to attack, to storm the citadel, but the counsel given here is as to how we are to hold the position which has been gained. We need to learn this conservation of energy, “having done all, to stand,” manifesting the full power of God.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood”—if we do, we are “out of it”; our warfare is against “the spiritual hosts of wickedness”(rv) which the world does not see. We are apt to forget that the enemy is unseen and that he is supernatural (cf. Daniel 10:12-13) ¹⁴“Don’t make any mistake,” says Paul, “you are not wrestling against flesh and blood, you are wrestling against tremendous powers you will never be able to withstand unless you put on the whole armour of God. When you see men doing terrible things, remember you are not wrestling against them, they are the cat’s-paw of the rulers of the darkness of this world.” We are to be taken up with a much more difficult wrestling, viz., the wrestling against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places which prevent us from seeing God. If Satan in his malice and cunning can slander God to His own children, he will do it because that is his whole aim. Our wrestling is to be against the thoughts suggested to our mind which press down on us and make us say, “What is the good of asking God to bring peace to a broken-hearted woman? of asking God to sustain people whose lives are ruined?” If I try to describe to my own heart a bereaved home and let the sorrow of it weigh with me, instantly my faith in God is gone; I am so overcome with sympathy and fellow-feeling for them that my prayer is nothing more than a wail of sympathy before God. The telepathic influence of my mind on another, whether I speak or not, is so subtle that ¹⁵the prince of this world will use it to prevent my getting hold of God; whereas if I remain confident in God I lift the weight off lives in a way I shall never realise till I stand before Him. We have to pray that the enemy shall not exact upon the hearts and minds of God’s children and make them slander Him by worry and anxiety. As the Lord’s remembrancers we are to hold off the exactings of Satan, not add to them.

Do I expect God to answer prayer? The first thing that will stagger our faith in God is the false sentiment arising out of a sympathetic apprehension of the difficulties. “Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him” (rv): the church prayed, and God did the impossible thing, and Peter was delivered. We have to pray with our eyes on God, not on the difficulties.

“Praying always . . . for all saints.” It is not always a time of triumph; there are not only times of taking strongholds by storm, but times when spiritual darkness falls, when the great powers in the heavenlies are at work, when no one understands the wiles of Satan but God; at such times we have to stand steadily shoulder to shoulder for God. How often the Spirit of God emphasises the “together-ness” of the saints!

“And for me,” says Paul. Prayer is God’s ordained way, the insignificant way of prayer.¹⁵

Ephesians Verses 10–18

Here is a general exhortation to constancy in our Christian course, and to encourage in our Christian warfare. Is not our life a warfare? It is so; for we struggle with the common calamities of human life. Is not our religion much more a warfare? It is so; for we struggle with the opposition of the powers of darkness, and with many enemies who would keep us from God and heaven. We have enemies to fight against, a captain to fight for, a banner to fight under, and certain rules of war by which we are to govern ourselves. “*Finally, my brethren* (v. 10), it yet remains that you apply yourselves to your work and duty as Christian soldiers.” Now it is requisite that a soldier be both stout-hearted and well armed. If Christians be soldiers of Jesus Christ,

I. They must see that they be stout-hearted. This is prescribed here: *Be strong in the Lord*, etc. Those who have so many battles to fight, and who, in their way to heaven, must dispute every pass, with dint of sword, have need of a great deal of courage. *Be strong therefore*, strong for service, strong for suffering, strong for fighting. Let a soldier be ever so well armed without, if he have not within a good heart, his armour will stand him in little stead. Note, spiritual strength and courage are very necessary for our spiritual warfare. Be strong in the Lord, either in his cause and for his sake or rather in his strength. We have no sufficient strength of our own. Our natural courage is as perfect cowardice, and our natural strength as perfect weakness; but all our sufficiency is of God. In his strength we must go forth and go on. By the actings of faith, we must fetch in grace and help from heaven to enable us to do that which of ourselves we cannot do, in our Christian work and warfare. We should stir up ourselves to resist temptations in a reliance upon God’s all-sufficiency and the omnipotence of his might.

II. They must be well armed: “*Put on the whole armour of God* (v. 11), make use of all the proper defensives and weapons for repelling the temptations and stratagems of Satan—get and exercise all the Christian graces, the whole armour, that no part be naked and exposed to the enemy.” Observe, Those who would approve themselves to have true grace must aim at all grace, the whole armour. It is called the armour of God, because he both prepares and bestows it. We have no armour of our own that will be armour of proof in a trying time. Nothing will stand us in stead but the armour of God. This armour is prepared for us, but we must put it on; that is, we must pray for grace, we must use the grace given us, and draw it out into act and exercise as there is occasion. The reason assigned why the Christian should be completely armed is *that he may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*—that he may be able to hold out, and to overcome, notwithstanding all the devil’s assaults, both of force and fraud, all the deceits he puts upon us, all the snares he lays for us, and all his machinations against us. This the apostle enlarges upon here, and shows,

1. What our danger is, and what need we have to put on this whole armour, considering what sort of enemies we have to deal with—the devil

¹⁵ Chambers, O. (1996). *God’s Workmanship*. Hants UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott.

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

and all the powers of darkness: *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood*, etc., v. 12. The combat for which we are to be prepared is not against ordinary human enemies, not barely against men compounded of *flesh and blood*, nor against our own corrupt natures singly considered, but against the several ranks of devils, who have a government which they exercise in this world. (1.) We have to do with a subtle enemy, an enemy who uses wiles and stratagems, as v. 11. He has a thousand ways of beguiling unstable souls: hence he is called a serpent for subtlety, an old serpent, experienced in the art and trade of tempting. (2.) He is a powerful enemy: *Principalities*, and *powers*, and *rulers*. They are numerous, they are vigorous; and rule in those heathen nations which are yet in darkness. The dark parts of the world are the seat of Satan's empire. Yea, they are usurping princes over all men who are yet in a state of sin and ignorance. Satan's is a kingdom of darkness; whereas Christ's is a kingdom of light. (3.) They are spiritual enemies: *Spiritual wickedness in high places*, or wicked spirits, as some translate it. The devil is a spirit, a wicked spirit; and our danger is the greater from our enemies because they are unseen, and assault us ere we are aware of them. The devils are wicked spirits, and they chiefly annoy the saints with, and provoke them to, spiritual wickedness, pride, envy, malice, etc. These enemies are said to be *in high places*, or in heavenly places, so the word is, taking heaven (as one says) for the whole *expansum*, or spreading out of the air between the earth and the stars, the air being the place from which the devils assault us. Or the meaning may be, "*We wrestle about heavenly places or heavenly things*;" so some of the ancients interpret it. Our enemies strive to prevent our ascent to heaven, to deprive us of heavenly blessings and to obstruct our communion with heaven. They assault us in the things that belong to our souls, and labour to deface the heavenly image in our hearts; and therefore we have need to be upon our guard against them. We have need of faith in our Christian warfare, because we have spiritual enemies to grapple with, as well as of faith in our Christian work, because we have spiritual strength to fetch in. Thus you see your danger.

2. What our duty is: to take and put on the whole armour of God, and then to stand our ground, and withstand our enemies.

(1.) We must *withstand*, v. 13. We must not yield to the devil's allurements and assaults, but oppose them. Satan is said to *stand up against us*, 1 Chr. 21:1. If he stand up against us, we must stand against him; set up, and keep up, an interest in opposition to the devil. Satan is the wicked one, and his kingdom is the kingdom of sin: to stand against Satan is to strive against sin. *That you may be able to withstand in the evil day*, in the day of temptation, or of any sore affliction.

(2.) We must stand our ground: *And, having done all, to stand*. We must resolve, by God's grace, not to yield to Satan. Resist him, and he will flee. If we distrust our cause, or our leader, or our armour, we give him advantage. Our present business is to withstand the assaults of the devil, and to stand it out; and then, having done all that is incumbent on the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, our warfare will be accomplished, and we shall be finally victorious.

(3.) We must stand armed; and this is here most enlarged upon. Here is a Christian in complete armour: and the armour is divine: *Armour of God, armour of light*, Rom. 13:12. *Armour of righteousness*, 2 Co. 6:7. The apostle specifies the particulars of this armour, both offensive and defensive. The military girdle or belt, the breast-plate, the greaves (or soldier's shoes), the shield, the helmet, and the sword. It is observable that, among them all, there is none for the back; if we turn our back upon the enemy, we lie exposed. [1.] Truth or sincerity is our girdle, v. 14. It was prophesied of Christ (Isa. 11:5) that *righteousness should be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins*. That which Christ was girded with all Christians must be girded with. God desires truth, that is, sincerity, in the inward parts. This is the strength of our loins; and it girds on all other pieces of our armour, and therefore is first mentioned. I know no religion without sincerity. Some understand it of the doctrine of the truths of the gospel: they should cleave to us as the girdle does to the loins, Jer. 13:11. This will restrain from libertinism and licentiousness, as a girdle restrains and keeps in the body. This is the Christian soldier's belt: ungirded with this, he is unblest. [2.] Righteousness must be our breast-plate. The breast-plate secures the vitals, shelters the heart. The righteousness of Christ imputed to us is our breast-plate against the arrows of divine wrath. The righteousness of Christ implanted in us is our breast-plate to fortify the heart against the attacks which Satan makes against us. The apostle explains this in 1 Th. 5:8, *Putting on the breast-plate of faith and love*. Faith and love include all Christian graces; for by faith we are united to Christ and by love to our brethren. These will infer a diligent observance of our duty to God, and a righteous deportment towards men, in all the offices of justice, truth, and charity. [3.] Resolution must be as the greaves to our legs: *And their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*, v. 15. Shoes, or greaves of brass, or the like, were formerly part of the military armour (1 Sa. 17:6): the use of them was to defend the feet against the gall-traps, and sharp sticks, which were wont to be laid privily in the way, to obstruct the marching of the enemy, those who fell upon them being unfit to march. *The preparation of the gospel of peace* signifies a prepared and resolved frame of heart, to adhere to the gospel and abide by it, which will enable us to walk with a steady pace in the way of religion, notwithstanding the difficulties and dangers that may be in it. It is styled *the gospel of peace* because it brings all sorts of peace, peace with God, with ourselves, and with one another. It may also be meant of that which prepares for the entertainment of the gospel, namely, repentance. With this our feet must be shod: for by living a life of repentance we are armed against temptations to sin, and the designs of our great enemy. Dr. Whitby thinks this may be the sense of the words: "That you may be ready for the combat, be shod with the gospel of peace, endeavour after that peaceable and quiet mind which the gospel calls for. Be not easily provoked, nor prone to quarrel: but show all gentleness and all long-suffering to all men, and this will certainly preserve you from many great temptations and persecutions, as did those shoes of brass the soldiers from those galltraps," etc. [4.] Faith must be our shield: *Above all, or chiefly, taking the shield of faith*, v. 16. This is more necessary than any of them. Faith is all in all to us in an hour of temptation. The breast-plate secures the vitals; but with the shield we turn every way. *This is the victory over the world, even our faith*. We are to be fully persuaded of the truth of all God's promises and threatenings, such a faith being of great use against temptations. Consider faith as it *is the evidence of things not seen and the substance of things hoped for*, and it will appear to be of admirable use for this purpose. Faith, as receiving Christ and the benefits of redemption, so deriving grace from him, is like a shield, a sort of universal defence. Our enemy the devil is here called *the wicked one*. He is wicked himself, and he endeavours to make us wicked. His temptations are called *darts*, because of their swift and undiscerned flight, and the deep wounds that they give to the soul; *fiery darts*, by way of allusion to the poisonous darts which were wont to inflame the parts which were wounded with them, and therefore were so called, as the serpents with poisonous stings are called fiery serpents. Violent temptations, by which the soul is set on fire of hell, are the darts which Satan shoots at us. Faith is the shield with which we must quench these fiery darts, wherein we should receive them, and so render them ineffectual, that they may not hit us, or at least that they may not hurt us. Observe, Faith, acted upon the word of God and applying that, acted upon the grace of Christ and improving that, quenches the darts of temptation. [5.] Salvation must be our helmet (v. 17); that is, *hope*, which has salvation for its object; so 1 Th. 5:8. The helmet secures the head. A good hope of salvation, well founded and well built, will both purify the soul and keep it from being defiled by Satan, and it will comfort the soul and keep it from being troubled and tormented by Satan. He would tempt us to despair; but good hope keeps us trusting in God, and rejoicing in him. [6.] The word of God is the sword of the Spirit. The sword is a very necessary and useful part of a soldier's furniture. The word of God is very necessary, and of great use to the Christian, in order to his maintaining the spiritual warfare and succeeding in it. It is called *the sword of the Spirit*, because it is of the Spirit's inditing and he renders it efficacious and powerful, and *sharper than a two-edged sword*. Like Goliath's sword, none like that; with this we assault the assailants. Scripture-arguments are the most powerful arguments to repel temptation with. Christ himself resisted Satan's temptations with, *It is written*, Mt. 4:4, 6, 7, 10. This, being hid in the heart, will preserve from sin (Ps. 119:11), and will mortify and kill those lusts and corruptions that are latent there. [7.] Prayer must buckle on all the other parts of our Christian armour, v. 18. We must join prayer with all these graces, for our defence against these

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

spiritual enemies, imploring help and assistance of God, as the case requires: and we must pray always. Not as though we were to do nothing else but pray, for there are other duties of religion and of our respective stations in the world that are to be done in their place and season; but we should keep up constant times of prayer, and be constant to them. We must pray upon all occasions, and as often as our own and others' necessities call us to it. We must always keep up a disposition to prayer, and should intermix ejaculatory prayers with other duties, and with common business. Though set and solemn prayer may sometimes be unseasonable (as when other duties are to be done), yet pious ejaculations *can* never be so. We must pray *with all prayer and supplication*, with all kinds of prayer: public, private, and secret, social and solitary, solemn and sudden; with all the parts of prayer: confession of sin, petition for mercy, and thanksgivings for favours received. We must pray *in the Spirit*; our spirits must be employed in the duty and we must do it by the grace of God's good Spirit. We must *watch thereunto*, endeavouring to keep our hearts in a praying frame, and taking all occasions, and improving all opportunities, for the duty: we must watch to all the motions of our own hearts towards the duty. When God says, *Seek my face*, our hearts must comply, Ps. 27:8. This we must do *with all perseverance*. We must abide by the duty of prayer, whatever change there may be in our outward circumstances; and we must continue in it as long as we live in the world. We must persevere in a particular prayer; not cutting it short, when our hearts are disposed to enlarge, and there is time for it, and our occasions call for it. We must likewise persevere in particular requests, notwithstanding some present discouragements and repulses. And we must pray *with supplication*, not for ourselves only, but for *all saints*; for we are members one of another. Observe, None are so much saints, and in so good a condition in this world, but they need our prayers, and they ought to have them. The apostle passes hence to the conclusion of the epistle.

Verses 19–24

Here, I. He desires their prayers for him, v. 19. Having mentioned *supplication for all saints*, he puts himself into the number. We must pray for all saints, and particularly for God's faithful ministers. *Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified*. Observe what it is he would have them pray for in his behalf: "*That utterance may be given unto me; that I may be enlarged from my present restraints, and so have liberty to propagate the faith of Christ; that I may have ability to express myself in a suitable and becoming manner; and that I may open my mouth boldly*, that is, that I may deliver the whole counsel of God, without any base fear, shame, or partiality." *To make known the mystery of the gospel*; some understand it of that part of the gospel which concerns the calling of the Gentiles, which had hitherto, as a mystery, been concealed. But the whole gospel was a mystery, till made known by divine revelation; and it is the work of Christ's ministers to publish it. Observe, Paul had a great command of language; they called him Mercury, because he was the chief speaker (Acts 14:12), and yet he would have his friends ask of God the gift of utterance for him. He was a man of great courage, and often signalized himself for it; yet he would have them pray that God would give him boldness. He knew as well what to say as any man; yet he desires them to pray for him, that he may *speak as he ought to speak*. The argument with which he enforces his request is that for the sake of the gospel he was *an ambassador in bonds*, v. 20. He was persecuted and imprisoned for preaching the gospel; though, notwithstanding, he continued in the embassy committed to him by Christ, and persisted in preaching it. Observe, 1. It is no new thing for Christ's ministers to be in bonds. 2. It is a hard thing for them to speak boldly when that is their case. 3. The best and most eminent ministers have need of, and may receive advantage by, the prayers of good Christians; and therefore should earnestly desire them. Having thus desired their prayers,

II. He recommends Tychicus unto them, v. 21, 22. He sent him with this epistle, that he might acquaint them with what other churches were informed of, namely, how he did, and what he did; how he was used by the Romans in his bonds, and how he behaved himself in his present circumstances. It is desirable to good ministers both that their Christian friends should know their state and that they should be acquainted with the condition of their friends; for by this means they may the better help each other in their prayers.—*And that he might comfort their hearts*, by giving such an account of his sufferings, of the cause of them, and of the temper of his mind and his behaviour under them, as might prevent their fainting at his tribulations and even minister matter of joy and thanksgiving unto them. He tells them that Tychicus was *a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord*. He was a sincere Christian, and so a brother in Christ: he was a faithful minister in the work of Christ, and he was very dear to Paul, which makes Paul's love to these Christian Ephesians the more observable, in that he should now part with so good and dear a friend for their sakes, when his company and conversation must have been peculiarly delightful and serviceable to himself. But the faithful servants of Jesus Christ are wont to prefer the public good to their own private or personal interests.

III. He concludes with his good wishes and prayers for them, and not for them only, but for all the brethren, v. 23, 24. His usual benediction was, *Grace and peace*; here it is, *Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith*. By peace we are to understand all manner of peace—peace with God, peace with conscience, peace among themselves: and all outward prosperity is included in the word; as if he had said, "I wish the continuance and increase of all happiness to you." *And love with faith*. This in part explains what he means in the following verse by grace; not only grace in the fountain, or the love and favour of God, but grace in the streams, the grace of the Spirit flowing from that divine principle, faith and love including all the rest. It is the continuance and increase of these that he desires for them, in whom they were already begun. It follows, *from God the Father*, etc. All Grace and blessings are derived to the saints from God, through the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord. The closing benediction is more extensive than the former; for in this he prays for all true believers at Ephesus, and every where else. It is the undoubted character of all the saints that they love our Lord Jesus Christ. Our love to Christ is not acceptable, unless it be in sincerity: indeed there is no such thing as love to Christ, whatever men may pretend, where there is not sincerity. The words may be read, *Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption*, who continue constant in their love to him, so as not to be corrupted out of it by any baits or seductions whatsoever, and whose love to him is uncorrupted by any opposite lust, or the love of any thing displeasing to him. Grace, that is, the favour of God, and all good (spiritual and temporal), that is, the product of it, are and shall be with all those who thus love our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is, or ought to be, the desire and prayer of every lover of Christ that it may be so with all his fellow-Christians. *Amen*, so be it.¹⁶

NOTES:

PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP: PRAYER

Prayer is not a freewill offering to God; it is an obligatory service, something which he requires."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

¹⁶ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (pp. 2318–2320). Peabody: Hendrickson.

Still Standing Week 4: The Power in Confession

Luke 11:1 "Lord, teach us to PRAY."

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

Twofold definition of PRAYER:

- 1.) **Growing perpetual communion with God.**
- 2.) **Asking.**

"Real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love." R. Foster

Five misconceptions of PRAYER:

1. Prayer mainly involves asking for things.
2. Prayer must always be a struggle to be real.
3. We live in a closed universe.
4. Our faith will crumble if our prayers are not answered right away.
5. Pray once, any more shows lack of faith.

Study questions:

What does 'To pray is to change' mean?

What is 'prayer is a learning experience'?

How can you tell when you receive a burden to pray for someone?

Does imagination have anything to do with prayer?

What is Flash prayer?

What do I do when I do not feel like praying?

Provoking descriptive list of forms of PRAYER:

(from Richard Foster's book *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*)

Outlines to Practice

Moving Inward:

The SIMPLE prayer:

Bringing ordinary, human concerns to a loving and compassionate Father.

How do we come to prayer?

With what state of mind?

With what motives?

Numbers 11:11-12(Moses), 2Kings 2:24(Elijah), Ps 137:9(Psalmist)

"Lay before Him what is in us, not what ought to be in us." C.S.Lewis

The prayer of the FORSAKEN:

Matt 27:46b, Ps. 42:9, Ps. 22:2

Dark Night of the Soul would describe what type of emotion in PRAYER?

Do I give God the freedom to follow His own will in my life?

The prayer of EXAMEN:

Examen(The accurate assessment of the true situation.)

Ps. 139:1, 1 Chron. 28:9, 1 Cor. 2:10

Consciousness: Discovering HOW God has been present to us throughout the day and HOW we have responded to His loving presence. It is HOW God makes us aware of what surrounds us.

A call to rehearse the mighty deeds of God. The ART of being present.

Conscience: **Inviting God to search our hearts to the depths.**

Goal: **The gift of Self Knowledge.**

The prayer of TEARS(Penthos):

Broken and contrite heart.

Acts 2:37; Job 16:20; Isaiah 16:9; Jer. 9:1; Lamentations 2:18; Psalms 5:17, 6:6, 56:8, 126:5; Hebrews 5:7; Matthew 23:37; Luke 6:21, 7:36-50; Acts 20:19,31; 2 Cor. 2:4, 7:7-11

Prayer of RELINQUISHMENT:

Self emptying Surrender Abandonment Release

Luke 22:39-36; John 12:24

The FORMATION prayer:

"None of us will keep up a life of prayer unless we are prepared to change. We will either give it up or turn it into a little system that maintains the form of godliness but denies the power of it—which is the same thing as giving it up." R.F.

Real Prayer is *Conversatio morum* = Death to the status quo.

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

Constant change. Constant conversion. Constant openness to the moving of the Spirit.
Us pursuing: Phil 2:12; 1 Tim. 4:7; Phil 3:12-14
Being pursued by God: Jer 18 (Clay in the Master Potter's hands.)

The COVENANT prayer:

"What we need is a desire to know the whole will of God, with a fixed resolution to do it." John Wesley
Ps 57:7 (My heart is fixed)
See covenant scripture handout.

Moving Upward:

Seeking the Intimacy we need

The prayer of ADORATION

For what He has done for us. For who He is in Himself.

Ps. 35:18

1 Chron. 16:4-36

Lev. 7:12

Ps. 30:12 (The entire book of Psalms.)

Obstacles:

- Inattention: We cannot adore what we do not see.
- Wrong kind of attention: Beginning but getting distracted & then, frustrated.
- Greed: Encore! Instead of enjoying the pleasures He has sent we continue to ask for more pleasure.
- Conceit: Self-righteousness...how wonderful we are for noticing God.

The prayer of REST

Allowing God to place us into the EYE of the storm.

Matt. 11:29

Heb. 4:9

Read ie. Page 94-95 "Be still...rest...shalom."

The SACRAMENTAL prayer:

Liturgy, Sacrament, Written Prayer vs. Intimacy, Informality, Spontaneous Prayer.

Rd qt. page 105

Luke 4:16...as was His custom.

Using structure for discipline, being real within that structure. Luke 11:2-4

The UNCEASING prayer:

Is this possible? How?

Spirit prays...Romans 8:26

1 Thess 5:17 Pray w/o ceasing

Romans 12:12

Ephesians 6:18

Colossians 4:2

Phil 4:6

Hebrews 13:15

The Breath or Flash prayer...Luke 18:13

Conversational and Spontaneous

PRACTICING HIS PRESENCE

The Model of Perpetual Communion:

John 5:19; John 5:30; John 14:11; John 15:1-11

The prayer of the HEART: Being naked before Him.

The prayer of Intimacy, an Abba prayer. Galatians 4:6

Luke 13:34

Inviting God to cuddle us, hold us

Psalms 103:13

Hosea 11:1-4

Isaiah 66:13

Luke 11:2 pg 134

The MEDITATIVE prayer:

Chewing your cud type of prayer.

"The truth being meditated upon passes from the mouth into the mind and down into the heart, where through quiet rumination-regurgitation, if you will-it produces in the person praying a loving, faith-filled response." R.F.

Assignment: Meditate on Luke chpt. 1. Chew on it, personalize it. Imagine.

Pg143-145

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

The CONTEMPLATIVE prayer:
"Immerses us into the silence of God." R.F.
Ridding our self of the enemy of distraction.
Praying without words
Psalm 62:1
Spiritual Warfare warning: 1 Peter 5:8 & 1 John 4:4

Moving Outward:
Seeking the Ministry we need

Praying the ORDINARY

1. Turn ordinary experience of life into prayer
2. Seeing God in the ordinary experiences.
3. Praying throughout the ordinary experiences of life.

Genesis 1:1,31
Pg. 169
1 Cor. 10:31

The PETITIONARY prayer:
Asking.
Matthew 7:7-8, 9-11
James 4:3 (warning)
Understanding the Lord's Prayer: (The Paternoster)
Matthew 6:9-13

The INTECESSORY prayer:
"Intercessory prayer is the purifying bath into which the individual and the fellowship must enter every day." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

If we truly love others...we pray.
Exodus 17:8-12 the ie. of Moses
Romans 8:34
Hebrews 7:25
John 13 – 17
1 Tim. 2:5
John 16:24
John 15:4-7
Luke 18:1-8
1 Samuel 12:23

The HEALING prayer:
Seeing all aspects: Matthew 12:15; John 9:1-12 and Mark 9:14-29
When He says no...how do you know and what do you do?
Hebrews 6:1-6, Mark 6:5, Mark 8:22-25, .Acts 28:7-10, Mark 16:18, 1 Timothy 5:22

1. We listen.
2. We ask.
3. We believe. Mark 9:24,
4. We give thanks.

The prayer of SUFFERING:
"Here we give to God the various difficulties and trails that we face, asking him to use them redemptively." R.F.
Jesus' ie. Luke 23:34
Colossians 1:24
*Philippians 3:10
Romans 8:18
Hebrews 12:2
1 Peter 4:13
Isaiah 53:3
Hebrews 5:7
Romans 8:35b-39

Rev. chpt 5 and 19..authority through suffering

The AUTHORITATIVE prayer:
Calling forth the will of the Father upon the Earth...Thy will be done...
Exodus 14:15-16a

Still Standing Week 4: The Power in Confession

Mark 11:23
Mark 7:6
Understanding Prudence and Discernment
Mark 11:23
Mark 9:14-29
Luke 9:1-2, 6
Luke 10:9
Luke 10:17
Luke 10:21
John 14:12
Matthew 16:18
Ephesians 6:13-18
Ephesians chpt. 1 = Christ's heavenly position of authority.
Ephesians chpt. 2 = Our heavenly position of authority.
Ephesians 2:6, 6:10-20

The RADICAL prayer:
The word radical comes from the latin word radix which means root.
Prayer that gets to the root, the center, the truth...prophetic prayer.
Pg 243 an ie.
Amos 5:24
Genesis 18, Exodus 32, Esther 4

"My house shall be called a house of Prayer." Isaiah 56:7, Luke 19:46

1 Samuel 12:23-25

²³Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; and I will instruct you in the good and the right way. ²⁴Only fear the LORD, and serve him faithfully with all your heart; for consider what great things he has done for you. ²⁵But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king."

Most of the notes are from:
PRAYER, Finding the Hearts True Home by Richard Foster

PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP: PRAYER
Prayer is not a freewill offering to God; it is an obligatory service, something which he requires.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Luke 11:1 "Lord, teach us to PRAY."

Twofold definition of PRAYER:

- 2.) **Growing perpetual communion with God.** 2.) **Asking.**

"Real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love." R. Foster

Moving Outward:
Seeking the Ministry we need

Praying the ORDINARY

4. Turn ordinary experience of life into prayer
5. Seeing God in the ordinary experiences.
6. Praying throughout the ordinary experiences of life.

Genesis 1:1,31

In the ^abeginning ^bGod created the heavens and the earth.

³¹ Then ^bGod saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Pg. 169

READ: The Sanctity of the Ordinary

Do I despise the ordinary? Do I feel it is unspiritual? UnGodly?

1 Cor. 10:31

³¹ "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

The HEALING prayer:

Seeing all aspects: Matthew 12:15; ¹⁵ But when Jesus knew *it*, ¹He withdrew from there. ¹⁰And great ³multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.

John 9:1-12

Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, ³who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, ^bbut that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴ ^c‘I ¹must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is ^dday; *the* night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, ‘I am the light of the world.’”

⁶ When He had said these things, ⁴He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. ⁷ And He said to him, “Go, wash ^ein the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So ^bhe went and washed, and came back seeing.

⁸ Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was ²blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?”

⁹ Some said, “This is he.” Others *said*, ³“He is like him.”

He said, “I am *he*.”

¹⁰ Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”

¹¹ He answered and said, ¹⁴“A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to ^dthe pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.”

9:2 Blindness was common in Jesus’ day, often resulting from a birth defect, infection, leprosy, cataracts, or advanced age. The Jews associated blindness (and suffering in general) with sin:

The man might have sinned while still in his mother’s womb (some Jews believed in prenatal sin);

The man, in his pre-existent state (an idea that emerged from the Greek philosopher Plato about 427–327 B.C.) might have sinned before his conception;

The blind man’s parents might have sinned and brought the affliction of blindness upon their son. Jews believed the sins of the parents could cause suffering for the child (see Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14:18).

and Mark 9:14-29

¹⁴ ^aAnd when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. ¹⁵ Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to *Him*, greeted Him. ¹⁶ And He asked the scribes, “What are you discussing with them?”

¹⁷ Then ^oone of the crowd answered and said, “Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. ¹⁸ And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not.”

¹⁹ He answered him and said, “O ^ffaithless ²generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I ³bear with you? Bring him to Me.” ²⁰ Then they brought him to Him. And ^wwhen he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ So He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?”

And he said, “From childhood. ²² And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

²³ Jesus said to him, “If ⁴you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes.”

²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; ^hhelp my unbelief!”

²⁵ When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He ^rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!” ²⁶ Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, “He is dead.” ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

²⁸ ^aAnd when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?”

²⁹ So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but ^vprayer ⁵and fasting.”

When He says no...how do you know and what do you do?

Hebrews 6:1-6 (NLT)

So let us stop going over the basics of Christianity ³ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don’t need to start all over again with the importance of turning away from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. ² You don’t need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³ And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding.

⁴ For it is impossible to restore to repentance those who were once enlightened—those who have experienced the good things of heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵ who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come—⁶ and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people to repentance again because they are nailing the Son of God to the cross again by rejecting him, holding him up to public shame.

Mark 6:5

Then ^aHe went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. ² And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing *Him* were ^bastonished, saying, ^c“Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! ³ Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and ^dbrother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?” So they ^ewere offended at Him.

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

⁴ But Jesus said to them, ^{4a} "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." ⁵ ^{5a} Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them*. ⁶ And ^{6a} He marveled because of their unbelief. ⁷ Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Mark 8:22-25

²² Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a ^{22a} "blind man to Him, and begged Him to ^{22b} "touch him. ²³ So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when ^{23a} He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

²⁴ And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

²⁵ Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. ²⁶ Then He sent him away to his house, saying, ^{26a} "Neither go into the town, 'nor tell anyone in the town."

Acts 28:7-9

⁷ In that region there was an estate of the ^{7a} "leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. ⁸ And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and ^{8a} "prayed, and ^{8b} "he laid his hands on him and healed him. ⁹ So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed

Mark 16:18

¹⁸ "they ^{18a} "will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; ^{18b} "they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

1 Timothy 5:22

²² Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor ^{22a} "share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

5. We listen.

6. We ask.

7. We believe. Mark 9:24 ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; ^{24a} "help my unbelief!"

8. We give thanks.

The PETITIONARY prayer:

Asking.

Matthew 7:7-8, 9-11

James 4:3 (warning)

Understanding the Lord's Prayer: (The Paternoster)

Matthew 6:9-13

The INTECESSORY prayer:

"Intercessory prayer is the purifying bath into which the individual and the fellowship must enter every day." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

If we truly love others...we pray.

Exodus 17:8-12 the ie. of Moses

Romans 8:34

Hebrews 7:25

John 13 – 17

1 Tim. 2:5

John 16:24

John 15:4-7

Luke 18:1-8, 1 Samuel 12:23

The prayer of SUFFERING:

"Here we give to God the various difficulties and trails that we face, asking him to use them redemptively." R.F.

Jesus' ie. Luke 23:34

Colossians 1:24

*Philippians 3:10

Romans 8:18

Hebrews 12:2

1 Peter 4:13

Isaiah 53:3

Hebrews 5:7

Romans 8:35b-39

Rev. chpt 5 and 19..authority through suffering

The AUTHORITATIVE prayer:

Calling forth the will of the Father upon the Earth...Thy will be done...

Exodus 14:15-16a

Mark 11:23

Mark 7:6

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

Understanding Prudence and Discernment

Mark 11:23

Mark 9:14-29

Luke 9:1-2, 6

Luke 10:9

Luke 10:17

Luke 10:21

John 14:12

Matthew 16:18

Ephesians 6:13-18

Ephesians chpt. 1 = Christ's heavenly position of authority.

Ephesians chpt. 2 = Our heavenly position of authority.

Ephesians 2:6, 6:10-20

The RADICAL prayer:

The word radical comes from the latin word radix which means root.

Prayer that gets to the root, the center, the truth...prophetic prayer.

Pg 243 an ie.

Amos 5:24

Genesis 18, Exodus 32, Esther 4

"My house shall be called a house of Prayer." Isaiah 56:7, Luke 19:46

Most of the notes are from:

PRAYER, Finding the Hearts True Home by Richard Foster

Confession:

PRACTICAL DISCIPLESHIP
from the book "Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster
CONFESSION

Service review:

CHOOSING a life of service..WHAT HAVE YOU DONE OR SEEN IN THE PAST 2 WEEKS?

1. Hidden Tasks—(develops into Joy. kills Pride.)
2. Small Things(Acts 9:39)—(simple assistance in trifling, external matters.
3. Charity(Titus3:2)—(guarding others)
4. Being Served—(Peter refusing Christ's offer to wash his feet)
5. Common Courtesy(Titus 3:2)—(manners)
6. Hospitality(1 Peter 4:9,1 Timothy 3:2, Titus1:8)—(sharing w/joy)
7. Listening—
8. Bearing each others Burdens(Galatians 6:2, James 2:8)—(being there)
9. Sharing God's Word—

CONFESSION per scripture:

- James 5:13-16

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him ^opray. Is anyone cheerful? ^pLet him sing psalms. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, ^qanointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. ^rAnd if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ ¹Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. ^sThe effective, ²fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

- Isaiah 59:1-

59 Behold, the LORD's hand is not ^ashortened,

That it cannot save;

Nor His ear heavy,

That it cannot hear.

² But your iniquities have separated you from your God;

And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,

So that He will ^bnot hear.

³ For ^cyour hands are defiled with ¹blood,

And your fingers with iniquity;

Your lips have spoken lies,

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

Your tongue has muttered perversity.
4 No one calls for justice,
Nor does *any* plead for truth.
They trust in ^eempty words and speak lies;
^eThey conceive ²evil and bring forth iniquity.
5 They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web;
He who eats of their eggs dies,
And *from* that which is crushed a viper breaks out.
6 ^fTheir webs will not become garments,
Nor will they cover themselves with their works;
Their works *are* works of iniquity,
And the act of violence *is* in their hands.
7 ^gTheir feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed ^hinnocent blood;
ⁱTheir thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity;
Wasting and ^jdestruction *are* in their paths.
8 The way of ^kpeace they have not known,
And *there is* no justice in their ways;
^lThey have made themselves crooked paths;
Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

Sin Confessed

9 Therefore justice is far from us,
Nor does righteousness overtake us;
^mWe look for light, but there is darkness!
For brightness, *but* we walk in blackness!
10 ⁿWe grope for the wall like the blind,
And we grope as if *we had* no eyes;
We stumble at noonday as at twilight;
We are as dead *men* in desolate places.
11 We all growl like bears,
And ^omoan sadly like doves;
We look for justice, but *there is* none;
For salvation, *but* it is far from us.
12 For our ^ptransgressions are multiplied before You,
And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions *are* with us,
And *as for* our iniquities, we know them:
13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD,
And departing from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving and uttering ^qfrom the heart words of falsehood.
14 Justice is turned back,
And righteousness stands afar off;
For truth is fallen in the street,
And equity cannot enter.
15 So truth fails,
And he *who* departs from evil makes himself a ^rprey.

▪ Romans 3:10-18

¹⁰ As it is written:

¹⁰There is none righteous, no, not one;
11 There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after God.
12 They have all turned aside;
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one."
13 "Their ^mthroat is an open ^ttomb;
With their tongues they have practiced deceit";
ⁿ"The poison of asps is under their lips";
14 "Whose ^omouth is full of cursing and bitterness."
15 "Their ^pfeet are swift to shed blood;
16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;
17 And the way of peace they have not known."
18 "There ^qis no fear of God before their eyes."

▪ Jeremiah 31:34

³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for ^bthey all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For ^cI will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

- Matthew 26:28

For ^ythis is My blood ^zof the ⁴new covenant, which is shed ^afor many for the ⁵remission of sins.

- Ephesians 1:7

⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to ^kthe riches of His grace

- 1 John 1:5-10

⁵This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that ^mGod is light and in Him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we ^owalk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and ^pthe blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we ^qconfess our sins, He is ^rfaithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to ^scleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we ^tmake Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

- 2 Corinthians 5:21

²¹For ^zHe made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become ^athe righteousness of God in Him.

- 1 Timothy 2:5

⁵For *there is* one God and ^bone Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus,

- 1 John 2:1

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, ^awe have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ²And ^bHe Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but ^calso for the whole world.

- Luke 15:11-24

Parable of the Lost Son

¹¹Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. ¹²And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*.' So he divided to them ^b*his* livelihood. ¹³And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with ^dprodigal living. ¹⁴But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the ^e pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

¹⁷"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."'

²⁰"And he arose and came to his father. But ^jwhen he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven ^kand in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²²"But the father said to his servants, ⁶"Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. ²³And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴^lfor this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

- Matthew 16:19, 18:18

⁹And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth ⁸will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

¹⁸"Assuredly, I say to you, ⁵whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

- John 20:23

²³^yIf you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained."

My definition of CONFESSION: _____

What part does CONFESSION have in Philippians 2:12

¹²Therefore, my beloved, ^aas you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, ^vwork out your own salvation with ^wfear and trembling; ¹³for ^xit is God who works in you both to will and to do ^yfor *His* good pleasure.

and Ephesians 4:13-16

¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith ^pand of the knowledge of the Son of God, to ^qa perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be ^rchildren, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of ^sdeceitful plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the 'head— Christ— ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

A/DA "Confession is a tool used by God to make His presence and forgiveness real to us."

What happens in a confessional?

- 1.) Reality therapy (1 John 3:9

Whoever has been ^oborn of God does not sin, for ^pHis seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

5:17-18

Still Standing Week 4: The Power in Confession

¹⁷ wAll unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

¹⁸ We know that ^xwhoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God ^ykeeps ⁶ ⁷himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

6.) Absolution -- forgiveness is expected (1 John 1:9)

⁹ If we ^cconfess our sins, He is ^ffaithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to [^]cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

7.) Penance – (If viewed as a way to earn forgiveness = watch out!

If viewed as a tool used to pause and consider the seriousness of our sin = repentance. See Jeremiah 44:4) abominable thing that I hate!”

“For a good confession three things are necessary: An examination of conscience, sorrow and a determination to avoid sin.”

Who do I confess to?

What qualities should they have?

“It is God who does the forgiving, but often He chooses human beings as the channel of His forgiving grace.”

Forgiveness is not: Pretending an injury doesn't matter.

Forgiveness is not: Ceasing to hurt.

Forgiveness is not: Forgetting.

Forgiveness is not: Pretending that the relationship is just the same as it was before the offense.

3670 *ὁμολογέω* [homologeō /hom-ol-og-eh-o/] v. From a compound of the base of 3674 and 3056; TDNT 5:199; TDNTA 687; GK 3933; 24 occurrences; AV translates as “confess” 17 times, “profess” three times, “promise” once, “give thanks” once, “confession is made” once, and “acknowledgeth” once. **1** to say the same thing as another, i.e. to agree with, assent. **2** to concede. 2A not to refuse, to promise. 2B not to deny. 2B1 to confess. 2B2 declare. 2B3 to confess, i.e. to admit or declare one’s self guilty of what one is accused of. **3** to profess. 3A to declare openly, speak out freely. 3B to profess one’s self the worshipper of one. **4** to praise, celebrate.

819 *אָשַׁמָה* [’ashmah /ash-maw/] n f. From 817; TWOT 180c; GK 873; 19 occurrences; AV translates as “trespass” 13 times, “sin” four times, “offend” once, and “trespass offering” once. **1** guiltiness, guilt, offense, sin, wrong-doing. 1A doing wrong, committing a trespass or offense. 1B becoming guilty, guilt. 1C bringing a guilt-offering.

3034 *יָדָה, יָדָה* [yadah /yaw-daw/] v. A primitive root, used only as denominative from 3027; TWOT 847; GK 3343 and 3344; 114 occurrences; AV translates as “praise” 53 times, “give thanks” 32 times, “confess” 16 times, “thank” five times, “make confession” twice, “thanksgiving” twice, “cast” once, “cast out” once, “shoot” once, and “thankful” once. **1** to throw, shoot, cast. 1A (Qal) to shoot (arrows). 1B (Piel) to cast, cast down, throw down. 1C (Hiphil). 1C1 to give thanks, laud, praise. 1C2 to confess, confess (the name of God). 1D (Hithpael). 1D1 to confess (sin). 1D2 to give thanks.

954 *בוּשׁ, בוּשׁ* [buwsh /boosh/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 222; GK 1017 and 1018; 109 occurrences; AV translates as “ashamed” 72 times, “confounded” 21 times, “shame” nine times, “all (inf. for emphasis)” twice, “confusion” once, “delayed” once, “dry” once, “long” once, and “shamed” once. **1** to put to shame, be ashamed, be disconcerted, be disappointed. 1A (Qal). 1A1 to feel shame. 1A2 to be ashamed, disconcerted, disappointed (by reason of). 1B (Piel) to delay (in shame). 1C (Hiphil). 1C1 to put to shame. 1C2 to act shamefully. 1C3 to be ashamed. 1D (Hithpolel) to be ashamed before one another.

1843 *ἐξομολογέω* [exomologeō /ex-om-ol-og-eh-o/] v. From 1537 and 3670; TDNT 5:199; TDNTA 687; GK 2018; 11 occurrences; AV translates as “confess” eight times, “thank” twice, and “promise” once. **1** to confess. **2** to profess. 2A acknowledge openly and joyfully. 2B to one’s honour: to celebrate, give praise to. 2C to profess that one will do something, to promise, agree, engage.

Still Standing Week 4: The Power in Confession

4604 **לַמַּחְלָה** [ma'al /mah-al/] n m. From 4603; TWOT 1230a; GK 5086; 29 occurrences; AV translates as “trespass” 17 times, “transgression” six times, “trespassed” twice, “falsehood” once, “grievously” once, “sore” once, and “very” once. **1** unfaithful or treacherous act, trespass. **1A** against man. **1B** against God.

3900 **παράπτωμα** [paraptoma /par-ap-to-mah/] n n. From 3895; TDNT 6:170; TDNTA 846; GK 4183; 23 occurrences; AV translates as “trespass” nine times, “offence” seven times, “sin” three times, “fall” twice, and “fault” twice. **1** to fall beside or near something. **2** a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness. **2A** a sin, misdeed.

Healed

5414 **נָתַן** [nathan /naw-than/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 1443; GK 3851 and 3852 and 5989; 2008 occurrences; AV translates as “give” 1078 times, “put” 191 times, “deliver” 174 times, “made” 107 times, “set” 99 times, “up” 26 times, “lay” 22 times, “grant” 21 times, “suffer” 18 times, “yield” 15 times, “bring” 15 times, “cause” 13 times, “utter” 12 times, “laid” 11 times, “send” 11 times, “recompense” 11 times, “appoint” 10 times, “shew” seven times, and translated miscellaneous 167 times. **1** to give, put, set. **1A** (Qal). **1A1** to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend. **1A2** to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate. **1A3** to make, constitute. **1B** (Niphal). **1B1** to be given, be bestowed, be provided, be entrusted to, be granted to, be permitted, be issued, be published, be uttered, be assigned. **1B2** to be set, be put, be made, be inflicted. **1C** (Hophal). **1C1** to be given, be bestowed, be given up, be delivered up. **1C2** to be put upon

7495 **רָפָא** [rapha', raphah /raw-faw/] v. A primitive root; TWOT 2196; GK 8324; 67 occurrences; AV translates as “heal” 57 times, “physician” five times, “cure” once, “repaired” once, and translated miscellaneous three times. **1** to heal, make healthful. **1A** (Qal) to heal. **1A1** of God. **1A2** healer, physician (of men). **1A3** of hurts of nations involving restored favour (fig). **1A4** of individual distresses (fig). **1B** (Niphal) to be healed. **1B1** literal (of persons). **1B2** of water, pottery. **1B3** of national hurts (fig). **1B4** of personal distress (fig). **1C** (Piel) to heal. **1C1** literal. **1C2** of national defects or hurts (fig). **1D** (Hithpael) in order to get healed (infinitive).

2323 **θεραπεύω** [therapeuo /ther-ap-yoo-o/] v. From the same as 2324; TDNT 3:128; TDNTA 331; GK 2543; 44 occurrences; AV translates as “heal” 38 times, “cure” five times, and “worship” once. **1** to serve, do service. **2** to heal, cure, restore to health.

2390 **ἰάομαι** [iaomai /ee-ah-om-ah-ee/] v. Middle voice of apparently a primary verb; TDNT 3:194; TDNTA 344; GK 2615; 28 occurrences; AV translates as “heal” 26 times, and “make whole” twice. **1** to cure, heal. **2** to make whole. **2A** to free from errors and sins, to bring about (one's) salvation.

4982 **ἐκσώζω, σώζω** [sozo /sode-zo/] v. From a primary sos (contraction for obsolete saoz, “safe”); TDNT 7:965; TDNTA 1132; GK 1751 and 5392; 110 occurrences; AV translates as “save” 93 times, “make whole” nine times, “heal” three times, “be whole” twice, and translated miscellaneous three times. **1** to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction. **1A** one (from injury or peril). **1A1** to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health. **1B1** to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save or rescue. **1B** to save in the technical biblical sense. **1B1** negatively. **1B1A** to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment. **1B1B** to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance.

Meeting Specific Needs

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him ^opray. Is anyone cheerful? ^pLet him sing psalms. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, ^qanointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. ^rAnd if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ ¹Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. ^sThe effective, ² fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man ¹with a nature like ours, and ^the prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed ^vagain, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.
(nkj)

e Power of Prayer

¹³ Are any among you suffering? They should keep on praying about it. And those who have reason to be thankful should continually sing praises to the Lord.

¹⁴ Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And their prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make them well. And anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

¹⁶ Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results. ¹⁷ Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for the next three and a half years! ¹⁸ Then he prayed for rain, and down it poured. The grass turned green, and the crops began to grow again. (NLT)

The Prayer of Faith (Cp 1 Kings 18:41—46)

¹³ Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷ Elijah was a human being like us,

LESSONS FROM THE MODEL PRAYER		
Prepare: Pure heart and motive (Matt. 6:5–8). Private conversation intent on invoking His presence (Matt. 6:6). Meaningful communication (Matt. 6:7, 8; Luke 18:1–8). Presentation of specific requests (Matt. 6:9–13; see 1 Sam. 12:23, 24).		
Pray		
Phrase	Meaning	References
Our Father in heaven" (Matt. 6:9)	Recognize who He is—the PERSON.	Rom. 8:15; see Is. 64:8
Hallowed be Your name" (Matt. 6:9)	Adore Him because of who He is—PRAISE.	Ps. 18:3; 96:8
Your kingdom come/ Your will be done" (Matt. 6:10)	Seek and do God's will. His word His Word is the path to finding His will—PURPOSE.	1 John 5:14
Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11)	Ask God to meet even your most mundane needs to accomplish your spiritual duties—PETITION.	Phil. 4:9
And forgive us" (Matt. 6:12)	Ask God to forgive your debts or your failures to give obedience due Him—PARDON.	Ps. 66:18; Hos. 14:2
And do not lead us into temptation" (Matt. 6:13)	Seek a way of escape from the evil of temptation—PROTECTION, not removal from any trials but from judgment that comes when you are overcome by trials.	1 Cor. 10:13; James 1:2, 3
For Yours is the kingdom" (Matt. 6:13)	This benediction is also a doxology—PRAISE AND PERSON.	

This model teaches the manner and method of prayer and shares matters for which to pray.

and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

¹⁹ My brothers and sisters,^s if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, ²⁰ you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's^h soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. (NRSV)

PRACTICING

NOUN 1. the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method as opposed to theories about such application or use.

"the principles and practice of teaching"

synonyms: application, exercise, use, operation, implementation, execution
"the practice of hypnosis"
use, make use of, put to use, utilize, apply
"it's time you put your teaching degree into practice"

2. repeated exercise in or performance of an activity or skill so as to acquire or maintain proficiency in it.

"it must have taken a lot of practice to become so fluent"

synonyms: training, rehearsal, repetition, preparation; More
practice session, dummy run, run-through;
informal dry run
"it takes lots of practice"

Still Standing

Week 4: The Power in Confession

a period of time spent doing this. "daily choir practices"

VERB

1. perform (an activity) or exercise (a skill) repeatedly or regularly in order to improve or maintain one's proficiency.

"I need to practice my French"

synonyms: **rehearse**, run through, go over/through, work on/at; **polish**, **perfect**

"he practiced the songs every day"

train, **rehearse**, **prepare**, go through one's paces

"the performers were practicing"

2. carry out or perform (a particular activity, method, or custom) habitually or regularly.

"we still practice some of these rituals today"

synonyms: carry out, **perform**, **observe**

"we still practice these rituals today"

Origin

late Middle English: the verb from Old French *practiser* or medieval Latin *practizare*, alteration of *practicare* 'perform, carry out,' from *practica* 'practice,' from Greek *praktikē*, feminine (used as a noun) of *praktikos* (see [practical](#)); the noun from the verb in the earlier spelling *practise*, on the pattern of pairs such as *advise*, *advice*.

13. Israel's fault: God's dismay over her disobedience

10:1–21

Chapters 9–11 of Romans all address the problem of Jewish unbelief. In chapter 9 the emphasis was on God's purpose according to election; the emphasis of chapter 10, however, is on the human factors, on the need for an understanding of the gospel (5–13), for the proclamation of the gospel (14–15), and for the response of faith (16–21). With chapter 10 Paul turns from the past to the present, from his explanation of the Israelites' unbelief to his hope that they will yet hear and believe the gospel. This vision for the future he will elaborate further in chapter 11.

1. Israel's ignorance of the righteousness of God (1–4)

Paul begins this chapter, as he began the last, with a very personal reference to his love and longing for 'them'. In the Greek sentence they are not specified, but NIV is certainly right to insert *the Israelites*. There are several similarities between the openings of the two chapters. In both Paul mentions his heart: his heart's sorrow and anguish because the unbelieving people of Israel are lost (9:2f.), and his *heart's desire and prayer to God ... that they may be saved* (1). J. B. Phillips catches the earnestness of the apostle's cry: 'My brothers, from the bottom of my heart I long and pray to God that Israel may be saved!' At the beginning of chapter 9 he expresses the hypothetical wish that he himself might be cursed if thereby they could be spared (9:3); at the beginning of chapter 10 he expresses an ardent, prayerful wish for their salvation. Moreover, as his pain is increased by their combination of privilege and prejudice (9:4f.), so his longing is increased by their combination of zeal and ignorance (2).

Still Standing
Week 4: The Power in Confession

Paul has no doubt of their religious sincerity. He *can testify about them* from his own experience *that they are zealous for God*. And he knows what he is talking about, because he himself in his pre-conversion life was 'extremely zealous' in his religion, as seen in his persecution of the church.² Indeed he was 'just as zealous for God' as any of his contemporaries, and could even describe his zeal at that time as an 'obsession'.⁴ So he is obliged to say of the Israelites that *their zeal is not based on knowledge* (2). Yet Scripture says that 'it is not good to have zeal without knowledge'. Sincerity is not enough, for we may be sincerely mistaken. The proper word for zeal without knowledge, commitment without reflection, or enthusiasm without understanding, is fanaticism. And fanaticism is a horrid and dangerous state to be in.

Having asserted their general condition of ignorance, Paul now particularizes in two negatives: *they did not know the righteousness that comes from God* and *they did not submit to God's righteousness*. Instead, they *sought to establish their own* (3). Recent commentators who have accepted Professor E. P. Sanders' thesis of 'covenantal nomism' offer an interpretation of this verse which is very different from the traditional understanding. Professor Dunn, for example, argues that the Jews were right to see 'righteousness' as obedience to the law and so loyalty to the covenant (the meaning of 'covenantal nomism'), but wrong to construe it in terms of circumcision, sabbath observance, dietary regulations and ritual purity. This understanding of the law was not only 'too superficial' but also 'too nationalistic',⁷ because it disenfranchised the Gentiles whom God wanted to include. 'Their own righteousness', therefore, meant a righteousness which was peculiarly and exclusively their own, and was being contrasted not with God's but with other people's. And their attempt to 'establish' this righteousness of their own was an act not of creation (producing something out of nothing) but of confirmation (preserving what was already in existence, namely their covenant membership and righteousness). What Paul objected to was 'Israel's attempt to maintain a claim of national monopoly to that covenant righteousness'.⁹ What then does it mean that *Christ is the end of the law ...* (4)? What Christ terminated was not the law as the way of attaining a righteous standing before God, but 'the law seen as a way ... of documenting God's special regard for Israel, of marking Israel out from the other nations ...'.

What disturbs me about this attempted reconstruction, I confess, is not so much what is being affirmed (for the Jews were ethnically exclusive), but what is being denied. For example, the statement that 'their own righteousness' is not being contrasted with God's is plainly not so in 10:3, and more plainly still in Philippians 3:9. I think the Jews (like all human beings) were more self-righteous than Professors Sanders and Dunn allow. As Calvin justly commented, 'the first step to obtaining the righteousness of God is to renounce our own righteousness'.

To other commentators the assertion that the Jews *did not know the righteousness that comes from God* means that they had not yet learned the way of salvation, how the righteous God puts the unrighteous right with himself by bestowing upon them a righteous status. This is 'the righteousness of God' which is revealed in the gospel, and is received by faith altogether apart from the law, as Paul has written earlier (1:17; 3:21). The tragic consequence of the Jews' ignorance was that, recognizing their need of righteousness if they were ever to stand in God's righteous presence, they *sought to establish their own*, and *they did not submit to God's righteousness* (3).

Still Standing
Week 4: The Power in Confession

This ignorance of the true way, and this tragic adoption of the false way, are by no means limited to Jewish people. They are widespread among religious people of all faiths, including professing Christians. All human beings, who know that God is righteous and they are not (since ‘there is no-one righteous, not even one’, 3:10), naturally look around for a righteousness which might fit them to stand in God’s presence. There are only two possible options before us. The first is to attempt to build or establish our own righteousness, by our good works and religious observances. But this is doomed to failure, since in God’s sight even ‘all our righteous acts are like filthy rags’. The other way is to submit to God’s righteousness by receiving it from him as a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ.¹³ In verses 5–6 Paul calls the first *the righteousness that is by the law* and the second *the righteousness that is by faith*.

The fundamental error of those who are seeking to establish their own righteousness is that they have not understood Paul’s next affirmation: *Christ is the end (telos) of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes* (4). *Telos* could mean ‘end’ in the sense of ‘goal’ or ‘completion’, indicating that the law pointed to Christ and that he has fulfilled it. Or it could mean ‘end’ in the sense of ‘termination’ or ‘conclusion’, indicating that Christ has abrogated the law. Paul must surely mean the latter. But the abrogation of the law gives no legitimacy either to antinomians, who claim that they can sin as they please because they are ‘not under law but under grace’ (6:1, 15), or to those who maintain that the very category of ‘law’ has been abolished by Christ and that the only absolute left is the command to love. When Paul wrote that we have ‘died’ to the law, and been ‘released’ from it (7:4, 6), so that we are no longer ‘under’ it (6:15), he was referring to the law as the way of getting right with God. Hence the second part of verse 4. The reason Christ has terminated the law is *so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes*. In respect of salvation, Christ and the law are incompatible alternatives. If righteousness is by the law it is not by Christ, and if it is by Christ through faith it is not by the law. Christ and the law are both objective realities, both revelations and gifts of God. But now that Christ has accomplished our salvation by his death and resurrection, he has terminated the law in that role. ‘Once we grasp the decisive nature of Christ’s saving work’, writes Dr Leon Morris, ‘we see the irrelevance of all legalism.’

2. Alternative ways of righteousness (5–13)

Paul has already stated three antitheses—between faith and works (9:32), between God’s righteousness to which we should submit and our own righteousness which we mistakenly seek to establish (3), and between Christ and the law (4). Now he draws out the implications of the latter by contrasting *the righteousness that is by the law* (5) with *the righteousness that is by faith* (6). He does so by appealing to Scripture, quoting a text on each side. He thus sets Moses against Moses, that is, Moses in Leviticus against Moses in Deuteronomy.

On the one hand, *Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: ‘The man who does these things will live by them’* (5). The natural interpretation of these words is that the way to life (*i.e.* salvation) is by obedience to the law. This is how Paul himself understood the sentence when he quoted it in Galatians 3:12. But ‘clearly’, he added in that context, ‘no-one is justified before God by the law’, because no-one has succeeded in obeying it. The weakness of the law is our own weakness (8:3). Because we disobey it, instead of bringing us life it brings us

Still Standing
Week 4: The Power in Confession

under its curse, and that would be our position still if Christ had not redeemed us from the law's curse by becoming a curse for us. It is in this sense that 'Christ is the end of the law'. Righteousness is not to be found that way.

So, on the other hand, *the righteousness that is by faith*, which Paul now personifies, proclaims a different message. It sets before us for salvation not the law but Christ, and assures us that unlike the law, Christ is not unattainable, but readily accessible. The passage Paul quotes (from Dt. 30) begins with a stern prohibition, which the righteousness by faith endorses: '*Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) (6) or "Who will descend into the deep?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)' (7)*. To ask such questions would be as absurd as they are unnecessary. There is no need whatever for us to scale the heights or plumb the depths in search of Christ, for he has already come, died and risen, and so is accessible to us.

What, then, is the positive message of the righteousness of faith? *What does it say? 'The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart', that is, Paul explains, the word of faith* (the message requiring a response of faith, *i.e.* the gospel) which *we* (apostles) *are proclaiming* (8). Taking his cue from the reference to the people's 'mouth' and 'heart' in Deuteronomy 30:14, just quoted, Paul now summarizes the gospel in these terms: *That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' (the earliest and simplest of all Christian creeds), and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved* (9). Thus heart and mouth, inward belief and outward confession, belong essentially together. 'Confession without faith would be vain ... But likewise faith without confession would be shown to be spurious.' *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved* (10). The parallelism is reminiscent of Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament, and the two clauses in verses 9–10 are to be held together rather than separately. Thus, there is no substantive difference here between being 'justified' and being 'saved'. Similarly, the content of the belief and that of the confession need to be merged. Implicit in the good news are the truths that Jesus Christ died, was raised, was exalted, and now reigns as Lord and bestows salvation on those who believe. This is not salvation by slogan but by faith, that is, by an intelligent faith which lays hold of Christ as the crucified and resurrected Lord and Saviour. This is the positive message of 'the righteousness that is by faith'.

But is Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:11–14 legitimate? Or is he guilty of an unprincipled allegorization, and of reading into Scripture what is not there? We begin by noting that his only actual quotation (as opposed to allusion) is Deuteronomy 30:14, which is reproduced almost exactly in verse 8: '*the word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart*'. There Paul stops, for the Deuteronomy text goes on to say that the reason the word was near them was 'so that you may obey it', whereas Paul calls it 'the word of faith'. How then can Paul take a verse about the law which is to be obeyed and apply it to the gospel which is to be believed? It sounds a fundamental contradiction, especially while he is commending 'righteousness by faith'. But it is not.

How does Paul use the Deuteronomy passage? He is not claiming either that Moses explicitly foretold the death and resurrection of Jesus, or that he preached the gospel under the guise of the law. No. The similarity he sees and stresses between Moses' teaching and the apostles' gospel lies in their easy accessibility. He knows that Moses began this part of his speech (although he

Still Standing
Week 4: The Power in Confession

does not quote it) by telling the Israelites that his teaching was neither ‘too difficult’ for them nor ‘beyond their reach’. Moses went on, using dramatic imagery, that it was neither up in heaven nor beyond the sea—remote, unrevealed and unknown—so that they would have to find someone to ascend into heaven or cross the sea in order to bring it to them. On the contrary, his teaching was very near them. They knew it already. Far from being above or beyond them, it was actually inside them, in their hearts and in their mouths.

What Moses had said about his teaching, Paul now affirms about the gospel. It is neither remote nor unavailable. There is no need to ask who will ascend to heaven to bring Christ down or descend to Hades to bring Christ up. Storming the ramparts of heaven and potholing in Hades, in search of Christ, are equally unnecessary. For Christ has come and died, and been raised, and is therefore immediately accessible to faith. We do not need to do anything. Everything that is necessary has already been done. Moreover, because Christ himself is near, the gospel of Christ is also near. It is in the heart and mouth of every believer. The whole emphasis is on the close, ready, easy accessibility of Christ and his gospel.

Verses 11–13 build on this. They stress that Christ is not only *easily* accessible, but *equally* accessible to all, to *anyone* (11) and to *everyone* (13), since *there is no difference* (12), no favouritism. All three verses refer to Christ and affirm his availability to faith, although each describes in different terms both the nature of faith and how Christ responds to believers. In verse 11 we ‘trust in him’ and will *never be put to shame*. In verse 12 we *call on him*, and he *richly blesses* us. In verse 13 we *call on the name of the Lord* and are *saved*. Let us now consider the three verses separately.

First, verse 11: *As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’* This is a second quotation of Isaiah 28:16, the first having been in 9:33. The designation of saving faith as ‘trust’ shows that the ‘belief’ and the ‘confession’ of the two previous verses (9–10) are not to be understood as a mere subscription to credal formulae.

Secondly, verse 12: *For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him*. It is a marvellous affirmation that through Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Of course there is a fundamental distinction between those who seek righteousness by the law and those who seek it by faith. But between those who have been justified by faith and are now in Christ, all distinctions, not only of race, but also of sex and culture, are not so much abolished (since Jews are still Jews, Gentiles Gentiles, men men and women women) as rendered irrelevant. Just as there is no distinction between us because in Adam we are all sinners (3:22f.), so now there is no distinction between us because in Christ, who is *Lord of all*, all who call on him are richly blessed. Far from impoverishing us, we all receive his ‘unsearchable riches’.

In the third verse (13) both our calling on him and his blessing of us are elaborated. To *call on him* is, more precisely, to *call on the name of the Lord*, that is, to appeal to him to save us in accordance with who he is and what he has done. *Everyone* who thus calls on him, we are assured, *will be saved* (13). In the first place this is a quotation from Joel 2:32. But Peter cited it on the day of Pentecost, transferring the text from Yahweh to Jesus, which is also what Paul does here. Indeed, this appeal to Jesus for salvation became so characteristic of Christian people that Paul could describe the worldwide community as ‘those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ’.²¹

Still Standing
Week 4: The Power in Confession

What then, according to this section, is necessary to salvation? First the fact of the historic Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified, risen, reigning as Lord, and accessible. Secondly, the apostolic gospel, *the word of faith* (8), which makes him known. Thirdly, simple trust on the part of the hearers, calling on the name of the Lord, combining faith in the heart and confession with the mouth. But still something is missing. There is, fourthly, the evangelist who proclaims Christ and urges people to put their trust in him. It is of Christian evangelists that Paul writes in the next paragraph.¹⁷

Confess, Confession. The biblical concepts expressed by the words “confess” and “confession” have in common the idea of an acknowledgment of something. This is the root idea of the two verbs that lie behind the great majority of occurrences of the words “confess” and “confession” in the English Bible: Hebrew *yādâ*, (in the hiphil root) and Greek *homologeō*. English versions such as the NIV therefore sometimes translate these verbs as “acknowledge.” From this common root emerge two distinct theological senses: the acknowledging or confessing of faith (in God, Christ, or a particular doctrine), and the acknowledging or confessing of sins before God.

Confession of Faith. Those who are in relationship with God have the joy and responsibility of publicly acknowledging that relationship and the beliefs that are part of it. Solomon alludes to such public profession of commitment to God in his prayer at the dedication of the temple: “When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and confess your name, ... then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel” (1 Kings 8:33–34; cf. v. 35; 2 Chron. 6:24, 26). But the reference to Israel’s sins suggests that confessing God’s name here involves also the acknowledgment of sin before him. The two biblical ideas of confession are here, therefore, united.

It is in the New Testament that confession in the sense of acknowledging allegiance to the faith becomes prominent. Confessing God’s name (Heb. 13:15) or the “name of the Lord” (2 Tim. 2:19) is the mark of a believer. And, since God has revealed himself and his truth decisively in Jesus Christ, confessing Christ becomes the hallmark of genuine Christianity. Jesus taught that “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven” (Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8; cf. Rev. 3:5). Reflected here is the secular Greek use of the word to denote solemn and binding public testimony in a court of law. Confession of Christ, then, is no private matter, but a public declaration of allegiance. Such claims can, however, be spurious, and are revealed by a lifestyle incompatible with a genuine relationship to Christ (Titus 1:16).

Confessing Christ, then, requires both a matching Christian lifestyle and a matching Christian theology. In what is perhaps the most characteristic New Testament use of the language, the writers stress that Christian confession includes adherence to certain truths about Christ. This doctrinal sense of the word can be seen generally in Luke’s reminder that the Pharisees acknowledge the teachings about the resurrection and the spiritual realm (Acts 23:8). Central to New Testament doctrine, of course, is the truth about Jesus Christ, and this is the point continually stressed by the New Testament writers. Perhaps the earliest and most basic of Christian confessions was the simple assertion that “Jesus is Lord” (Rom. 10:9–10). Paul here

¹⁷ Stott, J. R. W. (2001). *The message of Romans: God’s good news for the world* (pp. 279–285). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Still Standing
Week 4: The Power in Confession

makes “confessing with the mouth” parallel to “believing in the heart” as a means of salvation. He does not mean by this that public confession is a means of salvation in the way that faith is, for his choice of wording is dictated by the allusion to the heart and the mouth in his earlier quotation of Deuteronomy 30:14 (v. 8). But the text does highlight the fact that genuine faith has its natural result in a public confession of adherence to Christ.

A variation of the formula “Jesus is Lord” that is probably just as early is the confession “Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah.” John tells us that the Pharisees refused to confess that Jesus was the Messiah (12:42), and forced out of the synagogue all Jews who did make such a confession (9:22). Here also we see the way in which public confession of Christ could lead to persecution. It is perhaps because Timothy faces such persecution that Paul urges him to imitate his Lord’s example before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate by making “your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Tim. 6:12; cf. v. 13).

As the church was exposed to more and more alien influences, Christian doctrinal confessions had to become more specific and detailed. Contesting heretics who denied the reality of Jesus’ humanity, John insists that only those who confess that Jesus had come in the flesh could claim to know God (1 John 2:23; 4:2–3, 15; 2 John 7). Similarly, the author to the Hebrews exhorts his wayward readers to “hold fast our confession” (4:14, RSV; 10:23), a confession that is focused on the identity of Christ (see 3:1). This New Testament use of the language of confession led to the later church’s use of the word “confession” to denote a summary of what Christians believe (e.g., “The Augsburg Confession,” “The Westminster Confession of Faith”). From the beginning, the church found it necessary to define what it meant to be a Christian by formulating statements of Christian belief that could be recited publicly. First Timothy 3:16, introduced by the words “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion” (RSV), may be just such an early confession; and scholars have suggested that other such early confessions or creeds may be found in texts such as Romans 1:3–4, Colossians 1:15–20, and Philippians 2:6–11.

Confession of Sins. If confession of faith is more prominent in the New Testament, confession of sins is found more often in the Old Testament. The word that is most often used in such contexts is the Hebrew verb *yādâ*, which can mean either to praise or give thanks to God or to confess sins before God. Indeed, in some verses (Josh. 7:19), it is not clear which is meant. Confession of sin in the Old Testament often comes in the context of the offering of sacrifices. Leviticus 5:5 makes confession of sin the intermediate step between awareness that a sin has been committed (vv. 3–4) and the offering of an atoning sacrifice (v. 6). Here we see the idea of confession as a conscious and public acknowledgement that God’s holy law has been transgressed (see also Lev. 26:40; Num. 5:7). The Old Testament also stresses the way in which representative figures among the people of Israel can publicly confess sins on behalf of the people as a whole (the high priest on the Day of Atonement [Lev. 16:21]; Ezra [Ezra 10:1]; Nehemiah [Neh. 1:6; 9:2–3]; Daniel [Dan. 9:4, 20]). This acknowledging before God of the sins of the nation as a whole (an acknowledgment in which individual Israelites were to take part) was a necessary prerequisite for God’s mercy and restoring grace in the midst of judgment. The confession needed, of course, to be sincere. Jeremiah’s call on the people to acknowledge their guilt (3:13) leads only to an insincere confession (14:20) that the Lord does not heed. One way in which the sincerity of confession can be tested is by accompanying acts of repentance. In Ezra’s day, for example, confession of sin in taking foreign wives was to be followed by a putting away

Still Standing
Week 4: The Power in Confession

of those wives (Ezra 10). But the Old Testament also recognizes the importance of individual confession of sins and in contexts not obviously tied to the sacrificial system. David reflects, “I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’—and you forgave the guilt of my sin” (Ps. 32:5). David experienced the principle stated in Proverbs 28:13: “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

Confession of sins in the New Testament (usually expressed with the compound word *exomologeō*) is mentioned in only five passages. This is not, however, to minimize its importance, as confession is certainly included in the widespread call to “repent” from one’s sins. Thus, John the Baptist’s call for repentance is met by the people’s confession of their sins (Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:5). Perhaps the most familiar text on confession is 1 John 1:9: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” Making forgiveness conditional on confession raises theological problems for some. For does not Christ’s sacrifice wipe out for the believer the guilt of all sins—past, present, and *future*? Perhaps it is best to distinguish between the judicial basis for the forgiveness of sins—the once-for-all work of Christ—and the continuing appropriation of the benefits of that sacrifice—through repeated repentance and confession of sins. Secured for us eternally in our justification by faith, forgiveness is always provided, but we are to ask for it (Matt. 6:12, 14), as we confess our sins.

The setting of the confession of sins in the Old Testament is frequently public. This raises the question about whether confession should be private or public. James suggests the importance of public confession: “Confess your sins to each other” (James 5:16; cf. also Acts 19:18). This exhortation was a key scriptural basis for the early “methodist” lay gatherings, in which public confession of sin played a large role. Even in public confessions, of course, it is the Lord who is the primary “audience,” for all sin is ultimately sin against him, and all confession must be directed ultimately to him. Moreover, public confession of sin does not seem to be a standard feature of New Testament church life. While its biblical basis is not completely clear, therefore, there is wisdom in the principle that sin should be confessed to those whom it has directly harmed. When the whole church has been affected, the whole church should hear the confession. When one other person has been harmed, we should confess to that person. But when the sin is a “private” one, we may well keep the confession between ourselves and God. Certainly there is no New Testament warrant for the later Roman Catholic insistence on auricular confession to a priest. Although “elders” are mentioned in James 5:14, the exhortation to confess sins to “one another” in verse 16 clearly has in view the entire Christian community.

DOUGLAS J. MOO

See also FORGIVENESS; MOUTH.

Bibliography. O. Cullmann, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*; O. Michel, *TDNT*, 5:199–220; V. H. Neufeld, *The Earliest Christian Confessions*; J. R. W. Stott, *Confess Your Sins: The Way of Reconciliation*.¹⁸

¹⁸ Moo, D. J. (1996). [Confess, Confession](#). In *Evangelical dictionary of biblical theology* (electronic ed., pp. 111–113). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Confess

See also: *confessing*, p. 39

Greek expression: *homologeō*

Pronunciation: *haw maw law GEH oh*

Strong's Number: 3670

KEY VERSES

Mark 1:4–5; Romans 10:9–10; 1 Timothy 6:12; 1 John 1:9; 4:2

“Confess, confess!” Sounds like an interrogation scene, doesn’t it? The word does have this negative connotation, but it also has a positive one. Confess means to declare affirmatively what one believes in. The Greek word *homologeō* literally means “saying the same thing”—that is, affirming one’s agreement with a particular spiritual reality. We confess that we are sinners, and we confess (affirm) that Jesus is the Savior. These two kinds of confession occur in the Bible. First, individuals confess that they have sinned and are therefore guilty before God. Second, they confess that Jesus is Lord. One confession often leads to the other.

In the first kind of confession, one agrees or acknowledges that he has broken God’s law and therefore deserves punishment (Rom. 6:23). Those who were baptized by John the Baptist publicly confessed their sins and repented (Mark 1:4–5). All Christians, in fact, must agree with God that they are sinners (1 John 1:8), and they are encouraged to confess their sins to God (1 John 1:9). James said that when a Christian is sick, the elders are to visit that person and give him an opportunity to confess any sins. In the same passage, James urged Christians to confess their sins to one another (Jas. 5:13–16).

The second, more positive meaning of the word, occurs frequently in the New Testament with respect to affirming one’s faith in Christ. When Christians confess, they declare as a matter of conviction and allegiance that Jesus is the Christ and that they belong to Him. Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32, κϵν). Refusal to confess Christ is the same as denying Him (Matt. 10:33; Luke 12:8; 2 Tim. 2:11–13; Rev. 3:5). The Christian life therefore begins with a confession of faith, a public declaration before witnesses (Rom. 10:9–10; 1 Tim. 6:12). An additional dimension of the Christian’s confession is provided in 1 John 4:2. One must confess that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.” A person must not only acknowledge that Jesus “has come” and confess belief in Jesus’ divinity and preexistence as the Son of God, but also that He has come “in the flesh”—that is, confess belief in Jesus’ incarnation.

In the world today there are religions based on false prophets, the Bible tells us this is so, but some believers find it difficult to ascertain truth when the values and morals being taught by these religions seem to be in accordance with the Bible. However, as shown above, we can

Still Standing
Week 4: The Power in Confession

discern whether people have the spirit of God or not depending on their ability to proclaim that Jesus is indeed the Son of God (1 John 4:15).¹⁹

CONFESSION Admission, especially of guilt or sin; also, a statement of religious belief. “To confess” can mean to agree, to promise, or to admit something.

Two types of confession occur in the Bible. First, individuals confess that they have sinned and are therefore guilty before God, often confessing a particular sin (Lv 5:5; 1 Jn 1:9). In such confession one agrees or acknowledges that he or she has broken God’s law (Ps 119:126), that its penalty is justly deserved (Rom 6:23), and that in some specific way God’s standard of holiness has not been met (Lv 19:2; Mt 5:48).

In OT times the high priest would confess the sins of the whole nation (Lv 16:21); the nation of Israel was expected to confess when it had rebelled against the law of God (Lv 26:40; 2 Chr 7:14). Pious Jews were quick to confess; Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah confessed their nation’s sins, agreeing with God that his punishment of the people (including themselves) was just, yet praying for God’s mercy and deliverance (Dn 9:20; Ezr 10:1; Neh 1:6).

Second, individuals confess that God is God and that he rules the world (1 Chr 29:10–13), that he is faithful in showing his love and kindness (Ps 118:2–4), and that he has helped his people (Ps 105:1–6). Such confession or agreement, expressed publicly in worship or song (Ps 100:4), is spoken of in the OT as “blessing the Lord.”

The two types of confession are often combined in the Bible, producing many psalms of thanksgiving. In general those psalms contain some or all of the following ideas: (1) I have sinned; (2) I became ill and nearly died; (3) I prayed to God, who delivered me; and (4) now I offer this song of confession, which I promised him (Pss 22; 30; 32; 34; 40; 51; 116). The same Hebrew word means both “praise” and “confession of sin”; the two meanings were part of a single concept. The psalmist began by admitting sin and God’s justice, and he ended by confessing God’s forgiveness and delivering power.

Both those meanings also occur in the NT. Christians confess (that is, they declare as a matter of conviction and allegiance) that Jesus is the Christ and that they belong to him. “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Mt 10:32, *KJV*). Not to confess Christ is the same as denying him (Mt 10:33; Lk 12:8; cf. 2 Tm 2:11–13; Rv 3:5). The Christian life therefore begins with a confession of faith, a public declaration before witnesses (Rom 10:9–10; 1 Tm 6:12). An additional dimension of the Christian’s confession is provided in 1 John 4:2: one must confess that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh,” that is, acknowledge Jesus’ divinity and preexistence as the Son of God (that he “has come”; see also 1 Jn 4:15) as well as Jesus’ humanity and incarnation (that he has come “in the flesh”). The Greek word “confession” literally means “saying the same thing.” The Christian’s “good confession” is modeled after the pattern of Christ’s confession (1 Tm 6:12–13).

¹⁹ Carpenter, E. E., & Comfort, P. W. (2000). In *Holman treasury of key Bible words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew words defined and explained* (p. 257). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Still Standing
Week 4: The Power in Confession

In only a few passages does the NT discuss confession of sin. Those being baptized by John the Baptist publicly admitted their sins and repented (Mk 1:4–5). All Christians, in fact, must agree with God that they are sinners (1 Jn 1:8–10). James presented a fuller picture: when a Christian is ill, the elders are to visit and give the person opportunity to confess any sins. As in the Psalms, forgiveness and healing (the moral and the physical) are tied to confession. Recalling that principle, James urged Christians to confess their sins to one another.

See also Conversion; Forgiveness; Repentance.²⁰

²⁰ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (pp. 307–308). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.