



Let's Make the Complicated Simple

Let's make confession of sins for the Christian as easy as possible to understand.

1. It is being taught today as unnecessary for the believer and even worse, that it only applies to sinners. It has become an open door for sin and only the truth of God's word will reveal truth.
2. Confession of sins for the believer was never given as a license to sin against God, but to serve Him.
3. Christian growth is impossible without a way to rid ourselves of the sins we knowingly or unknowingly commit.
4. Something designed by God's grace for our freedom has turned from simple to complicated and from clear to ambiguous.
5. Confusion has arisen over this part of God's plan for our daily life.

What If There Is Only One Verse?

1. It has been said that 1 John 1:9 is the only verse in the New Testament that tells Christians they have to confess their sins.
2. It isn't (see Proverbs 28:13, Act 19:18). But let's assume for a moment this is true. It is asked, how do you build a doctrine on one verse?
3. Well, there is only one scripture telling us that as sinners we need to believe with our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead and confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9-10).
4. Yet, we all agree this is true. All other verses tell us to believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation.
5. All the other verses tell us *what* to do, believe, but not *how* to do it. Romans 10:9-10 tells us *how* to believe to receive salvation.

What Does Confess Mean?

1. The word used most often for confession of sins is *repent*.
2. Although, in the Old and New Testaments, it is often used for unbelievers, most of the time (over 80%) it is used for believers.

3. The verses in the New Testament telling Christians to repent tell us *what* to do, but not *how* to do it. 1 John 1:9 tells Christians *how* to repent. We are to confess our sins.
4. The Greek word for confess is “homologeō.” “Homo” meaning “*same*,” and “logeō” meaning “*to speak or say*.” It is a compound word, meaning “*to say the same thing*.”
5. It would be better translated not as confess, but as *admit* or *acknowledge*.
6. Nowhere in scripture are believers told to list or *name* their sins. This is a distortion of the meaning of “homologeō.”

As a pastor, I saw many Christians come for counseling who sinned. They finally were ready to admit it. At first, they tried to cover their sins, then blamed others, surrounding their original sin with more sins. Carnality always breeds more carnality.

By the time they came to see me, much time had passed, and they could not remember, much less name, all the sins they had added to the first.

Was God holding them accountable to name each one? No. David’s sin did not begin with Bathsheba, but with staying home when he should have gone with his troops to battle (2 Samuel 11:1-2). He got off his bed after sleeping all day, went to the balcony, saw a woman bathing, lusted after her, brought her into his bedroom, had sex with her, and got her pregnant. He then brought her husband home trying to get him drunk so he would go to bed with her. But as a faithful soldier he would not go home to her but stayed with the few guards at the gate. David still tried to cover his sins and had Uriah, her husband, murdered. Nine months later, an illegitimate child was born to them both.

After a year of sin, lies, and denial, David was confronted by Nathan the prophet. God knew David sinned, Jesus knew, the Holy Spirit knew, as did the prophet.

The only one who had to “say the same thing” was David. He did not list his sins or name each one. He said, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

He admitted or acknowledged his sins. Nathan immediately said, “Your sins are forgiven” (2 Samuel 12:13). A year’s worth of sins was cleansed in one moment. That is grace.

When the prodigal came home, he did not tell his father how much money he had gone through, how many prostitutes he slept with, or how many times he got drunk and the names of all the bars.

He simply said, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight” (Luke 15:21). He admitted or acknowledged his sin, was restored to fellowship with his father, and had his privileges restored.

What About Unknown Sins?

1. When we acknowledge what we know - that we have sinned against God, He is also faithful and just to forgive us for all we do not know, those sins surrounding the first.
2. He cleanses us from *all* unrighteousness as display of His great mercy. "*He who covers his sins will not prosper. But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy*" (Proverbs 28:13).

Spirit and Soul

1. Finally, which part of our beings are we responsible for keeping clean? It is not our spirit. That was cleansed when we were born again and will not need to be made clean again. The blood of Jesus washed our spirits and will never need to wash them again.
2. As Christians, we do not and cannot sin in our spirits (1 John 3:9). We sin in our souls, in thoughts which lead to words and actions.
3. It takes the blood of Jesus to cleanse us in our souls as much as it did to cleanse our spirits at the new birth.
4. Like Jesus told the disciples when He washed their feet, "*He who is bathed (new birth) needs only to wash his feet (confession of sins) but is completely clean*" (John 13:10).
5. Bathing takes place once. Foot-washing may need to take place many times. Water is needed for both, as is Jesus' blood for the Christian life.
6. Salvation is for heaven and our relationship with God. Confession of sins is for time, fellowship with God, and daily victory over Satan.

Enjoy the Grace of God

1. Don't throw out the baby with the bathwater today. Grace is a wonderful doctrine and I truly believe it is the message of the hour being emphasized by God.
2. Excesses do not negate the truth. The sinful excesses of many evangelists did not negate the healing movement. The excesses of shepherding did not negate the truth of the Charismatic Movement. The excesses of prosperity today do not negate the truth of the message of faith.
3. Like these other movements, the truth of grace will find its point of balance. Let's enjoy the grace of God together.