

Journey #2

This Is My Confession

Dealing With Sin and Receiving God's Forgiveness

R&B music artist Usher gave new meaning to the concept of telling the truth. In his song Confessions, Pt.2, he took a melody, some pulsating beats, catchy lyrics and soulfully put them to work. In the song, he tells the woman he loves about his regretful infidelity and then expressed the reality that as a result, he's going to have a child by a woman that he barely even knows.

He made it clear that telling his girlfriend about his affair is the hardest thing he's ever had to do, but he confesses the truth to her, as he clings to the hope that she will accept what he has to say and forgive him. In this song, Usher's decision to cheat on his girlfriend is a choice he realized he shouldn't have made, but this still doesn't stop him from breaking the trust in their relationship. Why?

The apostle Paul speaks frankly about this inner conflict between doing right or pursuing the wrong that affects us all: "And so, if I don't do what I know is right, I am no longer the one doing these evil things. The sin that lives in me is what does them. The Law has shown me that something in me keeps me from doing what I know is right" (Romans 7:20-21, CEV).

The 411: *In this study, you'll discover that God understands our struggles and has provided us with truth from the Bible, which shows how confession frees us from the power of sin, and gives us the freedom to experience God's forgiveness..*

That Nasty Sin Dilemma

"I came so that everyone would have life, and have it in its fullest."—John 10:10

In John 10:10, Jesus promises the abundant life to all who follow Him, yet many Christians live in defeat. So, what's the problem?

The problem is a three-letter word that's full of deadly destruction: SIN. The Greek word for sin is *hamartia*, which means "to miss the mark, to do wrong, to violate God's law." In essence, sin is anything that is a deliberate act of disobedience to the will of God. It is our innate refusal to go God's way and instead, to go our own way and do our own thing.

Truth: Romans 5:12

What is the result of sin and what effect does that result have on us?

Truth: Romans 3:23

In our own power, are we able to live our lives in ways that honor God? Why not?

"Don't let sin keep ruling your lives. You are ruled by God's kindness and not by the Law."—Romans 6:14

Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, the power of sin and the penalty of death were abolished forever. The apostle Paul encourages believers to remember we are no longer slaves to sin, and can now experience the freedom of our new lives in God. How does this truth about your new life make you feel?

Truth: Romans 6:1-14

Should the forgiveness of our sins that comes through Jesus' sacrifice give us freedom to irresponsibly abuse God's grace and continue to sin? What should our response to sin be?

Being a Christian doesn't mean that we won't make mistakes every now and then. But, being a Christian does mean that we should get rid of whatever blocks our fellowship with God when sin occurs.

The Confession Considerations

Confession is how we receive God's forgiveness, are cleansed from sin, and then are able to enjoy a thriving relationship with Him. Confession also gives us the opportunity to enjoy real relationships with others. When we acknowledge areas where we sin and fall short of God's best for us, God has promised to forgive us and cleanse us of our mistakes.

“But if we confess our sins to God, He can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away.” —John 1:9

Biblical confession involves three essential considerations:

- **Call it SIN:** Agree with God that a specific attitude or action is sin.
- **Call it FORGIVEN:** Thank God that you are totally forgiven because of Jesus’ death.
- **Call on God to CHANGE YOU:** Repent, which means you change your attitude about sin by deciding to let God call the shots, and make a choice not to repeat the behavior that led to sin in the first place.

Truth: 1 John 1:9

What is required of us to receive God’s forgiveness? If God forgives, should we then be able to forgive ourselves as well?

Our physical bodies need air to breathe. We inhale oxygen to meet the functioning needs of our organs, and exhale carbon dioxide as a waste product of this process. In the same way, our spiritual selves also need to breathe, as we exhale our sin through the act of confession. When we confess, we agree with God concerning our sin, and then inhale the incredible power available to us to live a Christ-centered life through God’s Holy Spirit.

This action, known as *spiritual breathing*, can be used as often as needed, on a moment-by-moment basis, because it fosters growth in your personal relationship with God, as you seek to draw closer to Him by letting go of behavior, actions, and even people that aren’t helping you pursue fellowship and intimacy with Him.

The Enemies Against You

As we grow in our relationship with God, we are also actively engaged in a spiritual battle with three real enemies:

- **The World:** The world will try to squeeze you into its mold through conformity and complacency.
- **The Flesh:** The flesh will try to control you by getting you to yield to its destructive desires.
- **The Devil:** The devil will try to trick you, trap you and tear you up.

Truth: Ephesians 6:10-20

List each piece of armor that God provided us with to stand strong in the face of spiritual warfare. Why are each of these pieces important? How does prayer factor in as a weapon of our warfare?

Truth: 1 John 2:15-16

Why should we not love the ways of the world? How does loving these ways affect our relationship with God? Which of these ways do you struggle most with and why?

“No one can live only on food. People need every word that God has spoken” —Matthew 4:4

When faced with temptation, Jesus always responded with the Word, as seen in Matthew 4:1-11. As believers of Jesus Christ and children of God, we need to do the same.

The Application

- For the next seven days, at the end of each day, make a list of your sins. Don’t worry, you won’t have to share this with anyone in the group. This is just between you and God, so be honest and be real in what you’ve struggled with and how you’ve made mistakes during the week.
- Apply the three confession considerations and then destroy the list, either by tearing it into pieces or balling it up and throwing it away. Just as these sins on your list have been destroyed, God has destroyed your sins through the sacrifice of His son Jesus Christ on the cross. These sins are no more, because you have confessed them openly before God, and God is faithful to forgive you and cleanse you.
- Become familiar with the following truths and memorize them to help as you continue growing in your relationship with God: 1 John 1:9, 1 Corinthians 10:13, and 1 Corinthians 6:18-20.

“You are tempted in the same way that everyone else is tempted. But God can be trusted not to let you be tempted too much, and He will show you how to escape from your temptations.” —1 Corinthians 10:13