

CONFESSION

If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. — 1 John 1:9

*A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person.
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

SYNOPSIS:

The rhythm of confession incorporates a right view of God, a right view of self, and a desire for transformation. Learning to trust God is who He says He is and truly believing He holds you safe in a divine embrace can offer freedom for self-examination. From this reflective space, we can offer our brokenness as an invitation. We invite God to make us new and reveal more. Confession as a rhythm includes observation of self, revelation of wrong, invitation for healing, and requisition for more. This pattern is met with open arms from God and a life of transformation.

GOD-GIVEN FRUIT:

When confession becomes a regular rhythm, some of the God-given fruit includes: Transformation into Christlikeness and awareness of your blind spots. Your eyes begin opening toward your temptations and God's work in your life. You will savor the gift of salvation and see yourself as God's loved and forgiven child no matter what you have done.

EXAMPLES:

As you expand your rhythm of confession, consider incorporating some of the following options. Choose someone you trust and ask them to begin an intentional relationship in which you tell the truth about who you are, and they pray for your transformation. Ask your family and close friends to help you see your blind spots. Take notice of your strong emotions this week - identify what triggers them, name the behaviors that occur as a result of them, and confess any sin related to them.

BASELINE SUGGESTION:

If confession is not a regular rhythm for you, we suggest the following practice this week: End each day with the following prayer. Talk with Him about what comes up and confess your sins to Him.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

God, I pray these words of the psalmist with great hesitation.

They are devastatingly honest. They lay things so bare. They allow no room for negotiation or compromise. I fear the scrutiny. I dread the probe. I resist the intrusion. I know that you are all love and so I am entering nothing more than your scrutiny of love. And yet...

No! I refuse to allow my fears to keep me from your love.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

PERSONAL QUESTIONS:

1

What is your current confession rhythm? What would you like to add or take away to enhance this rhythm?

2

Creating a rhythm of confession will open a door to honest, authentic living with God and one another. What is your initial hesitation in being fully known by God or others?

3

What would you need to do to create a rhythm of confession in your week?

4

What is your plan for practicing confession this week? Be as specific as possible

Downstream

A practice that comes easily or naturally to you.

Upstream

Practices that don't come easily; a practice that seems difficult or unnatural to you.

Would confession be beneficial for you to pursue? Why or why not?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What are some ways you avoid admitting your failings? Are there ways that - after you admit your faults - you can relax and let them go? What steps can you take to keep from reliving over and over the wrongs you have done?

Discuss the differences between a general confession like "Father, forgive me for all of my sins" and a specific naming of sin one by one. Which do you tend to do more?

What has your experience with confession been like in the past?

How could our group form an environment that is more conducive for people to confess sin?

RHYTHM PLAN

What:

When:

Where: