



# BUILD CHARACTER

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## CONFESSION

### **Spiritual Outcome Defined:**

Regularly engages in honest and humble admission, to both God and others, repenting to keep in step with God's Spirit.

### **Spiritual Outcome Described:**

The most dangerous problems in life are the hidden and unknown problems. These are the problems that lurk below the surface—undetected—wreaking havoc or preparing to make themselves known. Cancer is a problem, but it is a much more significant problem when it grows undetected. Disloyalty in an organization is a problem, but it creates an even bigger problem when that disloyalty quietly sows seeds of doubts in others and spreads the disease. Faulty engineering is a problem, but the defective design of a bridge is most dangerous when cars continue to use that bridge and nobody is aware of the issue. Known problems can be dealt with and addressed, especially when detected early. It's when a problem festers and spreads that the problem *really* becomes a problem and the damage may be irreversible. Confession is the honest and humble admission of a problem. It's the bringing of spiritual cancer out into the open so that cancer can be dealt with before it creates an even bigger problem. The more challenging thing about sin, though, is that resistance to confession is not just because the problem is at times unknown. The more pervasive problem is that authentic confession is resisted because authentic confession is accompanied by repentance, and we often don't want to let go of our ways. The sin, then, is effectively hidden—even though it is known—and the damage of that sin increases overtime. The authentic follower of Christ knows this and has a growing passion to dismiss sin early. He or she is open with God and open with their confidants. It takes a great deal of humility and courage to bring one's sin out into the open, but the power of doing so is profound. Scripture teaches that *"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). In another place we are commanded to *"confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed"* (James 5:16). Those serious about ridding themselves of spiritual cancer are serious about both vertical and horizontal confession. We confess and repent before God, and we confess and repent before each other.

*"The discipline of confession  
brings an end to pretense."  
-- Richard Foster*

### **Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:**

- A daily practice of honest conversation and confession to God.
- No known areas of life that are "hidden" from God.
- Identified and named people with whom one can be fully transparent.
- Can identify a conversation in the last month where a sin or struggle was confessed to another person.

## **Guidance**

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

### **1 Kings 8:33-34**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are you currently holding onto that you are hiding from God or resistant to submitting to him?

### **2 Chronicles 26:16-23, Proverbs 16:18**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you struggle with arrogance or pride? If so, how is it keeping you from listening to God or the people around you?



**Psalm 32:1-7**

Observations:

Discernment Question: What result of unconfessed sin have you seen, or are you currently seeing, in your own life (restlessness, anxiety, sleeplessness, bitterness, anger, etc.)?

**Proverbs 28:13**

Observations:

Discernment Question: As you are reading these passages, are any areas of your life coming to mind you need to address? If so, what are those what has kept you from addressing them in your life?



## **Isaiah 2:12-22**

Observations:

Discernment Question: To what extent are you worshipping God externally but internally rebelling against him? What keeps you from being fully honest before God and others?

## **James 5:16**

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you engage the regular practice of confessing to those whom you trust and who know you best? If not, what keeps you from doing this?



## 1 John 1:5-10

Observations:

**Discernment Question:** Do you have a confessional community, where you collectively seek God's grace through Christ and are open with each other about any struggles? If not, what keeps you from having this and how could you make it a high priority to cultivate it?

### Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on confession? Include insights offered from others in your Life Group that could be applied in your own life as well.

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### Scripture Memory:

James 5 NIV

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

1 John 1:9 NIV

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

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