

# A TOOL FOR COMMUNITY CONFESSION

( J A M E S 5 ; 1 6 )

## OVERVIEW:

In the New Testament alone, we read over fifty commandments to “one another.” Love one another. Serve one another. In James 5:16, we read “confess your sins to one another.” While some view confession as a “Catholic thing,” confession is a Biblical thing that Jesus-followers are called to practice.

## PURPOSE:

In Scripture, we see several purposes for confession. In James 5:16, we see that confession can lead to healing. In 1 John 1:9, confession leads to forgiveness. In Psalm 32, confession breaks the power of secret sin. The Hebrew word that we translate “confess” in James 5 means “to agree.” When we confess, we are agreeing with God that what we did was sinful - seeing our sin the same way He does.



## PRACTICES



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## PRACTICES



In inviting you to the practice of confession, we encourage you to consider these three questions before you begin.

### 1. What would I confess?

Any area of your life where you've come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit is something you should confess to God and potentially someone else. This could include sins of commission (wrong words or actions), missed opportunities (words not spoken or actions not taken), and sinful thoughts (lust, grudges, etc.)

### 2. With whom should I share this confession?

Not everyone, even in the church, is someone to be trusted with your confession. Wisdom and discernment are needed here. We outline four questions below to ask about who to share your confession with this week. (For each of these consider the basis of your initial reaction. Why do you have that assessment?)

- a. Do they have empathy or understanding?
- b. Are they able to keep a confidence?
- c. Would they be horrified?
- d. Would they sluff it off and downplay its significance?

### 3. What if someone shares a confession with me?

If someone asks if they can confess something to you, what are you called to do as a follower of Jesus? While this is not exhaustive list, here are some important things to consider.

- Place the cross of Christ between you and look at them through the grace and mercy of Jesus.
- Listen and resist the temptation to speak quickly or eliminate the discomfort.
- Affirm the work of the Holy Spirit in the other person's heart.
- Remind the other person of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Read Romans 8 together)
- Ask questions, instead of giving advice.
- Pray for the other person - in the moment and in the future - especially as they take their next steps.

**After your confession is complete, prayerfully consider and boldly obey what God reveals to be your next step.**

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