

40 Days OF PRAYER

SESSION THREE The Power of Grace

OPENING

How many of you have been using the 40 Days of Prayer daily devotional book? Can you share a story of how the book has been affecting your life and/or your prayers?

MEMORY VERSE

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

BIBLE STUDY

1. Read 2 Samuel 12:1-14. Why would God forgive David?
2. Read Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 3:19 & 4:13; and 1 Peter 1:15-16. What is God's goal for our life? Explain what this means to you.
3. Is God's forgiveness necessary in order to reach this goal? Why or why not?
4. Read Psalm 103:8-12; Romans 8:1 & 31-39; 1 John 1:9. How can we be confident of God's forgiveness? How can this confidence benefit us?
5. What role does confession play in achieving God's goal for our life?
6. Read Psalm 51. What can we learn about confession from David's example?
 - What is David's attitude towards his actions? Does he offer any excuses or explanations?
 - What desire does David express? How strong is this desire?
 - What do David's statements reveal about his view of God and his relationship with God?
 - Summarize what you have learned about confession from Psalm 51

To Confess

In the Greek, the word translated “confess” means “to agree with.” Applied to confession of sins it means to agree with God about wrong actions and attitudes. Confession, therefore, is more than agreeing that “I did it,” it is more than saying, “oops, I’m sorry.” Confession is saying, “I did this, I know it is wrong. I offer no excuses. I renounce this and choose to turn from it and towards you.”

7. What hinders people from practicing confession?
8. Read Psalm 32:1-5. What is a personal result of failing to confess? Can anyone share a personal example of this?
9. What is the role of guilt in confession? What is the difference between healthy and unhealthy guilt?
10. What is the role of repentance (choosing to stop a sinful action and replace it with a godly one) in confession?
11. Should confession be a daily habit?

Practice

In the Daily Devotional Guide, you are encouraged to use the “4 C’s” to reflect on the scripture passage each day. From your study in this session, share your answer to any one of the “4 C’s”

- What can you CELEBRATE?
- What will you COMMIT to?
- What do you need to CONFESS?
- What will you COMMUNICATE to someone else?

PRAYER

For prayer today, you will do a confession exercise adapted from an exercise written by Jud Boies and found in the devotional book.

This exercise will be done silently and privately.

1. Start by praying and asking God to reveal if you did anything today that was offensive to Him. As a help, use the 7 deadly sins. As you go through each one, review your day and ask God to reveal if you violated any one during the day:
 - a. Pride was I prideful in any way?
 - b. Envy was I envious about anything?
 - c. Anger did I demonstrate any anger inappropriately?
 - d. Lust did my mind run away in a lustful way?
 - e. Greed was I greedy in any way?
 - f. Gluttony did I overindulge in anything or activity?
 - g. Sloth was I lazy about anything?
2. As you go through these, there is usually one or more that you need to stop and reflect on. Often there is something in one or more of these that you will feel (or God is making you feel) the need for some correction.
3. Once you feel the need to stop, simply confess the problem and ask for God's forgiveness and help in correcting the behavior.
4. Confess by saying something like, "God I confess that I have done (state specific sin) I know and accept that it is wrong. I renounce (specific sin) and choose to turn away from it and live to honor you."
5. Embrace God's forgiveness. Claim the promise of forgiveness found in the scriptures you have studied and thank God both for the forgiveness and the chance to start fresh.
6. Ask God for strength to stand against any temptation to repeat this sin.

Special Note: Some issues you uncover may take several days or weeks to deal with. If you uncover a major issue, you may want to seek outside help (Pastoral counseling or an accountability partner). Another way to deal with the issue is to hand write Romans chapter 6 (yes, the whole chapter) and replace your particular sin every time you see the word sin in the chapter).