

Welcome to Digital Discipleship, a weekly video teaching from Pastor Shawn and a downloadable weekly devotional guide. We pray that you will grow stronger in your walk with Jesus as you lean into these teachings and devotions.

DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP – LESSON 7

Repent and Confess

Day 1

Renew the Mind

Introduction

1. We introduced the concept of repentance when we first discussed the SMORP acronym.
Scripture – Refers to reading and memorizing Scripture
Message – Refers to anything the Lord may be saying to you
Obedience – Refers to obeying what God instructs you to do
Repentance – Refers to sin the Holy Spirit requires you to confess and repent of
Prayer – Refers to your prayers to God
2. In the pattern prayer (Lord's Prayer) given by Jesus, one of the things He taught his disciples (and we) to pray was this: *Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. Luke 11:4 (NIV)*
 - a. The word "forgive," in the second half of the verse, is in the Greek present tense, which means that the subjects (disciples) are to continually and regularly forgive those who sin against them.
 - b. Jesus further said that as they do that, they then meet the condition for being regularly forgiven by God.
 - c. Of course, when we ask God to forgive us, as in the first half of the verse, we are confessing our sin.
3. Apparently that simple and straightforward instruction is at odds with some very dangerous and wrong teaching in some parts of the wider church, that claims that at salvation believers were already made holy, and so confession is unnecessary.
4. That is the subject of this lesson.
5. We'll see that the Bible clearly counters this error.

A. Saints still need to repent and confess their sins after salvation

First: Believers still sin after salvation

1. For example, Paul challenges us to walk in such a way that would please God.
2. **1 Thessalonians 4:1 (NIV)** *Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.*
3. The fact that Paul instructed the believers to walk in a way that would please God, means that it is also possible to walk in a way that would NOT please God.
4. In Ephesians 4, Paul set out a list of sins that the saints were to stay away from, as these actions grieved the Lord.
5. **Ephesians 4:30 (NIV)** *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*
6. Writing to the church in Corinth Paul rebuked the believers for sinful behaviors even in their meetings.
7. **1 Corinthians 11:17, 22 (NIV)** *In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good ...²² Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not!*
8. In his second letter to this same church, Paul is clear that they aren't yet perfect in holiness.

9. **2 Corinthians 7:1 (NIV)** *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*
10. John echoed what Paul said ...
11. **1 John 1:8-10 (NIV)** *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.*
12. John is saying that if we claim that we have no sin, the denial itself is sinful.
13. But then John went one step further, charging that such a claim makes Christ out to be a liar! How so?
14. Because Jesus Himself taught that we still sin ...
15. For example, in His seven letters to the churches (Revelation 1-3), Jesus rebuked five out of the seven because He was displeased with them. To the church at Ephesus He said ...
16. **Revelation 2:4 (NIV)** *Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.*
17. Or how about the church at Sardis ...
18. **Revelation 3:1-2 (NIV)** *To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. ² Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. (also: Rev 2:14; 2:20; 3:1-2)*
19. So, to claim that we no longer sin is in direct contradiction to what Christ said.
20. What then should we do with this ongoing sin in our lives?

Second: Believers must still confess and repent of these ongoing sins

1. Earlier we noted that IF we continue to forgive others, THEN the Father will continue to forgive our sins.
2. Therefore, the Father's ongoing forgiveness of us is **CONDITIONAL!**
3. However, there is a second condition for the Father's ongoing forgiveness – we must confess our sins.
4. **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.*
5. The verb "confess" is in the present tense, meaning that we are to regularly confess our sins.
6. James included confession of sins for believers in the middle of instructions concerning healing prayers:
7. **James 5:13-16 (NIV)** *Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*
8. In his instructions concerning the Lord's Supper, the Apostle Paul instructed us to examine ourselves for sin, to avoid discipline from the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:23-32).
9. Jesus straightforwardly told the churches of Revelation what to do with their sins!
10. He warned the church at Ephesus repent, saying ...
11. **Revelation 2:5 (NIV)** *Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.*
12. Jesus said something similar to the church at Sardis ...
13. **Revelation 3:3 (NIV)** *Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. (also Revelation 2:15-17; 2:20-23; 3:17-19)*
14. Jesus had already completed the sacrifice for sin, risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven when He gave each church a report card on how they were doing.
15. He commended them where they were deserving and rebuked and exhorted them to repent where necessary.
16. Evidently this is part of what Jesus is doing today! **This IS part of His ongoing ministry!**
17. This alone should be more than enough evidence that repentance and confession belong firmly at the heart of the Christian life.
18. If we meet the condition of confessing our sins, we have a promise and assurance that we will be forgiven! It doesn't get better than that!
19. What a gracious and loving heavenly Father!
20. So, why do some get this wrong?

21. Our guess is that many do not understand the distinction between judicial and relational forgiveness. We'll look at this during Day 2.

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. Why do we need to continue to confess and repent? What are some verses or passages that prove this?
3. What does Jesus say will happen if we do not forgive others (this is a part of repentance)?

Life Application

1. Since forgiveness is noted a number of times today, it would be pleasing to God to spend some time in prayer about this. This will be expanded on in a future lesson, but why not start today!

Day 2

Renew the Mind

The difference between judicial and relational forgiveness

1. The forgiveness that we STILL need is not the forgiveness of salvation, neither do we need to get saved over and over again whenever we sin.
2. Instead, this forgiveness is relational, not judicial. It has to do with our ongoing relationship and fellowship with God
3. The only thing that can affect our overall standing with God (salvation) is if we reject Jesus by denying Him or living in ongoing, unrepentant rebellion.
4. **Illustration: Marriage**
 - a. Suppose a husband ignores his wife and takes her for granted; perhaps he even says some unkind things to her.
 - b. It gets, as they say, “chilly in the room!”
 - c. She no longer responds to him and though they are living under the same roof there’s little or no communication.
 - d. Are they still legally married? Yes.
 - e. Are they expressing love? No. Are they communicating? No. Do they have a great relationship? No.
 - f. They are relationally distant.
5. That’s what we’re talking about in our relationship with God.
6. Are we still His legally adopted children? Yes. But our relationship with Him is relationally distant.
7. In relational forgiveness we are talking about being in harmony with the Father and in right relationship with Him.
8. Jesus made this perfectly clear when He washed His disciples’ feet (John 13).
 - a. In a culture where people walked long distances on dusty roads in sandals, it was customary for the host to arrange for water, to wash the feet guests’ feet.
 - b. Many have concluded that this story is about servanthood.
 - c. While Jesus clearly taught that He didn’t come to be served, but to serve (Matt 10:28), this is not what He was getting at with His demonstration.
 - d. For had he meant that, Jesus wouldn’t have said, *“You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”* **John 13:7 (NIV)**
 - e. Clearly, had he intended this to be a lesson about being a servant, it would have been obvious.
 - f. However, the fact that He said that they wouldn’t comprehend it until later, shows that He wanted to correct any notion that this was about servanthood.
 - g. No doubt, Jesus intended for this demonstration to metaphorically picture a higher spiritual truth.
 - h. When Peter objected to what the Lord was doing, Jesus replied, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me” (v. 8).
 - i. To which Peter responded, “Then wash me all over” (v. 9), to which Jesus answered ...
 - j. **John 13:10 (NIV)** *A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you* (referring to Judas – v. 11)
 - k. What was Jesus getting at?
 - l. Washing is elsewhere used to symbolize the cleansing from sin (1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 3:5)
 - m. Notice Jesus says the one who has bathed doesn’t need to be washed all over, as Peter had suggested – they just need their feet washed.
 - n. All his disciples, except Judas, were in good standing with Him.
 - o. Jesus had received them as His own, forgiving their sins, and in His words, they were clean all over.

- p. **John 15:3 (NIV)** *You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.*
 - q. What Jesus is teaching is that when we get saved we get bathed from head to toe – He washes us white as snow (Isaiah 1:18)! We’re clean all over!
 - r. But as the washing of feet demonstrated, we still need regular cleansing from sin that accumulates from living in this fallen world!
 - s. True, when we are born again, we stop living lives characterized by sinful actions.
 - t. **1 John 3:9 (ESV)** *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.*
 - u. However, as we saw earlier, we still sin – our feet still get spiritually dirty!
 - v. Perhaps we fail to pray; or perhaps we become critical of others; or we act selfishly; or we are insensitive towards another’s need; or we did not obey those who lead us; or we offend someone.
 - w. It can come out in a thousand different ways.
 - x. But that doesn’t mean we need to get saved or washed all over every time we fall short.
 - y. We just need the regular cleansing of confession.
 - z. And when we do, harmony between God and us is restored.
10. Paul taught the same:
- a. On the one hand he told the church at Corinth ...
 - b. **1 Corinthians 6:11 (NIV)** *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.* (Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22).
 - c. Yet in the same letter Paul admonished them to examine themselves for sin before partaking in the Lord’s Supper ...
 - d. **1 Corinthians 11:27-32 (NIV)** *Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.*
11. John also taught that we are to continue walking in ongoing confession ...
- a. **1 John 1:6-7 (NIV)** *If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*
 - b. John says that as the believer is walking in fellowship with God he is receiving cleansing.
 - c. The Greek word for “cleanses” is *katharizo*.
 - d. In this passage this word is in the present active indicative, speaking of continuous, ongoing cleansing; not a one-time cleansing as at the moment of salvation!
 - e. The blood of Jesus continues to cleanse us from sin.
 - f. So then “walking in the light” cannot mean living without sin.
 - g. It means that as we continually turn away from sin we are “cleansed” by the blood of Jesus!
12. Other passages that tell us to examine ourselves include: **Psalms 119:59-60; Lamentations 3:40; Matthew 7:3-5; 2 Corinthians 13:5.** (*Take a moment and read them*)
13. Therefore, when the Spirit reminds us of a sin, we must immediately ask for forgiveness and deal with it according to what He asks.
14. When we are conscious of doing wrong or when we realize that our actions or attitudes or words grieved Him, as a beloved child, a fully accepted member of the Father’s family, we confess our sin and ask Him to cleanse us, without for a second thinking, “I hope I’m still saved!”

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What is the difference between judicial and relational forgiveness? How did Jesus illustrate it?
3. What does our ongoing confession accomplish in our relationship with God?

Life Application

1. Since confession is discussed today, it would be pleasing to God to spend some time in prayer about this. This will be expanded on in a future lesson, but why not start today!
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any sins that you need to confess. Use the following guide below on your own or with someone. Instructions are included in the exercise below.

Working through the ministry steps

1. Understanding the terminology:
 - a. **Person:** refers to the person receiving spiritual ministry
 - b. **Minister:** refers to the person giving or guiding the spiritual ministry time
 - c. **If, you use the Peer-to-peer Prayer Ministry tools below on yourself (no one else present), then you are both the Person and the Minister.** If you are doing this alone I encourage you to write out the prayers in your journal.

Confession

- **Person** confesses every time a sin is uncovered to you by the Holy Spirit: *"Heavenly Father, I confess name of sin as my sin. I repent of it and ask you to forgive me."*
- **Minister** assures them of forgiveness: *"Name of person, God's Word promises when you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive you of your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. So, in Jesus name I declare that you are forgiven."*
- **Minister** breaks all ties and bondages to that sin: *"In Jesus' name I break all bondages and ties to name of sin in name of person and cleanse them with the Blood of Jesus."*

Day 3

Renew the Mind

What repentance entails

1. Repentance is something that happens with your whole being.
2. **First: repentance includes the mind**
 - a. It's an intellectual thing that understands that sin is wrong.
 - b. We see this in the life of the prodigal son.
 - c. **Luke 15:17-19 (NIV)** *When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'*
 - d. Obviously, repentance has to begin with a change of mind.
 - e. However, true repentance doesn't end with a change of mind or simply "agreeing with God" concerning our sin.
3. **Second: repentance includes the heart or emotions**
 - a. It produces a godly sorrow or grief.
 - b. **2 Corinthians 7:8-10 (NIV)** *Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it--I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while--⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*
 - c. According to this passage, the emotions can produce either a godly or worldly kind of sorrow.
 - d. The worldly sorrow ends up in death because it grieves and sorrows only over the results and effects of sin, and because it ends up in psychological guilt that is destructive and paralyzing.
 - e. Godly sorrow, on the other hand, grieves over the cause of those results – sin and sinfulness in themselves!
 - f. Godly grief, according to this passage, is wonderful because it leads to repentance – not just for unbelievers, but as in this case, for believers too!
 - g. Such repentance is heartfelt, it is intense, and it is thorough as seen by the wholesale reversal and change!
 - h. **2 Corinthians 7:10-11 (NIV)** *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.*
 - i. So, not only do we see that the guilty one who sins (in this case believers) agrees with God in the matter, but sorrow and regret is part of the repentance process too!
4. **Third: repentance includes the will**
 - a. It is a choice, an act of the will to change direction and behavior.
 - b. Right thinking always leads to right behavior!
 - c. **Luke 3:8 (NIV)** *Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*
 - d. **Revelation 9:20-21 (NIV)** *The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood--idols that cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹ Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.*
 - e. **Acts 26:20 (NIV)** *First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.*
 - f. **Revelation 16:10-11 (NIV)** *The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony ¹¹ and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.*
 - g. Repentance then, is not just agreeing with or changing our minds. It turns FROM sinful behavior and attitudes AND turns TO God.

- h. **Acts 26:20 (NIV)** *First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.*
- i. We see this turning back to the Father in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15) when he came to his senses and repented.
- j. **Luke 15:17-19 (NIV)** *When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'*
- k. What a vivid picture of repentance: the prodigal recognizes the folly of his ways, is impacted by guilt, and is eager to confess his sins and get right with his father.
- 5. Repentance then is a change of mind; a change of heart (emotions); and a change of the will, turning from sin and turning to God.
- 6. Repentance is so important to the Lord, that He disciplines us if we won't do it voluntarily.

We are to examine ourselves before the Lord

- 1. The Lord calls us to intentionally examine ourselves before Him, so that by His Spirit He can point out our sin.
- 2. Just as we are advised to receive regular medical checkups, the Scriptures wisely counsel us to do spiritual checkups as well.
- 3. **1 Corinthians 11:27-28, 31 (NIV)** *Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup ...³¹ But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.*
 - a. Paul explained that many (v. 30) believers were taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, by which he meant that they were coming before the Lord with unconfessed sin.
 - b. He warned, therefore, that they were to examine themselves BEFORE they participated in the Lord's Supper, meaning that they were to confess and repent of their sins.
 - c. We are to make an honest judgment or evaluation of ourselves and then deal with it, so that the Lord doesn't have to take the initiative to deal with our sins.
 - d. What does it mean to judge ourselves? It means to judge or deal with our sins!
- 4. In another passage, Paul even urged the believers at Corinth to examine and test themselves to ensure that they were still in the faith!
- 5. **2 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)** *Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you--unless, of course, you fail the test?*
- 6. How far from this directive are so many Western believers who are smug to just rest in some 'sinner's prayer' they may have repeated in their distant past, with no concern about their present living?
- 7. So how do we examine ourselves?
- 8. David shows us how – by asking God to do it!
- 9. **Psalms 139:23-24 (NIV)** *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* (see also Psalm 26:2)
- 10. **David knew that he couldn't trust himself to do the examination.**
- 11. What are some of the things that God examines us for? He checks: our faith; our love for Him and for others; our humility; our obedience; our holiness; our motives; our goals; and attitude.
- 12. Such examination leads to heart-felt confession and repentance before God.
- 13. And confession and repentance bring about at least the following two benefits:
 - a. It brings forgiveness
 - **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.*
 - Guilt is removed; relationship with God restored; you can hear God again!!!
 - b. It limits discipline
 - **1 Corinthians 11:28-30 (NIV)** *A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.*

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What are the three things that repentance entails?
3. What are the benefits of first examining ourselves, for any sin in our lives? And what are some of the sins that we are looking for?

Life Application

1. Can you think of a time in your life when you had worldly sorrow (sorry for yourself, sorry that you had consequences), rather than godly sorrow?
2. Can you think of a time in your life when you had godly sorrow (you were disappointed that you sinned against your Heavenly Father and against others that you love), rather than worldly sorrow?
3. Spend some time examining yourselves, with God's help, for the things that were noted in today's reading: our faith; our love for Him and for others; our humility; our obedience; our holiness; our motives; our goals; and attitude. If God reveals anything, spend some time in confession and repentance.

Day 4

Renew the Mind

Confessing to one another

1. As we already saw in a previous day, when Jesus was washing the disciples' feet just before the Passion, it was intended to be an object lesson illustrating a greater spiritual truth.
2. That's why He said, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" (John 13:7, 12)
3. We learned that though we are washed all over at salvation (1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5; John 13:10-11) we need daily or regular cleansing from sin, as symbolized by the washing of feet only, that accumulates from living in this fallen world!
4. Jesus said something very interesting after He had finished washing the disciples' feet.
5. **John 13:14-15 (NIV)** *Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.* ¹⁵ *I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*
6. He was saying that they were to wash each other's feet!
7. ***This confessional life is to be lived out in community.***
8. There are two aspects to living confessionally in community.
9. **Aspect 1** - what is quite clear to most Christians is that if a brother offends another, the offended brother is to confront the offender, and the offender is then to confess and repent.
10. The offended brother is then obligated to forgive.
11. **Luke 17:3 (NIV)** *So watch yourselves. "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him."*
12. What has been neglected by large swaths of the Christian community is that such two-way confessional living in community goes beyond personal offense.
13. For example, the writer of Hebrews instructs believers to warn one another, so that they are not hardened by sin's deceitfulness.
14. **Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)** *But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*
15. Notice that this exhortation wasn't some general encouragement to keep going – not at all!
16. The exhortation would be better thought of as a warning not to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin!
17. This is a ministry we are to undertake for one another! This is **Aspect 2** of being in confessional community. We confess our sins to one another.
18. Paul said something similar.
19. **Galatians 6:1 (NIV)** *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.* (see also Romans 15:14 NASB – admonish)
20. In Jesus' mind this is the ultimate service we can render to another! Why?
21. James gives us a powerful answer ...
22. **James 5:19-20 (NIV)** *My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, ²⁰ remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*
23. Using a striking symbolic act, Jesus instructed his disciples that this is what they are to do for one another.
24. Now it would really stretch things if we were instructed to confront someone about their sin that was leading them in the wrong direction, without expecting a response (confession & repentance) in return!
25. Which is why James says matter-of-factly ...
26. **James 5:16 (NIV)** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*
27. In the context here, the elders of the church are called to pray for a sick person.
28. And James says that this sick person will be forgiven.
29. **James 5:15 (NIV)** *And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.*
30. What is clear is that the sin committed and being confessed here is not a sin committed against the one being confessed to.
31. In this case it refers to any sin that may have contributed to that person's sickness!
32. And these sins are to be confessed openly.
33. And we see an example of this in Acts.

34. **Acts 19:18 (NIV)** *Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds.*
35. Scripture does not require that we confess to others every single sin we confess to God.
36. In fact, at times it would be quite inappropriate
37. **E.g.** You wouldn't confess certain sins of your youth, for example, to your teenager.
38. However, for wise reasons, God does at times require it, as we have already seen in James.
39. Benefits of confessing to others:
 - a. It releases healing (inner & outer) and sets us free!
 - **James 5:16 (NIV)** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*
 - We want to just confess our sins to Jesus; but we are told to confess our sins to each other.
 - b. It breaks our pride – which is at the root of all sin!
 - c. It encourages others to confess also
 - d. It brings accountability
 - e. It solicits prayer help
 - f. It solidifies the decision

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What are the two aspects of living in community confessionally?
3. What are benefits of confessing to one another?

Life Application

1. Read over the verses that were used on this day once again.
2. Spend some time with God and ask – “God, is there anything that I need to confess to another person?” Many are pleasantly surprised what kind of breakthroughs can happen when we confess to one another!

Day 5

Renew the Mind

Jesus judges' believers who do not confess and repent of their sins

1. We noted above that the Bible teaches us to examine and judge our own sins.
2. And there's good reason to do so because Jesus judges our sins in two ways.

First: Jesus will judge believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ

1. **Romans 14:10 (NIV)** *You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.*
2. Paul says we believers will ALL stand before God's judgment seat.
3. And it's clear he is saying that the believers who are judging or having arrogant attitudes towards their fellow believers will be judged for that at God's judgment seat!
4. In a letter to the Church at Corinth he says something similar ...
5. **2 Corinthians 5:10 (NIV)** *For we (believers) must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*
6. Now that's pointed!
7. If all our future sins had already been forgiven at salvation, there would be no mention of evil here!

Second: Jesus is judging believers in the present!

1. Our faith is so important to God that He sometimes disciplines His dearest children when they stumble along in an area.
2. Take for example the matter of believing or trusting God in Zacharias' life.
 - a. He merely asked the angel ...
 - b. **Luke 1:18 (NIV)** *How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.*
 - c. And for daring to question the vastness of God's power he was struck dumb on the spot until Elizabeth gave birth to their son John.
 - d. God longs for His children to believe His Word, and not to dispute His power.
3. However, sometimes discipline ended up in ultimate judgment.
4. In the sobering story of Ananias & Sapphira, Luke gives us a real-life example of this (Acts 5:1-11).
 - a. The two of them contrived to present the proceeds of their land sale as though it was the total, they had received.
 - b. The Holy Spirit was so displeased with their shameful lies, that He executed them before all to see.
 - c. The result was that the fear of the Lord fell on all who heard it!
 - d. Instances such as this weren't only one-time occurrences – see what Paul notes.
5. In fact, what Paul said about God's discipline ought to be sobering for all who hear it.
 - a. He said that if we won't examine ourselves, we will be judged and disciplined by the Lord!
 - b. **1 Corinthians 11:29-32 (NIV)** *For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. ³² When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.*
 - c. So much for being forgiven for future sins!
 - d. According to this passage the Lord's discipline includes, "weakness," and "sickness."
 - e. And in some cases, God's displeasure is so great, that His discipline may even bring with it, premature death of the believer (v. 30b).
6. Jesus evidently believed this too.
 - a. He had recently healed a paralytic of 38 years, at the Pool of Bethesda.
 - b. Later Jesus met up with the man at the temple and take note of what Jesus says to him.
 - c. **John 5:14 (NIV)** *"See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."*
 - d. Jesus clearly made a direct link between SOME sickness and a person's sin.
 - e. **Caveat:** Jesus was equally clear that NOT ALL sickness was related directly to the other person's sin.
 - As they passed by a man who had been blind since birth, the disciples asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" **John 9:2 (NIV)**

- To which Jesus replied, *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. John 9:3 (NIV)*
 - And this principle holds true of all afflictions – some are, and some aren't the direct result of sinful behavior on the part of the one being afflicted. The point is that the Bible teaches that sickness can be a result of sin in a person's life. The question to ask the Lord regarding sickness is, 'Lord, is there any sin in my life that is causing my sickness?' If so, repent. If not, pray for healing and strength and ask Him to show you what he wants you to learn in your suffering.
7. And if churches don't repent Jesus judges and disciplines His churches – even now!
- a. To the church at Ephesus Jesus said ...
Revelation 2:5 (NIV) *Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.*
 - b. To the church at Pergamum He said ...
Revelation 2:16 (NIV) *Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.* (Also: 2:23; 3:19)
 - c. These truths should challenge churches today.
8. And Jesus has great purposes in disciplining or judging us now.
- a. **First:** Jesus judges or disciplines us now for it results in holiness or sanctification for us
 - The writer to the Hebrews says that discipline is designed to bring about holiness.
 - **Hebrews 12:10 (NIV)** *Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.*
 - When we are disciplined by Him, we make the necessary course correction in our lives, resulting in right living – i.e. holiness or sanctification!
 - In future lessons, when we examine some of God's purposes in this, we'll recognize the discipline as His love, goodness and mercy towards us! And we'll really praise Him for that!
 - b. **Second:** Jesus judges us now so we won't have to be judged with the world
 - **1 Corinthians 11:29-32 (NIV)** *For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.³¹ But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.³² When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.*
 - He is anxious for us to remain in Him and not return to our sin and the world's ways.
 - So, in His mercy He judges us now, hoping that we will turn, so that we will not be judged with the world, and so that we may have a reward instead!
 - c. **Third:** Jesus judges or disciplines us now so that it will warn others, bringing about a fear of the Lord in them too
 - See what happened when Ananias and Sapphira were judged by the Lord.
 - **Acts 5:10-11 (NIV)** *At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.¹¹ Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.*
 - When others saw the results of sinful behavior in believers, the fear of the Lord took root in them, motivating them to refrain from sin or perhaps to turn from sin where applicable.
 - The Scriptures speak much about the fear of the Lord – and always we see it is a good thing!
 - **E.g. A hot stove element:** We don't live our lives in fear of the kitchen stove. However, we are definitely afraid of touching a stove element when it's hot – and that fear keeps us from doing such a stupid thing, which, in turn, saves us from serious injury.
 - Same with the fear of God: The Bible does not teach believers to live being afraid of God.
 - But we should certainly fear the awful consequences of sinning and running into God's wrath. Such a fear will keep us safe.
 - All this is God's love to us too!
 - He's doing everything to make it possible for us to be able to stand with confidence at the final judgment!
9. We should not take lightly this issue of dealing with our sin, as the consequences of NOT dealing with sin can be severe, whether presently or eternally.

Reflecting and Reviewing

1. Write down something that stood out to you, from the reading you just completed.
2. What are the two ways that Jesus judges our sin?
3. What are the three purposes for Jesus judging our sins now, and disciplining us for them in the present?

Life Application

1. Read over the verses that were used on this day once again.
2. Spend some time in prayer. Ask God – “have I experienced anything in the past, or am I experiencing anything presently, due to sins I was not repenting of?”
3. In response to your answer in Question 2, thank Him for loving you enough to discipline you now.
4. Also, in response to your answer in Question 2, ask God if there are any corrective steps that you need to currently take?

Day 6

Obedience

1. For this final day, we want to focus on OBEDIENCE, as we as disciples are to be doers of the Word (James 1:22-25). The Bible clearly teaches that obedience is a clear echo of our love for God (1 John 5:3).
2. It is also through obedience that we find blessing and our lives are built on a rock (Matthew 7:24-27).
3. Take this lesson and quickly scan the title and headings – do not re-read the entire lesson.
4. Humbly go before God and ask – “**what is one step of obedience that I can take as a result of this lesson?**”
5. Perhaps have a section in your journal where you record this step (and steps from future lessons). Or put it in the calendar on your phone. This shows God that we are both intending and committing to obey.
6. Write or speak out a prayer of commitment based on the step.