

SERMON NOTES

Sunday, March 9, 2025

Rhythms: Spiritual Training for Everyday Life Serving (Confession)

Train yourself to be godly. "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come." 1 Timothy 4:7-8 (NLT)

1. We all sin
2. Sin always breaks relationship (with God, others and our true self)
3. Confession opens the door to healing, reconnection, and freedom

Elements of Confession

1. Internal examination
 - a. Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)
 - b. What in my life needs to go (e.g., bitterness, pride, unforgiveness, deception, greed)?
 - c. What in my life needs to grow (e.g., love, patience, kindness, generosity, gratitude)?
2. Godly sorrow
 - a. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. Psalm 51:16-17 (NIV)
 - b. Godly sorrow grows as we acknowledge the pain that our sin has caused and empathize with those who have been harmed.
3. Commitment to change (repentance)
 - a. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. Acts 3:19 (NIV)
 - b. Repentance includes a commitment to reorienting our lives toward Jesus.
4. Acceptance of God's forgiveness and grace
 - a. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1 (NIV)



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- b. If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. 1 John 1:8-9 (NLT)

“Jesus taught that the damage done through sin was not the last word on life. Sin could be confessed. Sin could be forgiven. And sinful people could be set free.” Adele Ahlberg Calhoun

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. James 5:16 (NLT)

“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

Both scripture and modern neuroscience show that confessing our pain and our shame to an empathic and compassionate listener rewires our brain for healing and deeper intimacy.

Questions for thought and discussion:

1. How does sin break relationships or separate us from God, others and our true self? Can you think of examples from your own life?
2. How would you define shame? How is it different from guilt or godly sorrow?
3. Can you identify with the tension between wanting to be fully known but fearing rejection if you allow yourself to be fully known?
4. What has your experience been with confession? Have you had positive experiences? Have you had negative experiences?
5. How does vulnerable confession of our pain and our shame to another person lead to healing and reconnection? Why do you think God designed us to experience healing more easily when we confess to another human than when we just confess privately to God?
6. Can you think of times when you've experienced healing after sharing vulnerably with a caring and compassionate person in your life?



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7. How do you imagine God feels about you when you mess up? What do you imagine him thinking? What's God's facial expression? What does he say to you? How does this compare to the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15?
8. Take some time this week to do an internal examination and invite the Holy Spirit to point out the things that need to go and the things that need to grow. Make a list of what you hear God saying and share them with a supportive person in your life.

