

Church of the Promise

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Infusion

Become

Believe

Belong

Befriend

#10 Confession & Testimony

INFUSING THE LIFE FOUND IN CHRIST
THROUGH FAITH IN GOD'S VITAL PRECEPTS,
MAKING EVERY MEMBER WHOLE
SPIRIT, SOUL & BODY

Confession & Testimony

Session Ten

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Many people wonder why they were born. There is an innate sense deep within the heart, to become what they were destined to be. Along with that, there is often a murky cloudiness that seems to keep them from discovering that very purpose.

When we look into our own resources and history the enemy will strike a chord of shame and cause you to feel like you are lacking and should not tell anyone about certain aspects of your life. We wrap ourselves in a cloak of privacy and closely guard the hidden secrets that we believe will bring us embarrassment & shame.

This session will look at this and compare it to three precepts in Scripture that seem to contradict such inclinations. There will be a look at some misunderstood practices and bring clarity to them.

Aligning with heaven through

Confession & Testimony

I. CONFESSION:

Confessing our sin against God, ourselves & others is simply agreeing with God. He already knows our sin because nothing is hidden from his sight. When He asked Adam where he was when Adam was hiding from God; that was for Adams sake. God was gently helping Adam come to terms with the shame that sin had bound him in. That deep _____ was causing Adam to try hiding from God's holiness.

The scripture encourages us this way:

1 John 1:9

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

Confession is admitting or agreeing with the accusation, asserting its validity or truthfulness.

God does not categorize sins. Through the Cross, He has dealt once and for all, with the issue of sin. Now God wants us, having received His forgiveness, to move on. Through the cross, God says, "Shame **OFF** of you, my child." He washes away all traces & evidence of it from heaven's records. Shame has no place in the redeemed because sin is gone, but only if there is complete honesty between God & you. You must agree with God on the point of sin's hold on you before you can be freed from it. Denying sin only gives it permission to stay. Repentance begins with admitting it to the deepest part of you. Holding nothing back & there is no want to continue participating in sin. It is not enough to just know you are in sin you must admit it is not something you want at all in your life and that it has separated you from God and you no longer want to be separated from Him. From this place speak to God about your sin, tell Him what it is that you are guilty of then ask Him to forgive you and cleanse you from it. We have this promise that God is both _____ and _____ to do exactly that.

Faithful: He's going to do it.

Just: He is right to do so.

YOUR Testimony helps you overcome & encourages others in faith.

Jesus' and the example of biblical characters such as Mary Magdalene, the apostle Paul, and others display high levels of openness and transparency. When reading about them you may think that was a very natural thinking for them, but when you read closer you find that shame had them locked in a prison. They were hiding from people who would expose them to others. Jesus was willing to also expose them but not to

make them ashamed. He uncovered them from their hiding places for a different purpose. His exposure meant cleansing & finally, freedom from shame.

Revelation 12:11

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death

Many people come to church and hear great testimonies of victories won and amazing answers to prayer. These true stories of life altering encounters with God inspire and create an awareness of what God can do. That is perhaps something we have not come to expect for ourselves yet. However, the weaknesses that all of us possess, our secret shortcomings, even areas of our lives that need God's immediate intervention also inspire others. When anyone allows pride & shame to silence us about those, they consequently fail to find freedom for themselves but also reduce the chances for countless Christians who could have been inspired by their stories. They may be attending church but still feeling defeated and condemned.

II. TESTIMONY:

Testimonies are simply how we praise God for his goodness.

I Chronicles 16:8-12

*8. Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. 9. **Sing to him, sing praise to him;** tell of all his wonderful acts. 10. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. 11. Look to the LORD and his strength;*

They are the individual unique stories of how a person came to know Jesus as Lord & Savior. They have a lasting effect on the one who tells the story and the ones who hear it. Testimonies release the love and power of God to transform another life, both before and

after meeting Jesus. They reveal the importance and beauty of being able to be honest and transparent before others.

The person sharing their testimony will convey how God the Father has shown His compelling desire to help them. Many overwhelming odds withstand every soul that leaps into the captivating heart of God. No matter what the obstacles may have been God is faithful to help us overcome them all. Events, people who shared the hope of Christ, how prayer was answered, and more are told in every unique testimony.

We've selected a few of the many Biblical testimonies.

1. Jesus Christ (*Matthew 26:36-39*)

- A. Christ disclosed to His disciples that His soul was "grieved to the point of death."
- B. He did not try to hide this aspect of His nature from them.

2. Mary Magdalene (*Mark 16:9*)

- A. She was referred to as "the one He had cast seven demons out of."
- B. Obviously, Mary did not mind this. She had been healed and became more than comfortable with a high degree of transparency concerning her past and what the Lord had done for her.

3. Genesarsene demoniac (*Mark 5:1-19*)

- A. Jesus instructed him to go to his people and inform them concerning the wonderful things God had done for him.
- B. He was expected to be extremely transparent with others after his initial encounter with Jesus.

I. The Bible defines sin for us (*James 4: 1 7*).

1. The Bible also explains how sin becomes a reality in a person's life (*James 1:12-15*).
2. Sin is devastating to individuals, marriages, families, and whole communities. Many will defend or cover up sin their when it becomes socially normal in their circles. But the ultimate end of sin is death (*Romans 6:23, James 1:15*); however, its effects from the start are horrendous. Almost without exception, innocent victims also suffer due to the repercussions of sins committed. This is especially true in closely-knit relationships, such as friendships, marriages, families, and churches, where people let down their defense mechanisms, granting one another varying degrees of trust and vulnerability.
3. Sin should be treated as a spiritual cancer; it is life threatening to the spiritual life of the believer as well as to those he relates to interpersonally. *Romans 6 The Message Bible*

CAUTION:

Transparency should not include detailed depictions of anything sinful or in any way inappropriate.

Don't create images that may become a unintended temptation for the people you share with. Stories do create pictures in our imaginations as we hear them. And graphic imagery is often very hard to release from our memory. This is the very thing that makes our stories so impacting. However, that impact must be framed with purity. It is enough to say an area or event without describing too many details that may damage the hearers.

Telling Your Story

FOR CHRISTIANS WHO CAN TRACE THEIR CONVERSION TO A SPECIFIC POINT

1. Attitudes & actions before I became a Christian

Describe your life before Jesus. What was your life like- what were your feelings, attitudes, actions and relationships? What caused you to begin considering a solution to your needs?

2. Circumstances surrounding my conversion

Consider the time, date, place, people, motivation, etc. What realization did you come to that finally motivated you to commit your life to Christ? Maybe you can summarize gospel here: death, burial, rising to life, forgiveness of Jesus. Verbalize how YOU prayed to God.

3. Changes in my attitude and actions since my conversion

What benefits have you experienced since becoming a Christian? How is your life different? Describe how Jesus is blessing and looking after you today.

PEOPLE WHO BECAME A CHRISTIAN AT A YOUNG AGE

1. Encounter with Jesus

Describe your early life and when and how Christianity was involved. If appropriate, include family or church background. Avoid naming denominations.

2. Circumstances surrounding a crisis or special encounter with Jesus

Describe one or more events that brought you to a deeper trust in Jesus. What realization did you come to that finally motivated you to seriously follow Jesus? Verbalize how you made you deeper commitment to Him. Consider the time, date place, people, motivation, etc. Maybe you can Summarize gospel here: death, burial, raising to life, forgiveness of Jesus. Verbalize how YOU prayed to God.

3. Changes in my attitudes and actions since my conversion

What benefits have you experienced since becoming serious about Jesus. How is your life different? Describe how Jesus is blessing and looking after you today.

THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING: Ecclesiastes

Use the Bible Study tool as you read. The next session will come from a portion of this book. Return your completed form for credit. You will get much more from the time if you prepare in advance by reading prayerfully through the assignment: