

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



June 23, 2013

Confess Your Sins

We will never make any progress in overcoming our weaknesses and mistakes if we refuse to own up to them. That's why confessing our sins is such an important part of our walk with God.

“I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin” (Psa. 32:5).

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (Jas. 5:16).

Our society long ago jettisoned the concept of sin as a relic of a more unsophisticated age. Today, rather than confess our sins, we redefine them as “failing to meet our potential.” Or we blame others for the mess we made; or we minimize the seriousness of the error; or we stubbornly deny that we did anything wrong at all.

Why it is so important that we confess our sins? From a purely practical standpoint, it's the only way we can make any progress in improving our character. If we cannot admit that we have a problem, it's impossible to fix it. From a psychological standpoint, the willingness to confess our sins is essential to our emotional wellbeing.

Consider the two parties to whom confession should be made. The first is *God* (“confess . . . to the Lord”). Telling God that we have sinned seems so abstract and pointless. After all, God already knows everything we've done, right? And He does not respond to our confession in any visible, tangible way, so what's the point? David's experience in Psalms 32 reveals the value of this private act of honesty. Prior to his confession, while he “kept silent” about his sin (v. 3), he felt the sharp pangs of guilt: “groaning all the day long” (v. 3); his “vitality was turned into . . . drought” (v. 4). But once he acknowledged his wrong to God, he felt the cathartic relief of forgiveness (v. 5).

The second party to whom we should confess our sins is *other believers* (“confess . . . to one another”). When we are transparent with others, we accomplish two things: First, we make ourselves accountable for our actions. The feedback, encouragement, and counsel that others provide us can be immensely helpful in overcoming our weaknesses. And certainly if our sins

involve pain that we have caused others, then a genuine apology can go a long way toward providing the reconciliation—James uses the word “healing”—that we seek. Strong relationships are built upon this kind of honest humility.

When we refuse to confess our sins—either to God or to others—we are displaying a symptom of a deeper and more serious sin: *pride*. By keeping our sins bottled up, hidden, out of sight, we're being dishonest, not just with God and others, but with ourselves.

It requires a great deal of humility to openly admit that we've made a serious mistake. But once we have mustered the courage to make that admission, we are then in a better position to address the issues that led to the sin. We're better people for it. And that's a good thing.

Confession of sin is not just a generic acknowledgement that “I am a sinner.” That's important, but confession also involves being as specific about our wrongdoing as possible. Once we build that habit into our character, we'll make great progress in our growth as children of God.

— David King