

Confessing Our Way to Joy (Romans 7:14-25)

- Proverbs 24:16. “The righteous man falls seven times, and rises again.”

- William Romaine. “No sin can be crucified either in heart or life unless it first be pardoned in conscience...if it be not mortified in its guilt, it cannot be subdued in its power.”¹

- 1 John 1:9. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- Romans 7. “(14) For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am [in possession] of [a sinful] flesh [that is] sold into bondage to sin. (15) For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. (16) But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. (17) So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.
 (18) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. (19) For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. (20) But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.
 (21) I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. (22) For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, (23) but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and [seeking to] make me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.
 (24) Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?
 (25) Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!....”

¹ William Romaine. *The Whole Works of the Late William Romaine*, volume II, 74.

6 Lessons
...about confession of sin

#1 The path to a deeper experience of gospel grace comes through a maturing honesty in searching out and confessing our sins.

#2 It is the experience of gospel grace that gives us courage to be more honest in searching out and confessing our sins.

- A. Romans 5. “(1) Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) through whom also we have obtained our entry by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult (3) . . . we exult (11) . . . we exult.”
- B. Romans 5:5. “...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit”
- C. Romans 6. “(7) . . . freed from sin . . . (18) . . . freed from sin (22) . . . freed from sin”
- D. Romans 7:4. “. . . that you might be joined to . . . Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God.”

#3 Our confessions of sins should feature a heavy use of the biblical vocabulary of sin.²

- A. Romans 7. “(17) ... sin... (19) ... evil ... (20) ... sin ... (21) ... evil ... (23) ... sin ... (25) ... sin ...”
- B. Co-dependency, affair, sexual addiction, stressed, bad mood, mistake, struggling, etc.

#4 Healthy confession involves confessing sin as coming from within ourselves.

- A. Romans 7. “(17) . . . sin which indwells me. . . (18) . . . in me . . . flesh . . . (20) sin which dwells in me.”
- B. Romans 7. “(15) For what I am doing I do not understand . . . (21) I find then the principle that evil is present in me . . . (23) I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and [seeking to] make me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.”
- C. Genesis 3.
- v. 11. “Have you eaten of the tree that I told you not to eat?”
 - v. 12. “The woman, whom You gave to be with me, she gave to me from the tree, and I ate.”
- D. Luke 18:13. “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!”

² A supplemental resource to help you in this area is *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions* (Banner of Truth Trust). This book includes 28 prayers of repentance and confession. Many other prayers in the book also feature characterizations of sin that are richly informed by Scripture.

#5 Our confessions of sin should embody a recognition that our sin is not the full truth about us.

A. Paul confesses his hatred of sin and desire for righteousness:

- Romans 7:15. He genuinely wants to do what is right. (see also v. 19)
- Romans 7:15. He “hates” the sin he is committing (see also vv. 19, 20)
- Romans 7:16. He “agrees” with the Law, “confessing” that it is good
- Romans 7:22. He “joyfully concurs” with the Law of God

B. Paul confesses that there is a distinction between himself and his sin:

- Romans 7:17. “So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which indwells me.”
- Romans 7:20. “If I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.”

#6 Our confessions of sin should always conclude with turning to Jesus Christ and confessing gospel truth.

A. Confess. to “say the same thing”

B. Romans 7. “(24) Oh, wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? (25) Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

C. Romans 8:

- v. 1. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
- v. 2. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of **sin** and death.” (NKJV)
- v. 3. “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and an offering for **sin**, He condemned **sin** in the flesh.”

Ways Sin Wins & Loses

If I sin and then deny it, sin wins.

If I sin and then call my sin good, sin wins.

If I sin and then minimize the evil of it, sin wins.

If I sin and blame others, sin wins.

If I sin and blame my circumstances, sin wins.

If I sin and then say, "This is who I am and who I forever will be," sin wins.

But if, having sinned, I confess it as wholly mine and no one else's,

If I flee to the cross and bathe in Christ's atoning blood,

If I confess at the cross that my sin is condemned and I am justified,

And if I hearken to my Savior's voice which says, "You are free,"

Then is my sin defeated and Christ glorified.