

## Equipped to get right with God

How do you normally respond when you find you've blown it - yet again? Could you use some help when it comes to admitting, or confessing, your wrongdoing to God? Here are some suggestions, based on the word **CONFESS**.

**Come into the presence of God:** When we become aware of a particular sin in our lives, God's presence is probably the last place we want to be. But this is the first step in acknowledging our wrongdoing to him. Find a place where you can be alone, with as few distractions as possible, and meet him there.

**Offer praise to the One who never changes:** This gets our eyes off ourselves and onto the One who is worthy of our adoration and thanksgiving. We can praise God by focusing on what he is like. For example, he is compassionate<sup>1</sup>; good<sup>2</sup>; forgiving<sup>3</sup>; and merciful<sup>4</sup>. He is always like this, no matter what we've done. This gives us confidence to confess our sin to him.

**Never think your sin is too big or too small to bring to God:** Perhaps you think you've done something so massively wrong there's no way God could ever forgive you. Maybe you're aware of little sins in your life, but you think they don't really matter so you can ignore them. All "degrees" of sin are offensive to God as well as damaging to us and, therefore, need to be confessed if we are to truly appreciate the benefits of forgiveness.

**Focus on Christ's sacrifice on the cross:** It's always helpful to come back to the centre of our Christian faith, the cross of Calvary. Spend time thinking about Christ dying there for each of your sins (including the one(s) you're about to confess) and remind yourself that he offered himself as a perfect sacrifice so that a holy God could pardon imperfect sinners like you and me.

**Expect God to hear what you have to say:** Have you ever tried speaking to someone, only to find they weren't listening? Frustrating, huh? Thankfully, it's not like that when we confess our wrongdoings to God. If we are genuine about sorting things out between ourselves and God, then we can be certain that our confession will be heard and that he will respond to us in mercy.

**Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance:** There are times when we feel guilty about something even when we haven't actually done anything wrong. There are other times when we have done something wrong, but don't feel guilty about it. So, we can't always trust our feelings when it comes to knowing what to confess. You might find it helpful to ask the Holy Spirit to show you what is wrong in your life so you can confess it and enjoy the forgiveness he's so ready to extend.

**Specifically name your sin to God:** Once you know what needs to be confessed, don't be afraid to name that sin before God. It might be a wrong attitude, or unkind speech, or some form of inappropriate behaviour. Perhaps it's something you haven't done which you ought to have done. Whatever it is, specifically naming your sin to God enables you to face up to it for what it is. Doing this means you are agreeing with God about your sin, which is at the very heart of confession, and you are less likely to ignore it or rationalize it.

I'm very thankful our God is a merciful God who is so willing to forgive us when we confess our sins to him<sup>5</sup>. Sin doesn't need to have the last word, so let's not allow feelings of guilt or condemnation to hold us back from confessing those things that rob us of being in a right relationship with the God who loves us and gave himself for us.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 145:8

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 25:8

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 6:14

<sup>4</sup> Luke 6:36

<sup>5</sup> 1 John 1:9