

Prayer of Confession

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1

Now I am happy, not because you were made sorry,

but because your sorrow led you to repentance. 2 Cor. 7:9

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

Prov. 4:23

A confession of sin is the occasion for us not only to detach from and repent of the actions of sin and independence from God, but to become aware of (“watch over”) the deeper habits of the heart and unbelief that generate our sin and autonomy. In confession, we simultaneously open to the truth of ourselves *and* the truth of Christ’s atonement, letting the gospel continue to transform our hearts.

- 1) As you pray the first part of this prayer below, allow the Holy Spirit to identify areas of sin and autonomy in your day. Take time to move through your day or week, identifying where in *thought, word and deed* you disobeyed God or acted apart from Him. What invitation, command or prompting from the Holy Spirit have you been resisting (*what we have left undone*)? Talk openly with the Lord about these things, and do not let shame or guilt cause you to repress or push the truth of yourself away. You are not condemned, though it is appropriate to feel sadness and regret before the Lord.

“Most merciful God,

We confess that we have sinned against you

In thought, word, and deed,

By what we have done,

And by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.”

- 2) Now, as you hold an awareness of your sin before you and the Lord, also become aware that God is still with you and for you. Because of Christ’s atonement, his dominant attitude toward you is love, although he sees, grieves, and can even be angry with your sin. Hold these truths together in your heart—your sin, his holiness, and his love. Return to the cross, realizing again that our sin was given to him and his righteousness was given to us. Sit with these truths below:

“If we confess our sins,

he is faithful and just

and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 Jn. 1:9)

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor. 5:21)

- 3) Now with the prayer below, repent. Resolve to the Lord to “walk in his ways” in these particular areas where you have sinned or struggle. Knowing that some of these sins are deeply rooted in your heart and its habits, ask the Lord to help you (*have mercy on us*). Ask the Holy Spirit what deeper things need to be addressed in you, knowing that our sinful actions are often just the tip of the iceberg, pointing to a deeper work that needs to be done in our hearts. To what might the Spirit be inviting or calling you?

“We are truly sorry and we humbly repent,

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,

Have mercy on us and forgive us;

That we may delight in your will,

And walk in your ways,

To the glory of your Name. Amen.