



2020 Focus: GOD Sight is 2020

The Inward Disciplines: *The Discipline of Confession*

“The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works.”

~ *Augustine*

- Confession and forgiveness are realities that transform us.
- Without the cross, confession would only be psychologically therapeutic.
- Confession involves an objective change in our relationship with God & a more subjective change in us.
- Confession is a means of healing and transforming the inner spirit.
- Confession is a grace as well as a Discipline.

Philippians 2:12, Ephesians 4:13, I Timothy 2:5, James 5:16

“Confession is a difficult Discipline for us because we all too often view the believing community as a fellowship of saints before we see it as a fellowship of sinners. We feel that everyone else has advanced so far into holiness that we are isolated and alone in our sin. We cannot bear to reveal our failures and shortcomings to others.”

~ *Richard J. Foster*

I. The Authority To Forgive

- A. Christ gives us the authority.
- B. This authority is based on grace not merit.
- C. There is still an efficacy in private confession.
- D. Even Martin Luther believed in mutual, brotherly confession.

John 20:23

“A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. As long as I am by myself in the confession of my sins everything remains in the dark, but in the presence of a brother the sin has to be brought into the light.”

~ *Deitrich Bonhoeffer*

II. The **Advice** In The Giving Of A Confession

- A. There must be the **examination** of conscience.
- B. There must be a **godly** conscience.
- C. There must be a **determination** to avoid sin.
- D. Confession isn't the **permanent** habit of self-condemnation
- E. When confessing to someone, make sure they have the following **qualifications**: spiritual maturity, wisdom, compassion, good common sense, the ability to keep a confidence, and a wholesome sense of humor.

“Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God.....such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth.” ~ *Martin Luther*

III. The **Counsel** In The Receiving Of A Confession

- A. We must be **prepared** to rightly hear the confession of a person.
- B. We must learn to **live** under the Cross.
- C. Be prepared to hear the **worst** things from the **best** people.
- D. Be delivered from the **danger** of spiritual **domination**.
- E. When people are opening their griefs to us, **be silent**.
- F. Do not try to pry more details than necessary.

“The Discipline of confession brings an end to pretense ... Honesty leads to confession, and confession leads to change.”

“Anybody who lives beneath the Cross and who has discerned in the Cross of Jesus the utter wickedness of all men and of his own heart will find there is no sin that can ever be alien to him. Anybody who has once been horrified by the dreadfulfulness of his own sin that nailed Jesus to the Cross will no longer be horrified by even the rankest sins of a brother.” ~ *Deitrich Bonhoeffer*