God has redeemed us from sin through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The sacrifice of Jesus was to heal our sin NATURE. The blood of Jesus is able to redeem us from past, present and future sin. However to STAY free of its power, God has provided the instrument of CONFESSION. To maintain a healthy Christian walk, believers should make every effort to keep their spirits free of impurities.

In developing our character as Christian disciples, it is helpful to understand how God purifies us on an ongoing basis. To do this, we should understand the nature of sin and how it can be addressed.

**The Origins of sin**
God created humankind in God’s own image, and intended for humanity to peacefully coexist with God in paradise. However when sin entered the world through human disobedience a breach (separation) was created in the relationship (Isaiah 59:2) requiring reconciliation. Each subsequent sin (or transgression of God’s law) reestablishes that separation. As Biblical “death” means both mortality (physical death) and separation from God, sin by definition carries a “death sentence.” (Romans 6:23a, Genesis 2:17)

After the Exodus, the Law of Moses was established, which gave humanity a means by which it could know what sin was and when we were sinning. (Romans 7:7-13). Through the law, humankind could realize how sinful it was.

**Sin’s remission**
Because sin results in death, and because God cares about God’s relationship with humankind, God instituted a system to restore the relationship and bring about remission (cancellation of a debt). The remission is brought about by something dying (losing its life) in the place of the one who sins.
- Leviticus 17:11 – The essence of life of a living being is in its blood
- Hebrews 9:22 – Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin

The Law thus required that sin be remitted through the system of blood sacrifice. However this system proved inadequate, because the very nature of humankind had been corrupted and continually tended toward sin (Hebrews 9:9). Therefore Jesus Christ came to earth and shed HIS blood ONCE AND FOR ALL for the sins of all, past, present and future. (Hebrews 9:11-14, 24-28) Thus the blood sacrifices are no longer required.

**The Role of Confession**
- To activate this sacrifice NOW, however, what is required is CONFESSION. (1 John 1:8,9; 2:1)
- The forgiveness of sins is not just our ticket into heaven, it is one of the keys to maturity (Eph. 4:13). To walk in victory is to overcome sin’s diseases That’s why Paul said salvation should be “worked out” (Phil 2:12)
God is not wanting to withhold forgiveness—God’s DESIRE is to forgive (2 Peter 3:9)

- Jesus went to the cross to experience the fullness of humanity, and became sin for us (2 Cor 5:21)
- Our hesitation often has more to do with US, than with God.
- Confession is both a grace (a gift) and a discipline—something we must engage continually.

Confession is both PERSONAL and CORPORATE

- Thanks to the reformation, we are not bound to confess our sins to a priest in order to receive forgiveness. There is ONE mediator between God and humanity (1Timothy 2:5). Personal acknowledgement of sin before God is necessary for God’s forgiveness.
- However, some aspects of sin will not be healed unless one receives the help of another person (James 5:16)
- The believing community is a “fellowship of sinners in need of redemption.”
- The fellowship of believers has been given authority to be instruments of God’s forgiveness (John 20:23). We are all priests before God (1 Peter 2:9)
- Confession to another believer is effective for truthfulness, compassion and accountability (Hebrews 3:13)
- We are instruments of GOD’S compassion for each other.

About Confessing

- Understand that God’s greatest desire is to forgive you, and release you
- Allow the Spirit’s discernment to lead you in selecting someone to confess with. (Matthew 7:6)
- Examination of conscience (should be searching, specific). It may not be necessary to get into the specifics of the sin when confessing to another, however one should have at least acknowledged it to oneself.
- Godly sorrow is not just tears or emotion, but a sense of true regret (James 4:7-10)
- A determination to avoid sin is needed. (Matthew 5:29-30) Be willing to put some things in place to avoid the behavior or the sin, and for the person to somehow hold you accountable
- Rejoice in the knowledge that your confession is the first step toward your healing.

On Hearing Someone’s Confession

- Be prepared EVERY DAY that someone might come to you with their heart in their hands. Remain “prayed up.” (1 Peter 3:15)
- Stand in the shadow of the cross as you look at the other person. Remember that same cross redeemed YOU (Galatians 6:1,2) See people “through the cross” as God sees them (2 Cor. 5:16). Understand that that there IS NO BIG OR LITTLE SIN, and that WE ALL stand equally guilty. (Hebrews 4:13, 2 Cor. 5:10)
- Understand that you are REPRESENTING CHRIST in that moment when someone is led by the Spirit to talk to you about their sin. What would Jesus do? (2 Cor. 5:20)
- Do not analyze the sin—wait quietly and let the person pour out their heart.
- Offer counsel from scripture, not from YOUR OPINION. (Romans 15:4)
- PRAY before, during, and after a person shares their burden with you (James 5:16)
- Allow the compassion of the Lord to flow through you. Try to EMPATHIZE. (Romans 12:15)

God is calling us into being a church that can openly confess its frail humanity and know the forgiving and empowering graces of Christ. Honesty leads to confession, and confession leads to change.