

THE MEANS OF GRACE

CONFESSION

DEVOTION

CONFESSION

What sins should we confess?

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even those we are not aware of, as we do in the Lord's Prayer; but before the pastor we should confess only those sins which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?

Consider your place in life according to the Ten Commandments: Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or worker? Have you been disobedient, unfaithful, or lazy? Have you been hot-tempered, rude, or quarrelsome? Have you hurt someone by your words or deeds? Have you stolen, been negligent, wasted anything, or done any harm?

For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover up my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:3–5)

FOR SHARING

1. "Confession is good for the soul." Share a story or an example that demonstrates the truth of this adage.
2. The sins "we know and feel in our hearts" are rightly confessed to our pastor. What is it about private confession that brings great comfort to troubled hearts?
3. In private confession with a pastor, what can Christians depend on:
The pastor must _____
The pastor must *not* _____
4. We plead guilty. Our Father declares us "not guilty" for the sake of His Son. In what ways does Christ's forgiveness help us to confess our sins openly to our heavenly Father? to our pastor or Christian brother or sister?
5. Because of Christ, what change does God's Spirit work in our hearts toward those who sin against us?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I admit and deplore my sinfulness, yet I rejoice that Your love in Christ brings me forgiveness and life. Help me not to judge others but to humbly carry out my vocation as Your servant for Jesus' sake. In His name I pray. Amen.