

How Healthy Confession Can Bless You Abundantly

The art of messy, vulnerable, healthy confession is not always an easy or comfortable one. I was joking recently with a friend about an old-school, Christian-ism, the “unspoken.” Back in youth group prayer circles, if someone didn’t feel comfortable sharing the details of their prayer request, they’d ask for prayer over an “unspoken.” It was a helpful, albeit funny way to maintain privacy in a group setting.

While the “unspoken” has long since gone out of style, there’s something to be said of how we engage in our communities of faith as adults today. I’ve observed two major methodologies in Christian circles: “safe sharing” and “packaged sharing.”

“Safe sharing” is glossing over the guts of the truth (perhaps the grown-up version of the “unspoken”). It’s saying something but nothing at the same time. It sounds something like, “I’m dealing with a family issue,” but never admitting that last night’s screamfest with your mom shook you up. “I need financial peace,” but never voicing the anxiety attack you had after your credit score dropped below 600.

“Packaged sharing” occurs when we occasionally open up at a breaking point, but quickly move on. We hit a low point, ask for prayer and then it’s rarely spoken of until something has been defeated or there’s a praise to be reported.

We want our struggles to fit neatly into a testimony narrative of “I suffered; I overcame.”

The reality of constantly stumbling, tripping and backsliding isn’t nearly as compelling. It fuels our fear of vulnerability and prevents us from seeking help from our peers.

What Both Methods Lack

Both methods of sharing are devoid of the purpose and freedom of painful, honest, consistent, healthy confession. We all experience seasons of rising and falling; our spiritual walk will never cease to naturally oscillate simply because we're human. There's nothing wrong with privacy and healthy boundaries, but how often do we invite others into our perpetually messy reality? A reality where sharing is uncomfortable or embarrassing—where it's a daily battle? We need conversations to go deeper and happen more often. We need to practice *true confession*.

The toughest part of admitting our shortcomings is shame. Shame keeps us from embracing God's grace and infects us with humiliation. We fear people will see us differently, and ironically enough, that fear is often amplified in tight-knit Christian circles. However, it's in the messy humiliation of healthy confession that God's redemptive love thrives.

Healthy Confession Makes a Difference

Healthy confession is not the admittance of worthlessness, it's the admittance of God's necessary grace.

When we practice confronting our fallibility with openness, we are forced to allow God to anchor our identity in Him and not in what the world thinks. We surrender our concern with opinions and embrace how God sees us.

A friend of mine once said, "Sin thrives in silence—it fills the little cracks of our lives until the pressure rises and creates boundless chaos." When we let others stand alongside us in faith, we invite God into the cracks. We aren't meant to suffer in silence. Just like baptism is an outward expression of an inner change, healthy confession to a circle of counsel echoes our continual, inward acceptance of God's grace.

Burden or Blessing?

Confession isn't a burden; it's an uncomfortable but

liberating gift.

God didn't create us to navigate life alone: we were created for fellowship. Just as James 5:16 states, "Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." God's grace is always sufficient, but it doesn't mean He intends for us to live in isolation with our sins. Openness with each other allows us to seek true healing and change.

Confession takes courage. Courage takes Jesus.

We can't will ourselves to be better at vulnerability; it takes inviting the Holy Spirit to abandon our fears. Lean on God to help you discern the right people to trust and to give you the courage to be bold in your sharing. Entrust your circle with your sorrows, your pain, your embarrassments, your consistent frustrations—the freedom will lead you to new spiritual heights. {eoa}

Chanshi Chibwe is a writer for the Lightworkers team. LightWorkers' mission is to create engaging, uplifting and inspirational content that breaks through the clutter, building a community of sharing and igniting a movement in the real world that motivates people to celebrate and share the good all around them. Find them at