

# DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

## DISCIPLINE OF DEVOTION

### CONFESSION

**There can be no ongoing devotion without confession**, which can take place anytime. Ideally it ought to take place whenever we sin. But all too often we are too proud and emotionally charged to acknowledge our sin at the time we commit it — for example, when we lose our temper in an argument. *But devotion is impossible if we are overloaded with guilt.*

#### *Spontaneous Confession*

If we have put off admitting our sins to God, confession may need to come first in our devotional time. There is also the probability that during Scriptural meditation, or even during adoration, further hidden sins will come to light. *So our moments of devotion may be filled with repeated confession.* It is instructive to notice that [Psalm 139](#), which systematically contemplates God's omnipotence and omniscience, ends with a prayer for divine investigation of the Psalmist's soul:

**“Search me, O God,  
and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.”**

**([Psalm 139:23-24](#))**

Likewise, as Isaiah was worshiping he cried out in confession, **“Woe to me! ... I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty”** ([Isaiah 6:5](#)).

#### *Systematic Confession*

While understanding that confession should happen spontaneously, our discipline of devotion ought to involve systematic confession as well. **First**, we must confess what we are, the ontological reality that we truly are *sinner*s. [Romans 3:9–20](#) is the text I have found most helpful on this point, for it repeatedly affirms that we are sinners — that, in fact, our entire being is tainted with evil. It is most important that we regularly make this confession because, as regenerated men who are making some progress in spiritual growth, it is sinfully natural to falsely suppose we are rising above our condition — a delusion which testifies to our very depravity.

**Bible Study: Discipline for Godliness**

**Discipleship Series:**

**Pastor Eddie Idefonso**

**Second**, we must confess our **specific sins**. I would suggest making a list of our sins, for the act of writing them out helps materialize this personal reality for us. **C. S. Lewis** said, “We must lay before him what is in us, not what ought to be within us.” This done, we should confess each sin by its ugly name, and then thank God for His forgiveness through the blood of His Son.

*The importance of confession for the devotional life cannot be overstated. “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” ([Psalm 66:18](#); cf. [Proverbs 28:13](#)).* Unconfessed sin makes the heavens seem like brass. But confession not only opens the heavens, it also enhances our intimacy with God, as **François Fenelon** urged:

“Tell [God] all that is in your heart, as one unloads one’s heart to a dear friend... People who have no secrets from each other never want for subjects of conversation; they do not ... weigh their words, because there is nothing to be kept back. Neither do they seek for something to say; they talk out of the abundance of their heart — without consideration, just what they think.... Blessed are they who attain to such familiar, unreserved intercourse with God.”