

## REPENTANCE AND THE ACT OF REPENTING

Let me make some specific suggestions:

1. Public confession must be cautiously made so as not to provoke others to sin.
2. Public confession must be prudently given so as not to shame any who might be affected by the sin. Imagine the devastation to a man's wife if she were to learn in a public setting of her husband's infidelity.
3. Public confession must be carefully and honestly made in such a way that the person confessing is not placing the guilt of his personal sin on others.
4. Public confession must be sincerely given and not mischievously used as a means of getting even or venting rage.
5. Public confession must be shamefully made, demonstrating true remorse and repentance.
6. Public confession must be adequately made, leaving no questions concerning what you are confessing or what you are going to do about it.
7. Public confession must be justly made, not indicting others but openly acknowledging your own sin.
8. Public confession must be humbly made, without rancor or evil speaking.
9. Public confession must be cautiously made, lest you say more than you mean and can demonstrate to be true by your ongoing repentance.
10. Public confession must be soberly made, making light of evil or lessen the offence lest you offend God by conviction of sin in others.

### PUBLIC CONFESSION OF CORPORATE SIN

Just as every individual sins, so does every corporate entity. And just as every individual sinner must both repent and confess his or her sin, so, every corporate entity must do the same.

1. Public confession of corporate sin is much too significant to be rushed into quickly or and carelessly, thus robbing it of its great meaning
2. Be certain that the entire corporate entity has prayerfully participated in the preparation of the catalog of sins to be confessed.

### THE CONFESSION OF PRIVATE SIN

*"A sin should be confessed as widely as the influence of that sin has spread." Because all sin is against God, it must first and foremost confessed to Him."*

*The apostle James urged, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed" (5:16).*

Doubtless he was referring particularly to physical healing, but spiritual Healing is also at stake. There are many in our churches who seem to be in the vise-like grip of sin. There are times when public confession of those private sins will greatly aid the sinner in gaining ascendancy over those sins and thus in being healed.

However, special care must be taken especially in terms of sexual sins. During times of public confession, it is wise to have a mature and godly leader to whom the confession is first confided. He then determines the propriety or impropriety of allowing a public statement.

## **CONFESSION OF PERSONAL SIN**

*REPENTANCE was not ordained by God as a means of heading off the consequences of sin or of gaining some selfish end.*

*2. Confession of sin must be freely made, being prompted by the Holy Spirit of God and the desire of the heart to be right with both God and man.*

*Confession that is coerced by others or driven by external pressure has no validity.*

*3. Confession of sin demands a willingness to assume appropriate levels of blame for the evil done; it must not be invalidated by blaming others for your own personal sin.*

*4. Confession of sin must be definite and must not degenerate to vagaries such as, "If I have done anything wrong, please forgive me. You have done wrong! Candidly admit that wrong.*

*5. Confession of sin must be particular. Sins are committed one by one and must be confessed the same way.*

*6. Confession of sin must be full and complete. The all-seeing eye of God has noted every one of your sins. Do not offend Him by confessing only a portion of them.*

*7. Confession of sin must include acknowledgment of all the aggravations that have worsened your sins. Sins can be made more heinous by the circumstances under which they occur. For instance, a sin committed by one who knows better is more aggravated than a sin of ignorance; a Pharisee-like sin cloaked in religious garb is an aggravated sin.*

*8. Confession of sin must expose the roots, not merely clip the branches.*

*9. Confession of sin must be without excuses, self-justification, or explanations.*

*10. Confession of sin must be accompanied by feelings appropriate to the circumstance: shame, remorse, or tears, for instance.*

*11. Confession of sin must include a determination to turn completely and forever from that sin*

*12. Confession of sin must be made by the sinner himself. None of us has the power to confess other people's sins in their place. No mother can effectually confess the sins of her children for them. No wife can confess the sins of her husband. No pastor can confess the sins of his people in their place. Every individual must confess his or her own sins.*