

Self-Examination & Confession

October

This month we will spend time both reflecting on the brokenness we bring to our work and confessing it in a way that invites God to continue changing us. It is a powerful discipline to develop our humility, gratitude, dependence upon God, and authentic availability to the world...*at our workplaces.*

The spirit of confession is not to wallow in how miserable we are, to legalistically rake our lives over the coals, or to appease God in any way. Rather it is to become more conscious of that which God is forgiving and growing in us, receiving anew the complete forgiveness already offered to us through Christ. Confession is relational, leading to repentant living – literally a change of mind that fosters a change in actions.

Practicing Self-Examination

Take the first week of the month and commit to a process of self-examination about your work. This is a practice of submitting yourself to the Holy Spirit and asking him to make you aware of ways that you engage work in a way that dishonors God, others, and yourself. This could involve a brief reflection on the day before you head home and/or keeping a private journal or log of the things that God brings to mind throughout the days of the week.

Broaden your self-examination to include both sins of commission and sins of omission – that which you do and the good you fail to do. Think in terms of your relationships, words, actions, and attitudes.

- Anxiety and fear
- Greed
- Pride
- Anger and frustration
- Attitudes about others
- Gossip or speaking about coworkers without respect and love
- Wasting time and slacking off
- Misleading others (boss, clients, coworkers) – by lying outright or exaggerating
- Missed opportunities to care for someone
- Ignoring the poor or disadvantaged
- Apathy
- Idolatry – even overvaluing good things

- Unhealthy conflict
- Not resting and having boundaries from work
- Not integrating the gospel
- Institutional sins
- Service of self over others
- Lack of mindfulness of God
- Value extraction
- Abuse of creation

For the first week, just try to deepen your awareness of these kinds of brokenness before God.

Practicing Confession

In light of your self-examination, here are some simple practices of confession to engage the remaining weeks of the month:

- At the end of each day, reflect back on the day and receive God's forgiveness for ways you sinned in work.
- As you practice confession at work more, simply confess things immediately as you recognize them in the moment.
- Use the Prayer of Confession from the *Book of Common Prayer* (see below), pausing at various ideas in the prayer as a guide to your reflection about your work.
- Keep a running journal or log for the month of what you are confessing. At the end of the month, look for themes that emerge. Again, don't let this be a legalistic or self-deprecating practice.
- Take the risk of confessing to another trusted Christian (see James 5:16). The goal of this is to deepen our honesty and hope for transformation with a friend.

Our hope is to have a deeper awareness of areas within us (i.e. the worker) that need Christ's renewal, even as we join him in his "renewal of all things" (Colossians 1) through our work.

Prayer of Confession

In connection to your times of confession, you might consider praying this prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer*.

*Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you*

*in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.*

[Pause briefly here to reflect on sins
your self-examination has revealed]

*We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name.
Amen.*