

When We Confess, We Begin to Heal

By Rick Warren

“Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed” (James 5:16a TLB).

The first step in forgiveness is admitting your guilt. Then, you have to accept responsibility for your sin.

What’s the best way to ensure that you are really accepting responsibility for your sin? You’re not going to like the answer, but you need to hear it anyway: The best way to get over your guilt is to tell one other person who loves you unconditionally and who will listen and not judge you.

This is important: You don’t have to confess to another person to be forgiven. All you have to do is confess your sin to God, and you’ll be forgiven. But many of you have already been forgiven, and you still feel guilty. If you want to be forgiven, you tell God. If you want to feel forgiven, you’ve got to tell one other person. That’s the way God wired it. Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing. We only get well in community! You don’t have to tell a bunch of people. You really only need to tell one person. If your sin is between you and another person, you go to that person.

James 5:16 says, *“Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed”* (TLB). It doesn’t say “so that you may be forgiven” but so that you may be healed. Forgiveness comes from God. Healing comes in relationships.

So why do you need to drag another person into your own personal sin?

Because the root of all of our problems is relational. We are dishonest with each other. We play games with each other. We wear masks all the time. We fake it. We pretend to have it all together when everybody knows we don’t have it all together. We’re all broken.

There are only two kinds of people in the world: people who are broken and sinful and know it and people who are broken and sinful and won’t admit it. When we

refuse to be real with each other, it creates all kinds of fears in our lives and isolates us from each other. It is a roadblock to intimacy, and it creates insecurity.

God wired us to need each other. You need a friend who's going to love you unconditionally and won't think less of you when you share your guilt. If you're not in a small group, you probably don't know anybody like that. If you're in a small group, you need to find one person you can share your heart with.

Talk It Over

- Why do you think it's so hard for people to admit their guilt or sin to another person?
- What difference has confession with another person made in your life?
- Describe the kind of person you trust the most and with whom you would be willing to share your sin. Are you that kind of friend to someone else?

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