

# THE GOOD CONFESSION

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## INTRODUCTION: (1 TIMOTHY 6:12-16)

- A. There's a famous but simple saying which states: "Confession is good for the soul" – This is something that is readily recognized as truth by psychologists, Christians, and most religions of the world
- B. Yet as Christians we recognize that there is a greater significance behind confession than how it is most often applied by those outside of Christ:
  - 1. Many recognize the power of confession but speak of it in reference to the emptying of yourself of your innermost feelings, your secrets or your deeds in order to do something like freeing yourself of guilt or strengthen relationships (Jack Baur in 24 about to die wants to confess)
  - 2. As Christians, we recognize that confession is powerful not only for the cleansing of the soul or the strengthening of relationships, but it is powerful for salvation! (1 John 1:7; Romans 10:9-10)
  - 3. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he spoke of a time in Timothy's life in which he made "the good confession" before many witnesses (1 Tim 6:12-16).
- C. This confession is not just part of a formula for obeying the gospel and it's not some formal words used to look spiritual before men... They are words they flow from hearts filled with faith, hope, & love!

## WHAT IT MEANS TO MAKE THE GOOD CONFESSION

- A. Throughout the gospels the power and prominence of "The Good Confession" takes center-stage
  - 1. During some very crucial times in Jesus' life, the Father made some "confessions" concerning Him:
    - a. The Father first gave confession as to the identity of Jesus as His beloved Son and spoke of His pleasure in Jesus for the work and submission He was exhibiting (Matt 3:13-17)
    - b. As Jesus was transfigured on the mountain before Peter, James, & John the Father spoke the same words, but this time added the words, "Hear Him" (Matt 17:1-5). This confession validated not only Jesus' identity but also man's need to fully obey Him.
    - c. Were these emotionless and mechanical statements just made to benefit man or is this the Father showing approval & joy in His Son – see Jesus' use of "Abba" (Matt 14:36)
    - d. Isn't this like a parent expressing joy in their child? I don't believe these are said because the Father felt obliged to, but as delight flowing from His heart! ("That's my boy!")
  - 2. When Jesus first began calling His disciples, Andrew and Nathanael made confessions about Him with great excitement and faith (John 1:41, 49)
    - a. When we think about confession we often think of Peter, but he was not the first. Here we see great faith and enthusiasm in these two more obscure disciples very early on
    - b. Andrew came to see that Jesus was the Messiah, that Jesus was the promised One of the prophecies, and Nathanael not only saw Jesus as that, but also the Son of God, deity!
    - c. These two men aren't asked by Jesus or anyone else to make this confession – They come to realize the importance of Jesus and go seek others to whom they can confess Him!
  - 3. Possibly one of the most famous confessions during the life of Jesus was when Peter answered the question, "Who do you say that I am?" with great faith (Matthew 16:13-20)
    - a. Was this confession of faith drawn out of Peter? In a sense, yes, but notice Peter willingly speaks up. He's not being prompted specifically... This is something he really feels!

- b. Peter has been putting the pieces together, & while his faith is not perfect, it has brought him to the point of seeing who Jesus really was and what His mission on earth was.
- c. Jesus says He will build His church upon this rock – Was the rock Peter? No, or else He would have said, “Upon you” or “Upon Peter.” While He’s likely drawing an analogy from Peter’s name, the confession was the rock. This truth is the foundation of our faith & the confession of it flowing from the lips of men is what the church is built on
- 4. We know these confessions are forms of the good confession Timothy made because in the same passage Paul also told him that Jesus Himself made the good confession before Pilate (**1 Tim 6:13**)
  - a. This refers to the confession Jesus concerning His identity and His mission while on trial before Pontius Pilate shortly before His crucifixion (**Luke 23:3; John 18:33-37**)
  - b. What’s the confession? He confessed that He was the King of the Jews... He confessed that His kingdom would not be of this world & that its citizens listen to His voice
  - c. He knew if He made this confession it would cost Him His life – He knew that on the other said of those words lie an immense amount of suffering that’d culminate in His death
  - d. During the night before this event, Jesus openly confessed before the Jewish leaders that He was the Christ the Son of God. While the Jewish leaders turned Jesus over to Pilate with the accusation that He said He was a king, it was this confession as the Son of God, the fact that He was claiming deity, that incited them (**Matt 26:63-64**)
  - e. During the days of the early church many men and women were faced with the choice of confessing Christ and dying or denying Him and living. Jesus required them and us today to be faithful unto death and some paid the ultimate price in doing so. But notice, Jesus never required them or us to something that He was not willing to do!

**B. As we see from these examples, “the good confession” is central to the lives of those who follow Jesus:**

- 1. We learn some things about our responsibility to the good confession by looking at Paul’s reference to when Timothy made it (**1 Timothy 6:12**)
  - a. It’s a confession that is good – Why is it good? Because it is a reflection of great faith in the Lord, it’s a confession that leads to salvation, & it’s a confession of owning Christ!
  - b. Timothy confessed the same thing Jesus confessed – That Jesus was and is the King!
  - c. When did Timothy confess this? Most believe it was when he first obeyed the gospel, but perhaps it was during a time when he faced persecution for his faith, and really it could have been any time when there were many people who heard him confess it
  - d. This confession was something he was willing to make in front of many witnesses so it was something that mattered to him and something he wasn’t ashamed of. We know it was something that drove him since Paul brings it back up here as more motivation
- 2. The confidence and assurance we have of our salvation is directly connected to our confession of Jesus as coming in the flesh (**1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 1:7**)
  - a. There were people going around in that day who were teaching & confessing things about Christ which were false and this was shipwrecking the faith of some. So John gives this litmus test so they could know who was really from God and who was antichrist
  - b. John says, “Every spirit that confesses” – This isn’t a confession made at a single event in their life, but is a verb in the active tense... “Confesses” refers to an ongoing activity.
  - c. This confession is a confession of faith – It demonstrates a person’s faith that Jesus came into this world, took on flesh, & lived the life of man. Implied within this confession is the fact that Jesus is God & He came as God in the flesh (Immanuel – God with us)

- d. This confession is consistent with what's taught in [John 1:1-18](#) about "the Word"
- 3. Paul talks about the vital role confessing Jesus as Lord plays in our salvation ([Romans 10:8-10](#))
  - a. Often when we read this passage we talk about what how people abuse it, but we must not ignore what it does teach... If you confess with your mouth from your heart that Jesus is Lord you will be saved. Confessing Jesus brings about our own salvation.
  - b. Notice how this confession is not just part of a formula, checking a step off of a checklist of requirements, and it's not coerced from others... It is an outburst of a heart. When is this confession to be made? Not just at baptism... it's to be throughout our lives
  - c. This confession is a confession of submission – It's recognizing that Jesus is Lord, that He is King, that He is reigning over His kingdom, and that I am submitting my will to His will
  - d. It is this confession that every person is brought to make as they recognize that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is the King of Kings, and are submitting to Him ([Phil 2:11](#))
- 4. While confessing our faith in Christ is "The Good Confession" sometimes our confessing it will bring difficult consequences! ([John 9:18-23](#); [John 12:42-43](#))
  - a. The blind man's parents were afraid to confess Jesus as the source of their son's healing because they knew it meant confessing Him as Christ & they feared the Jews!
  - b. There were some religious leaders who were too afraid to confess their faith in Jesus, even though they believed, because of the response of their peers. They stayed secretive!
  - c. If our faith really matters to us, then we will hold fast to our confession in spite of who approves, what consequences it may be bring, or even who it might condemn!
- 5. What we're talking about is "The Good Confession" – There are some confessions of faith people make that aren't good because they aren't from the faith revealed by God's word ([2 Tim 3:16-17](#))
  - a. There are "salvation experience" confessions – This is where people confess a feeling they had deep inside them during some great experience... It's "Better felt than told"
  - b. Others say before their baptism – "I believe God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins..."
    - 1) It puts salvation before baptism & where is such a confession taught in the Bible?
    - 2) Though often sincere, it doesn't accomplish anything, but is the confession we use at baptism any more effective if it's just seen as part of a formula, a checklist
  - c. There are "confessions of faith" quoted by some religious people – There is the Nicene Creed, the Ante-Nicene Creed, the Apostles Creed, etc. Each contains statements that are used as tests of faith for admittance into certain churches or before baptism
  - d. James Orr writes on the Apostles Creed: "The original germ of it is to be sought for in the baptismal confession made by converts in the reception of that rite. The primitive confession may have contained no more than "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God"

**C. In Application We See That Confession Is More Than Just A Mechanical Formula, But Is The Response Of A Heart That Is Filled With Faith, Love, And Devotion:**

- 1. We see this in the text this lesson originates in – Paul was admonishing Timothy to remember the good confession he made to help drive him to continued faithfulness ([1 Tim 6:12-15](#))
  - a. Do you remember your marriage vows? There's two ways to view them... Either you said it & now you're obligated to do it... Or you said it, meant it, and its memory stirs you up
  - b. Paul had just told Timothy to pursue spiritual things over physical things, he encourages him to keep strong in the fight of faith, and to keep the commandment with purity

- c. Standing central in all of these things is his memory of “the good confession” he had made before many people. His memory of that confession was a reminder to Timothy of his faith and it drove him to greater faithfulness. He couldn’t and wouldn’t give up!
- d. So as we look back to times we’ve made “the good confession,” particularly when we obeyed the gospel of Christ, it ought not be just another step in a formula but words that really meant something to us and our memory of it motivates us to keep going!
- 2. Confessing Christ is a powerful thing – Our confession of our faith and hope is something that we have as an anchor for our souls... Something to which we can hold fast **(Hebrews 4:14; 10:23)**
- 3. We must view the confession of our faith as a daily thing, not a one-time task! **(Psalm 71:15-18)**
  - a. I’m afraid we sometimes view confession in the same light as baptism... A one and done type of thing. Oh if someone asks us, we will confess, but it’s not a regular activity
  - b. **Illustration:** Man telling wife, “I told you I loved you when I married you, if I change my mind I will let you know!” – That’s repulsive! What about our confessing our faith?
  - c. Question: When was the last time you truly confessed Christ to someone?
    - 1) I’m not talking about arguing with someone about their religious views or answering a question from a stranger as to whether or not you’re a Christian
    - 2) I’m talking about telling someone, “I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God” or “I believe that Jesus came in flesh” or “I believe Jesus is Lord”
    - 3) Wait, won’t that make us sound “denominational” or “charismatic” ? Just because others do it doesn’t make it wrong... Confession is simply a Christian thing!
  - d. Like with the Father’s confession of His Son or Andrew & Nathanael’s confessions of Jesus, our confessing Christ should burst from a heart of faith! On the flip side, if you feel like confessing Christ is just an obligation, don’t bother... that’s not worth anything!
- 4. There are some promises the Lord has given concerning our confession of Him:
  - a. First of all, if we will confess Jesus before others in this life, He will confess us before His Father. If we “own” Christ now, He’ll “own” us then! **(Matthew 10:32-33)**
  - b. If we actively confess our faith in Christ, both by the words we speak and by the life we live, we are promised that we have fellowship with God **(1 John 2:23; 4:15)**
  - c. We are promised that one day every one of us will bow before Jesus and confess Him. If we will confess Him now, then it’ll be bowing & confession filled with joy, if we don’t confess Him now, then it’ll be a bowing & confession filled with fear! **(Rom 14:11-12)**