

The People Promised to Be Faithful (Nehemiah 9–10)



Dear families,

What comes to mind when you think about confession? Do you think of sadness? Weeping and guilt? Shame and failure? What about worship?

When was the last time you came before God in true confession? What led to your admission of failure before a holy God?

The Bible is clear that “God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance” (Rom. 2:4). But what does the Bible say about what confession should look like? What does the Bible say should lead us to confession?

Nehemiah 9 gives insight in how to answer that question. The Israelites had gathered and were fasting and beginning to confess their sin when the priests chimed in with an appropriate pattern for how that confession ought to progress.

In this text, we discover that true confession of sin will never come before genuine recognition of the holiness of God. God’s people had promised to be faithful, but following their return from exile, the men of Israel intermarried with foreign women. They were unfaithful to God, disobeying His commands. Yet God remained faithful.

The pattern of the priests is to first recognize, exclaim, and celebrate God’s goodness, faithfulness, holiness, and righteousness. Only out of those comes the reason for confession.

For it is only when we see the majesty of the holy God that we see the weight of our sin and the punishment due to us as a result. Then, and only then, will we be drawn to the altar of honest confession before God. Yes, conviction must come, but it will only come when there is first an awareness of the greatness of God.

Set aside time to intentionally approach God to confess the sin in your life. Remember this pattern. That God wants your eyes fixed firmly on Him, even in moments of reflection and confession. For the moment we lose sight of Him is the moment we lose sight of the sinfulness of our sin, which is the moment before we lose sight of the necessity of confession.

Check out *The Gospel Project At Home* for resources designed to help you lead a family worship experience as well as suggestions for morning and evening prayer times and family activities.

FAMILY TALKING POINTS

CHRIST CONNECTION

This is the big idea of how this week's Bible story points to Jesus.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** God does what is right even when His people do what is wrong. We have God's kindness and love through Jesus, who died on the cross for our sins.
- **Younger Preschool:** God has always done what is right even when His people have done what is wrong. We have God's kindness and love through Jesus, who died on the cross so we can have life with God forever.
- **Older Preschool:** God's people remembered all He had done and promised to be faithful. God is kind and loving. God has always done what is right even when His people have done what is wrong. We have God's kindness and love through Jesus, who died on the cross so we can have life with God forever.
- **Kids:** God's people remembered all He had done and promised to be faithful. God is gracious and compassionate. All along, God has been faithful to people who are unfaithful. We experience God's grace and compassion in Jesus, who gave His life so we can receive mercy and life forever.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER

This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Younger Preschool:** How should we feel when we make wrong choices? When we make wrong choices, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and want to obey Him.
- **Older Preschool:** How should we feel when we sin? When we sin, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and choose to obey Him.
- **Kids:** How should we feel when we sin? When we sin, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and want to turn from our sin because we love Him.

KEY PASSAGE

This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- **Babies & Toddlers:** We should feel sorry when we disobey God. 2 Corinthians 7:10
- **Younger Preschool:** We should feel sorry when we disobey God and want to obey Him. 2 Corinthians 7:10
- **Older Preschool:** Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret. 2 Corinthians 7:10
- **Kids:** For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death. 2 Corinthians 7:10

**** Next week:** We Should Be Sorry for Sin (Romans 8)