



Healing From Sin

Overview

Jesus once said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”* He likened sin to a disease and himself to a healer. Based on this text, ancient Christians called Jesus “the doctor of the soul.”

And trying to go on the spiritual journey of discipleship without healing from sin is like trying to run a marathon with a broken leg — you’re not going to get very far, and it’s not going to be very fun.

A key step in our apprenticeship to Jesus is healing from sin.

Practice reflection

Before we begin Session 06, break up into small groups and share your reflections on last session’s exercise of noticing and naming your feelings in prayer.

- 01 What was your experience of noticing and naming your feelings before God like?
Where did you feel delight in your practice?**
- 02 What were the most common feelings that came up for you? Was anything a surprise to you?**
- 03 Where did you most experience God’s nearness in this practice?**

* Mark 2v17

Teaching

Scripture

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

—Mark 2v17

Session summary

- A key aspect of the spiritual journey is healing from sin.
- Three dimensions to sin:
 - Sin done *by* us
 - Sin done *to* us
 - And sin done *around* us
- Four layers of sin we move through in our healing:^{*}
 - Gross sins
 - Conscious sins
 - Unconscious sins
 - Attachments
- Our part in the healing of sin is the practice of confession.

^{*} M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2016).

In-session reflection exercise

Pause the video and take a few minutes in the quiet to journal through the following questions:

01 What do you believe about how God sees you and your sin?

02 What came up for you as we talked about sin?

03 Is there anyone you need to forgive or ask for forgiveness from, including God?

Discussion questions

Now take some time to process together as a community, sharing with your small group whatever you're comfortable with in response to the following:

Here are some questions for discussion:

- 01 Growing up, what was your understanding of sin and God's response to it?

- 02 When you sin, what do you normally do?

- 03 As you think about your sin patterns, what attachments or idols are you clinging to in your pursuit of happiness?

- 04 In light of this teaching, what steps may God be inviting you to take toward healing?

After the video

Closing prayer

End your time together by praying this liturgy:

Loving God, we open ourselves to you
and confess all that we have and have not done,
both consciously and unconsciously,
in opposition to your goodness.
Help us to live more openly with you,
that in our being seen in all,
we may also too be healed in all,
growing in your love.
Amen.

OPTIONAL

If you'd like to continue your conversation, here are some additional questions for reflection:

- 01 What comes up for you as you consider this session's exercise in confession?
- 02 Is there someone who comes to mind when you consider practicing confession? Or would you be open to partnering with someone in your group?
- 03 What steps do you need to take to set yourself up to practice confession this week?

Practice

Confession

We heal from sin by coming out of hiding. This is why this session, almost more than any other, must be put into practice. The practice of naming your sin to another person is what the writers of the Bible call “confession.”

When we feel guilt and shame because of something we’ve done or not done, confession is likely the last thing we feel like doing.

But the path to being free from shame involves being open and transparent with someone we trust. In James 5:16 we read, “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” When we name our sin or shame or secret with a trusted person, we can experience healing.

The practice is simple:

- 01 **Find someone you trust who will both love and accept you, and call you up to holiness. This could be a spiritual friend, community member, pastor, spiritual director, or therapist.**
- 02 **Find a place to meet that is private enough for you to feel safe and at peace.**
- 03 **Name your sin or shame or secret. Tell them the sin done by you, to you, or around you.**
- 04 **Let them love you, be faithful to you, and speak Jesus’ forgiveness over you.**

For those of you *hearing* a confession, your role is very important. Don’t shame or lecture or scold, just welcome in love.

Continue this practice on a regular basis, and keep the conversation going.



This session’s reading

For this session, we’re reading “Take up your cross,” the final section of *Practicing the Way* by John Mark Comer, pp. 206-221.

Resources to go deeper

If you're interested in growing even more in your practice of confession, here are some more resources to consider.

Recommended reading

- *The Relational Soul* by Richard Plass and James Cofield
- *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be* by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr.

Recommended listening

- The Sin Series by Jon Tyson at Church of the City New York:
link.practictheway.org/course-s6a
- The Bad Words video series by BibleProject: link.practictheway.org/course-s6b



Guest bio

Our guest this week was Jennie Allen. Jennie is an author, speaker, and the founder of IF: Gathering, an organization that exists to equip women with gospel-centered resources, events, and community as they disciple others. Learn more about Jennie and her work at ifgathering.com or check out her *New York Times* bestsellers, *Find Your People* and *Get Out of Your Head*.

