

Deeply Rooted in the Discipline of Confession & Self-Examination

Time for a Selfie

We live in a selfie world. Hopefully you know what a “selfie” is. It is when you take a picture of yourself. You hold your phone and turn the camera to face you, and then you hold the camera in just the right angle, so you look your best, and you click a picture of yourself. In 2013, the word selfie became an official word in the dictionary. Although I am not a super big selfie taker, I do admit that I have used the camera facing myself to make sure I look okay when a mirror isn't around. According to a study published in *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, we spend, on average, a total of seven minutes a day capturing selfies.

In addition to selfies, we now have Facetime, video chat, Zoom and TEAMS where you can connect with others through the use of technology. You don't just get to see their face, but they can see yours as well. After COVID, when everything went virtual, I realized I was staring at myself a lot more than I used to. In a regular meeting, I wouldn't think about what my hair looks like, or even what my facial expression is saying, but now that I can stare at myself in a little box, I am much more aware of my appearance. A lot more self-examination has been taking place.

As Christians, we are called to do a selfie, so to speak, in our walk with Jesus. We need to self-examine ourselves, to make sure we are living according to God's Word, the way Christ desires. Sin is part of the daily life, and so often we go throughout our days, unaware of the sin we are committing. Yes, we are all sinners, and we all sin. This side of heaven, we will never outgrow sinful habits. We sin with our thoughts, our words, and our actions.

Unlike a hair that is out of place, or spinach in my teeth, it isn't as obvious when I have sin in my life. I can't just hold a mirror up to my heart, or turn my camera to be facing me. I need to ask the Lord, daily, to reveal the sin that is lurking in my heart. David prayed this prayer of self-examination on his heart, ***Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*** (Psalm 139:23-24).

David wants to be make sure he is walking rightly with the Lord. He is praying an open and honest prayer. He knows he isn't perfect (FYI—none of us are), and there are areas in his life, deep in his heart, that aren't what God wants. He wants God to reveal those areas to him, and then show him the correct path to take. David was honestly staring at himself, examining his areas of flaws, weakness and downright sinfulness, and willing to acknowledge those areas, with a desire for the Lord to correct him, change him, and lead him in the right direction.

In a selfie focused world, let's take the time to take a spiritual selfie and allow God to reveal areas where we need change, and then confess our sin, and choose to take the right path.



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Territorial Women's Ministries Department

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Conversation Starters

Gather with some friends and spend some time going deep with conversation around the topic of self-examination and confession. Here are a few conversation starters.

- ◆ When you were a child and did something wrong, were you quick to confess it or did you try to cover it up?
- ◆ Is it easy for you to admit when you have done something wrong? Why or why not?
- ◆ Is confession a regular part of your prayer life?
- ◆ Are you aware of some of your areas of weakness, sin patterns, etc.? If so, where do you tend to get tripped up?
- ◆ When you confess your sins to the Lord, do you do it generically, “Lord, forgive my sins” or do you specifically name your sins one by one to God? Why would this matter?
- ◆ What does the lack of specific confession do to self-awareness?
- ◆ Share a time when you confessed your sin to another believer? Why was it beneficial to confess it to the other person?

“To confess your sins to God is not to tell [God] anything [God] doesn’t already know. Until you confess them, however; they are the abyss between you. When you confess them, they become the bridge.” Frederick Buchner

Additional Resources

Check out our website for more resources to help you be rooted in the disciplines of confession and self-examination <https://usw-womensministries.org/>

Bible Study: *Confession is Good for the Soul* a study of Psalm 32.

Devotional: Are you willing to admit you are *Sinful*?

Craft Idea: *Beaded Cross Necklace Pendant* by Major Harryette Raihl.

Confession Prayers

We are sinful, and in need of confessing our sin to our Heavenly Father. Here is a simple way to pray prayers of confession:

- **Acknowledge.** The first step is acknowledging that you have sin in your life. Guess what? We all have a sin problem (Romans 3:23). We can’t confess our sin if we don’t acknowledge the sin that is present in our lives. Denying sin will not get us anywhere. 1 John 1:8 says, ***If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.***
- **Admit.** Some stay stuck on the acknowledge step. They wear the label of sinner like a badge and declare their sinful habits are just who they are. After acknowledging our sin, we have to admit it or confess those sins to the Lord. Be honest with God about your sins, and openly tell Him what you have done. 1 John 1:9 says, ***If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins.***
- **Accept.** We need to accept the truth of the gospel. Yes, you have sinned, but Christ has forgiven you of this sin. Don’t rush past this. He not only forgives our sin, He completely forgets them. We don’t need to be burdened with shame, and we don’t need to allow the enemy to bring up past forgiven sins. Psalm 103:12 says, ***As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.***
- **Ask.** Confession isn’t just about being sorry for what you have done wrong, but desiring to not do it again. We are sinners, and we will sin, but we can ask the Lord to help us not sin in this way again. We can ask the Lord to guide us on the right path. Psalm 25:4-5 says, ***Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.***



See what the Bible has to say about confession of sin.

Flourishing in the Word

This month let's look at what God's Word has to say about examining our selves and confessing our sins.

April 1	Exodus 32:1-35	April 16	Psalms 139:1-24
April 2	Leviticus 16:1-34	April 17	Proverbs 28:1-4
April 3	2 Samuel 24:1-17	April 18	Isaiah 6:1-8
April 4	1 Kings 8:22-54	April 19	Isaiah 43:14-28
April 5	2 Chronicles 6:12-42	April 20	Isaiah 59:1-21
April 6	Ezra 9:1-15	April 21	Daniel 9:1-20
April 7	Ezra 10:1-17	April 22	Micah 7:14-20
April 8	Nehemiah 1:1-11	April 23	Luke 18:9-14
April 9	Nehemiah 9:1-37	April 24	Acts 3:11-26
April 10	Psalms 25:1-22	April 25	2 Corinthians 7:2-16
April 11	Psalms 32:1-11	April 26	1 Timothy 1:12-16
April 12	Psalms 38:1-22	April 27	Hebrews 10:19-25
April 13	Psalms 51:1-19	April 28	James 5:13-20
April 14	Psalms 66:13-20	April 29	1 John 1:5-2:2
April 15	Psalms 103:1-22	April 30	Revelation 2:1-7

Flourishing Ideas from the Territory

El Cajon, CA make homeless "care bags" to be distributed through their Family Resource Center.

Escondido, CA had a "Feed Me Tacos and Tell Me I am Pretty" party where they learned that God does not look on the outside but He looks at the our heart.

Fairbanks, AK ladies served a couple of hours at the Thrift Store to sort donation and show support to the employees. They enjoyed pizza together as well.

Gilroy, CA began a monthly nutrition class partnering with the Silicon Valley Food Bank.

Lewiston, ID raises funds so the women could take the younger troop kids to the thrift store to shop for Christmas presents for their parents. (Christmas isn't that far away).

Modesto, CA had a "Soup, Soap and Salvation" class where they all brought their favorite soup to share and learned about William Booth and some Salvation Army history.

San Diego Citadel, CA did a "Written on Stone" program and they all got to paint rocks.

San Francisco All Nations, CA finished as 12-week Old Testament Bible reading series.

Women Preach Sunday

In honor of International Women's Day (which was March 8, 2024), the USA Western Territory held its first annual "Woman Preach Day" on Sunday, March 3. The goal was to have as many pulpits as possible filled by women on that specific Sunday.

We celebrate the beautiful heritage that we as women have in The Salvation Army. Catherine Booth, co-founder of The Salvation Army, was an accomplished preacher and wrote a pamphlet entitled, *Female Ministry or Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel* in 1859, which systematically refuted claims that women shouldn't preach. She wrote,



From L to R, T to B: Captain Dora Stearns, Captain Mysti Birks, Major Toni Halstad, Captain Dina Cisneros, Captain Maureen Lawliss, Major Monica Covert

"[W]e think that we shall be able to show, by a fair and consistent interpretation...[t]hat not only is the public ministry of woman not forbidden, but absolutely enjoyed by both precept and example in the word of God. She also wrote, "And we find from Church history that the primitive Christians understood it; for that women did actually speak and preach amongst them we have indisputable proof."

Colonel Genevera Vincent, Territorial Secretary for Women's Ministries challenges us with these words:

"As women we have been given a sacred privilege of preaching the Living, Breathing Word of God. This is a privilege not to be taken lightly but one that should fill us with joy...we get to share the Word! As women, God has gifted us with a voice, He has given us something to say—so let's avail of every opportunity to use this God given privilege and preach the Word with power and conviction."



From L to R, T to B: Major Noelle Nelson, Captain Bridget McCourt, Captain Stephanie Pavlakis, Captain Jamie Stokes, Captain Tanya Pemberton, Major Dina Graciani

We had three retired officers also participate: Major Flo Murray preached in Sitka, AK, Major Willdonna Rich preached in Concord, CA. and Lt. Colonel Shawn Posillico preached in Prescott, AZ



From L to R: Major Flo Murray, Major Willdonna Rich, Lt. Colonel Shawn Posillico

Not only officers, but soldiers shared the morning message. Kittura Wimer preached at San Diego Centre City Corps, CA. Ellen Lasater preached in Auburn, CA. Alina Santamaria preached in Flagstaff, AZ while her mother, Major Sybil Smith preached in Torrance, CA.

Commissioner Colleen Riley, Territorial President of Women's Ministries, shares this from her heart:

"Women who are called by God, it is our privilege to share His gospel with the world. Let's take up the mantle and preach. The world for Jesus. #womenpreach"

Women your voices needs to be heard. We pray that women will continue to fill our pulpits and preach the Word of God. Start preparing now for next year when we celebrate **"Women Preach Sunday"** on March 2, 2025.



From L to R, T to B: Kittura Wimer, Ella Lasater, Alina Santamaria, Major Sybil Smith



From L to R, T to B: Captain Deanna Markham, Major Harryette Raihl, Captain Felicia LeMar, Captain Amber Ohl, Major Jennifer Masango, Captain Stephanie Philpot, Major Lawry Smith, Captain Martha Apuan, Major Shevaun Malone, Captain Heather Baze, Captain Heather Pope

Alaska Women Fill the Pulpits

Congratulations to the Alaska Division who filled every pulpit in their division with a woman preacher on March 3, 2024, including the three corps that are run by single men officers.

From L to R, T to B:

R 1: Major Jennifer Erickson-King, Captain Serina Woods, Captain Monica Kyle, Major Tina Bottjen
R 2: Captain Heather Witcher, Captain Belle Green, Major Barbara Wehnau, Major Gina Halverson
R 3: Lt. Rosie Tollerud, Captain Minhee Lee, Captain Michelle Josephson, Captain Shelby Qualls



“Look on my affliction and distress and take away all my sins.”

Psalm 25:18



Confidence in Confession

In Psalm 25:18, David declares ***“Look on my affliction and distress, and take away all my sins.”*** He was calling out to God for forgiveness of sin. He was confident in saying this because He knew God’s character: David knew God to be his Savior and source of hope (v. 5), that God is good and upright (v. 7), and that all His ways are loving and faithful (v.10). He boldly proclaims, ***“For the sake of your name, Lord, forgive my iniquity, though it is great.”*** David knew his sin was great, but He also knew that God’s love and mercy was greater (v. 6) David knew that God would forgive him, because God desires to guide His children in the truth (v. 5) and to instruct them in the ways they should go (v. 12). Ultimately, David knew that God was trustworthy, and the only place for him to put his trust (v. 1-2a).

The same God David knew, is the one we worship and serve. His character has not changed. Meghan Ryan writes, “David’s confession of his sins didn’t leave him in despair and dismay; it reminded him of his desperate need for God. He knew God was the only One who could rescue him.” So don’t let your sin shame you, rather confidently approach God and confess your sins to Him!