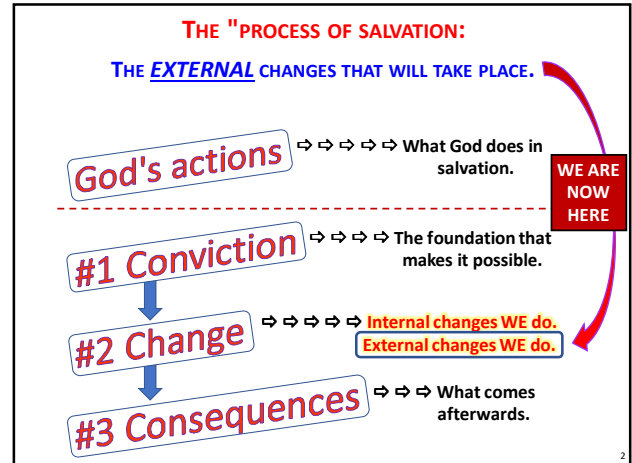




GOOD NEWS

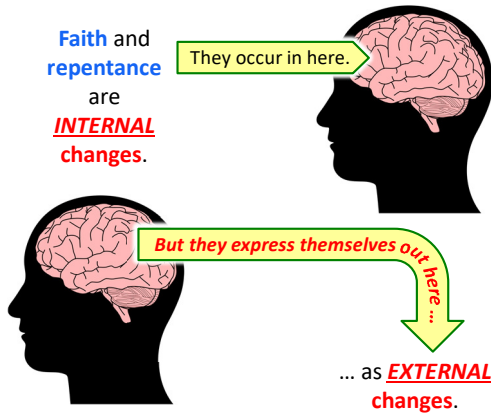
for the unsaved WORLD!

(#117)
Confession (1).



Faith and repentance are INTERNAL changes.

They occur in here.



But they express themselves out here ...

... as EXTERNAL changes.

Key Issue: When the internal changes take place... External changes will also take place.

HOW DO WE KNOW THIS?

- ✓ Scripture commands us to do these things.
- ✓ A person who has a changed heart and a renewed mind will want to obey God and will be willing do these things.

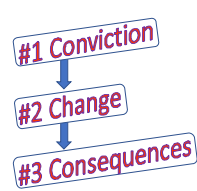
If we willfully choose to live in sin (disobeying God's commands), we really have no basis for believing that the internal changes have taken place.

- ✓ Exceptions are rare – such as when a person dies before he has the opportunity to do them.

Example: The thief on the cross died before he could be baptized; but other visible expressions of change were present.

THE FIRST EXTERNAL CHANGE WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT IS:

"CONFESSION"



ABOUT THIS CONCEPT:

- This action is hardly mentioned (by name) in the book of Acts – but it's inherently connected to many of the concepts that are mentioned.
- It is probably related to all three parts of the "process of salvation" – but it's more predominant in the "change" and "consequences" sections.

"CONFESSION" – WHAT IT IS NØT:

- Some religious groups have turned "confession" into a religious ritual. ⇒ This is NOT the focus of the Bible, so it will not be our focus.
- Some people try to turn it into a private "individual" matter. ⇒ The very meaning of the concept (at least in the Bible) makes this impossible. ⇒ The nature of the situation will determine how "public" it is.
- Some people think "confession" refers to an admission of sinful behavior. ("I confess I have sinned.") ⇒ This is true only about 10% of the time. Normally, it is not about sin!

"CONFESSION" – WHAT IT IS:

The New Testament term has a much broader focus than what people often associate with it.

- Most often, it refers to publicly admitting something that is true, or telling people something factual.

"Confessing sin" would belong in this category; but confession can include so much more. For example, confession can be an expression of allegiance or loyalty— such as, "I confess that I follow Jesus."

- It can also refer to making an agreement about something.
- When spoken to God, it is often best translated as an expression of thankfulness or praise— such as a joyful acknowledgement of God's greatness and goodness.

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EXAMPLES OF HOW THIS CONCEPT IS USED:

These examples are based on a group of several related New Testament Greek words, all having a similar focus. When translating this concept, there are a number of words to choose from— such as, confess, acknowledge, admit, etc.

- An agreement or promise**— something being affirmed as true. (It won't always have any "religious" significance connected to it.)

- Herod **promised** to give the daughter of Herodius anything she asked for— Matthew 14:7.
- Judas **agreed** to look for an opportunity to betray Jesus— Luke 22:6.
- In Israel's history: The time came for God to fulfil what he had **promised** to Israel— Acts 7:17.

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2. To admit or affirm that something is true.

- The Pharisees affirmed various teachings found in Scripture; the Sadducees didn't.

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees **acknowledge** them all.
Acts 23:8 (ESV)

- John the Baptist affirmed that he wasn't the Messiah/Christ.

He **confessed**—he did not deny but **confessed**—"I am not the Christ!"
John 1:20 (NET)

Some of these examples don't have much significance related to our response to the Good News (gospel). But they show typical ways the concept is used, and provide the background for our understanding of the more significant issues.

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3. Acknowledging the greatness and goodness of God

— normally described as an expression of praise or thanks.

- When Joseph and Mary took the baby Jesus to the temple.

At that very moment, [Anna] came up and **began to thank** God and to speak about [Jesus] to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.
Luke 2:38 (CSB)

- After Jesus had been rejected by the people of several cities.

At that time Jesus said, "I **praise** you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them to little children."
Matthew 11:25 (NET)

The "wise and intelligent" probably refers to those who are arrogant and proud; "little children" probably refers to those who are humble and lowly.

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(We plan to look at these groups of passages in the future.)

- About 10% of the time, the word is used in reference to public admission of sin.

Confessing their sins, they were baptized by [John] in the Jordan River.
Matthew 3:6 (NIV)

- A few passages are about Jesus affirming that people do (or don't) belong to him.

GOD'S PEOPLE: I will **acknowledge** them in the presence of my Father and his angels.
Revelation 3:5b (GW)

THE UNSAVED, EVEN THOUGH RELIGIOUS: "Then I will **declare** to them, 'I never knew you. Go away from me, you lawbreakers!'"
Matthew 7:23 (NET)

11

(We plan to look at these groups of passages in the future.)

- Most passages focus on our "confession" to the world that we are followers of Jesus.

"I tell you the truth, everyone who **acknowledges** me publicly here on earth, the Son of Man will also **acknowledge** in the presence of God's angels."
Luke 12:8 (NLT)

(Most translations use "acknowledge"; a few use "confess.")

... Whosoever shall **confess** me before men, ...
Luke 12:8b (KJV)

- A few passages make reference to other Bible concepts that we affirm as true.

EXAMPLE: ... your **confession** of the gospel of Christ, ...
2 Corinthians 9:13b (NIV)

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 **Our mission** 

As we look at this word, let's make it our goal to pursue a "good confession"!

WE SHALL DISCOVER:

1. **The #1 focus is Jesus!**
If we have this focus, the other aspects of confession (such as confession of sin) will naturally occur.
2. **Confession is a lifelong activity.**
This Jesus-focused confession begins at salvation (i.e., when we first turn to Jesus), and becomes a way of life.

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JESUS HIMSELF IS OUR #1 EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW!

... Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good **confession**, ...
1 Timothy 6:13b (NIV)

He was willing to confess the truth about himself even in the face of death. (See Matt. 27:11; John 18:33-37.)

IT WAS "GOOD" – BOTH IN WHAT HE SAID, AND IN HOW HE SAID IT!

He not only spoke the truth, but he did so in a God-honoring way (1 Peter 2:21-23.)

If you have to suffer because of your good confession, remember this:
He left you an example so that you could follow in his footsteps.
1 Peter 2:21b (GW)

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FOLLOWING JESUS INVOLVES MAKING A "GOOD CONFESSION" IN THE PRESENCE OF OTHERS.

... you made your good **confession** in the presence of many witnesses.
1 Timothy 6:12b (NIV)

Here, Paul emphasizes the public expression of following Jesus – the visible expression of the "change" that is a part of salvation.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS "GOOD CONFESSION"?

1. Its "fact focus" is → "Therefore, everyone who will **acknowledge** me before others, I will also **acknowledge** him before my Father in heaven."
Matthew 10:32 (CSB)
2. Its "action focus" involves the conduct necessary for "following Jesus" – such as, the need to flee from sinful things and to pursue godly character (1 Timothy 6:11+).

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HERE IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF THIS "GOOD CONFESSION"!

It's all about Jesus and it will result in godly character!
(The "mystery," *now revealed*, is that Jesus makes it all possible.)

EACH LINE REPRESENTS SO MUCH!
If these facts (all they represent) influence our values, it will affect our conduct!

Great indeed, we **confess**, is the mystery of godliness:
He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.
1 Timothy 3:16 (ESV)

[This is thought to be part of an early Christian hymn. The lines don't represent a chronological (time) sequence; but more likely fit the poetic structure of the original hymn.]

16

Credits (1)

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Great indeed, we **confess**,* is the mystery of godliness ...
1 Timothy 3:16b (ESV)

* "We confess" – The idea is that "it's something so obvious that there's no reason for anyone to not admit (confess) it." This is often simplified in translation, with phrases such as: *beyond all question; most certainly; etc.*

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Credits (2)

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He* was manifested in the flesh, ...
1 Timothy 3:16b (ESV)

* Instead of the word "he," some N.T. manuscripts have an abbreviation for "God."
[It would be the difference between OϞ (who) and OϞC (God, abbreviated).]
Textual evidence suggests that this alternate reading is much *less* likely. But in any case, the lines of this passage (which may have been copied from an early Christian hymn) represent the whole teaching about Jesus and his impact on the world. This being the case, Jesus' deity is a part of it, regardless of which word is chosen.

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