

# “Respectable Sins”

We will focus our attention this week on the "Do It" section and practice the Rhythm of Repentance" together.



## Open It:

- This week, as a small group we will practice confession and repentance, one of the nine Brazos Pointe community rhythms.

## Read It:

- **James 5:16** - *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”*
- **1 John 1:9** - *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*
- **Proverbs 28:13** - *Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*

## Explore It:

- Why do you think confession and repentance is so important to our development as Jesus' disciple?
- Why is this practice so difficult for most people?

## Do It:

- **Read aloud:** If confession makes you nervous and you feel a little uneasy that means you're probably doing it right. Confession makes us vulnerable. All of us. In general, it's not supposed to be comfortable, but consistency and practice does make it easier. Our goal today, is to ease into repentance and to make this a safe experience for you. We will NOT be confessing deep dark secrets today, but simple, small, everyday decisions that hinder our walk with God. Jerry Bridges calls them "Respectable Sins." They are sins that we tolerate and sometimes even celebrate. They are more subtle, but no less destructive. Some of the sins we confess this

week might even be “good” things that have become “God” things. When anything (good or bad) gets in between us and God, it is sin.

- We’ve given examples of some "respectable sins" below. (and on the BPF website: <https://www.brazospointe.com/repentance>) This is not an exhaustive list (and different from the Rooted stronghold list) so please encourage your group to:
  - look through the list
  - search themselves
  - reflect on which one most represents their struggles (or another not listed)
  - consider confessing and repenting of that sin (no one is required, but encourage everyone to get out of their comfort zone a bit.)

**Recommended Plan:**

1. Divide into groups of men and women. As the leader, you will set the tone for how authentic and vulnerable people are willing to be. The suggested plan for confession is below:
2. One person will name the sin they are tolerating in their life (Leader confesses first.)
3. The person next to them will read the encouraging scripture over them associated with that particular sin.
4. The person confessing will pray this scripted prayer:

*Father, I come before you in the name of Jesus. I recognize the power You have given me by the shed blood of Jesus to overcome and destroy sin in my life. I confess that I have tolerated this sin and it is threatening my relationship with You. Today, I turn away from the sin of [name sin] and I will choose to hold firmly to the truth of [name freedom] by the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. Through Your power, I take back the ground I surrendered to the enemy. I pray You will enable me to trust and obey Your Holy Spirit so that this area of my life will begin to look more like the image of Christ. Amen.*
5. The person who read the scripture over them will now pray for their freedom from this stronghold.

**Closing:** Bring the whole group back together and close your session by reciting this "Prayer of Confession" together as a group: (This can also be found on the

webpage so your group members can join in.

(<https://www.brazospointe.com/repentance>)

*Lord,*

*Forgive our sins. Forgive the sins that we remember, and the sins we have forgotten. Forgive us when we fall to temptation, and when we have been stubborn, refusing to obey Your voice. Forgive us when we have been prideful of our own efforts and when we have failed to boast in Your works. Lord, forgive the harsh judgments we have made of others, and the leniency we have shown to ourselves. Forgive the lies we have told to others, and the truths we have avoided. Forgive us the pain we have caused others and the indulgence we have shown ourselves. Forgive us when we have allowed sin to control us and when we allow good things to get in the way of You. Forgive our crowded, busy, distracted lives and call us back to You. Lord God, have mercy on us and make us whole. In Jesus Christ, our Savior's name, Amen.*

# "Respectable" Sin      Freedom

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| <p><b>Avoiding</b><br/>Examples: social media, food, alcohol, video games, shopping, etc.</p>                                                                                                      | <p><b>Facing Challenge/Pain</b><br/><b>Matthew 26:36-39</b><br/>Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." <sup>37</sup> He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and <b>he began to be sorrowful and troubled.</b> <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."<br/><sup>39</sup> Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."</p> |
| <p><b>Hurry &amp; Dangerously Tired</b><br/>Hurry</p>                                                                                                                                              | <p><b>Rest, Sabbath Rest, &amp; Solitude</b><br/><b>Luke 5:15-16</b><br/>But the news about him spread even more, and large crowds would come together to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.<br/><sup>16</sup> Yet he often withdrew to <b>deserted places</b> and prayed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Comparison</b><br/>Examples: comparing your inner life to the outer lives posted on social media, comparing your finances/family/career/etc to your peers, jealousy, critical/judgmental</p> | <p><b>Contentment</b><br/>Matthew 6:25-26<br/>"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not <b>life more than food</b>, and the body more than clothes? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet <b>your heavenly Father feeds</b> them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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| <p><b>Complaining</b><br/>Examples: frustration, dissatisfaction, negative thoughts and feelings about your circumstances, vocalizing negative words, etc.</p>         | <p><b>Lament</b><br/><b>Philippians 2:14</b><br/>Do everything without grumbling or arguing,<br/><i>Instead, bring your grief to God</i></p> <p><b>Psalm 13</b><br/><sup>1</sup> How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?<br/>How long will you hide your face from me?<br/><sup>2</sup> How long must I wrestle with my thoughts<br/>and day after day have sorrow in my heart?<br/>How long will my enemy triumph over me?<br/><sup>3</sup> Look on me and answer, Lord my God.<br/>Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,<br/><sup>4</sup> and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"<br/>and my foes will rejoice when I fall.<br/><sup>5</sup> But I trust in your unfailing love;<br/>my heart rejoices in your salvation.<br/><sup>6</sup> I will sing the Lord's praise,<br/>for he has been good to me.</p> |
| <p><b>Pride</b><br/><b>Examples:</b> Believing your accomplishments are your own, relying on yourself more than God, expecting to get you what you "deserve," etc.</p> | <p><b>Humility &amp; Surrender</b><br/><b>Luke 14:11</b><br/>For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."<br/><b>Luke 9:23</b><br/>Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and <b>follow me</b>."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>Selfishness (also see inward focus)</b><br/>Examples: selfish ambition, holding on tightly to possessions, avoiding responsibility</p>                           | <p><b>Generosity</b><br/>Matthew 6:21<br/>For where your <b>treasure</b> is, there your <b>heart</b> will be also</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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| <b>Inward Focus</b><br>Examples: putting your needs and wants before others, taking advantage of others                                                                                                        | <b>Outward Focus</b><br><b>Philippians 2:3-4</b><br>Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the <b>interests of the others.</b>                                                                            |
| <b>Anger</b><br>Examples: can't control your tongue, harsh with your children or spouse, passive aggressive, self-directed anger, road rage, impatience                                                        | <b>Patience</b><br><b>James 1:19-20</b><br>Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, <b>slow to anger</b> ; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Fear</b><br>Examples: lack of trust, insecurity, risk averse, preventing yourself from experiencing things<br><i>Side note: Often what you worry about most is actually what you are best at.</i>           | <b>Trust in God's Sovereignty</b><br><b>John 14:1</b><br>"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Laziness</b><br>Examples: Give excuses; waste time, energy and money; not taking care of your body; lack of serving                                                                                         | <b>Doing Good Works</b><br><b>Matthew 5:15-16</b><br>Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that <b>they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.</b> |
| <b>Gossip</b><br><b>Examples:</b> sharing rumours, unnecessary negative talk about others, caught up in being "in the know," etc. (as Christians this is sometimes couched in terms of "let's pray for . . .") | <b>Silence &amp; Encouragement</b><br><b>Ephesians 4:29</b><br>Do not let any <b>unwholesome talk</b> come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for <b>building others up.</b>                                                                                                                                                      |

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| <p><b>Discontentment</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> constant struggle for more, never satisfied, unhealthy appetite to achieve or impress, etc.</p>         | <p><b>Freedom: Contentment</b></p> <p><b>Philippians 4:11b-13</b></p> <p>I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being <b>content in any and every situation</b>, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13I can do all this through him who gives me strength.</p> |
| <p><b>"Respectable" Addictions and Idols</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Gluttony, workaholism, saving money, shopping, an activity/sport, a hobby, etc.</p> | <p><b>Freedom:</b> Spiritual practices/positive priorities</p> <p><b>Exodus 20:4-5</b></p> <p>"You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5You shall <b>not bow down</b> to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God".</p>                                                                             |