



Unconfessed Sin as Clutter that Hinders Prayer for Emotional Healing, and Truth-based Guilt

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This ministry aid addresses sin that is a willful act of disobedience. See corresponding separate ministry aids for the reactive¹ sins of bitterness, bitterness towards the Lord, judgment, self pity, embellishment, entitlement, vows, and psychological defenses.

I. Sin as clutter that hinders the healing process

I'm not a theologian, but it seems pretty straight-forward that sin will create a hindrance between our hearts and Jesus. It seems pretty straight-forward that sin will hinder our ability to perceive the Lord's tangible presence, to connect with the Lord, and to perceive and understand content coming from the Lord. Thankfully, in His mercy the Lord does *not* allow this hindrance to totally block us from perceiving and connecting with Him.

In fact, I have been surprised and amazed by how mercifully and compassionately the Lord relates to people who are still wallowing in sin. For example, I worked with a man who was still actively involved in an affair. One might think, "Jesus won't manifest to him or talk to him or help him until he confesses, repents, asks for forgiveness, and renounces his affair." The irony is that his affair *did* create a huge initial blockage, but not as one might expect. The blockage was *not* that Jesus refused to manifest to him or communicate with him or help him until he confessed, repented, and asked for forgiveness. Rather, the blockage was that the man was afraid to *allow* Jesus to be tangibly present because he was afraid that the Lord would be angry and judgmental. And this blocking fear did initially prevent him from being able to perceive Jesus. However, after I helped him to identify, focus, and articulate this blocking fear, and then talk directly to Jesus about it and ask for help,² the blocking fear reduced to the point that he was able to invite Jesus to be with him and allow Jesus to be tangibly present.

As soon as we moved the blocking fear out of the way, this man was able to perceive Jesus sitting right next to him. And it is important to note that at this point he was still justifying his affair and wanting to continue with it, as opposed to repenting, asking for forgiveness, or renouncing it. It is also important to note that Jesus did not just ignore his affair – Jesus started out with, "I'm sad about what you're doing. It's not a good plan, and I want to talk about that." Finally, it's most important to note that Jesus then continued with, "But *most* important is that

¹"Reactive" sins are sins that we engage in in reaction to being wounded, as opposed to willful disobedience. Also, my perception is that there is a continuum, with a thousand shades of grey between sins that seem almost justifiable in response to the trauma the person suffered on one end of the spectrum, and sins that are hard to understand ("how could anybody choose to be so deliberately toxic?") on the other end of the spectrum. For additional discussion of reactive sin, see the "General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids" essay (available as a free download from the "Kclehman.com Website Archives" section of our Immanuel Approach website:

<https://www.immanuelapproach.com/kclehman-com-website-archives/>).

²These interactions with Jesus were totally in faith at this point, since he was not yet able to perceive Jesus' presence.

you let me be with you. I want to be with you – please let Me be with you.”

And I have had similar interactions with a woman who was engaged in alcohol abuse, a man who was visiting strip bars, and many others.

All that being said, it still seems pretty straight-forward that sin will create some kind of spiritual blockage between our hearts and Jesus. It also makes sense that sin will make it easier for demonic spirits to hinder our ability to perceive and connect with the Lord. Which brings us to the bottom line for this essay: Confessing sin, asking the Lord to forgive us and give us true repentance, and then renouncing and turning away from the sin will remove blockages. And removing blockages will make it easier for us to perceive the Lord, connect with the Lord, communicate with the Lord, receive help from the Lord, and move closer to the Lord.

The sample prayers at the end of this ministry aid are designed to help recipients engage directly with Jesus to resolve sin blockages.

II. Truth-based guilt

In many situations in which the recipient experiences guilt, we work with Jesus to find the roots and we end up in traumatic memories, with the guilt coming from false negative beliefs anchored in the trauma. For example, when a person is sexually abused they will sometimes feel pleasure during the abuse, even though they did not want or choose to participate in the activity. Sadly, the person being abused will then often come up with distorted, false conclusions regarding the meaning of this experience, such as, “I’m dirty and bad because I enjoyed it.” And, not surprisingly, believing “I’m dirty and bad” will result in feeling guilt. In these situations Jesus resolves the guilt by healing the trauma.³

In other situations in which the recipient experiences guilt, we work with Jesus to find the roots and we end up in memories where the person engaged in conscious, voluntary sinful behavior. For example, the person might go to a teenage memory in which he molested a younger sibling, and comment, “I’m just thinking how much I regret molesting my sister – how much I hurt her. There’s no way I can undo the pain I caused. I feel so bad and guilty about what I did.” Or the person might go to memories of yelling and swearing at his children as part of alcoholic drinking, and comment, “I’m thinking about how badly I hurt my children with my drinking – I feel so bad and guilty about how my selfish choices have affected their lives.” In these situations Jesus resolves the guilt by forgiving the recipient’s sins.⁴

Whenever I work with recipients who are struggling with guilt, I reassure them that Immanuel

³When recipients struggle with guilt that is coming from trauma-anchored lies, it is almost always (always?) tangled together with shame that is coming from lies anchored in the same trauma. That is, they will have “I *am* bad” shame tangled together with “I *did something* bad” guilt. The good news is that Jesus will resolve both as He resolves the trauma.

⁴When recipients struggle with truth-based guilt that is coming from sin that has not yet been confessed and forgiven, it is often tangled together with lie-based shame. That is, they will have “I *am* bad” lie-based shame tangled together with “I *did something* bad” truth-based guilt. This makes sense when you think about it – if you were the enemy and you noticed someone falling into sin, would you ever *not* try to hook shame lies into the memories around committing the sin? Again, the good news is that Jesus can both forgive the sin and heal the shame-lie trauma piece. But it’s important to watch for shame lies associated with truth-based guilt so that you can make sure both get taken care of.

Approach work can *always* resolve guilt: “No matter what we find, we’ll be okay. If we find traumatic memories where you have guilt from trauma-anchored lies, Jesus will just heal that trauma and remove the lies. On the other hand, if we find memories where you have guilt because you did something wrong, you can just ask Jesus for forgiveness. And if you’re afraid that you’ve done something that’s beyond forgiveness, I’ll help you take that fear directly to Jesus. I’m one-hundred percent confident that He can convince you that His work on the cross is big enough for anything you’ve done.”

The sample prayers at the end of this ministry aid are designed to help recipients resolve truth-based guilt by engaging with Jesus to receive forgiveness.

III. Practical comments regarding sample prayers and commands

Local strongholds, demons, and curses: There are often spiritual strongholds, demonic spirits, and curses that are connected to/associated with the specific sin and guilt that are being addressed, and therefore lose their protection/anchor when the sin and guilt in question are resolved. In these situations it is easy and important to finish with commands to deal with the spiritual strongholds, demonic spirits, and curses that have just been exposed. I target the specific, local strongholds, demons, and spirits in question by including the local “address” in the commands. For example, “In the name of Jesus, we command that all spiritual strongholds connected to or associated with *John lying to his wife about pornography* be torn down now.”⁵

More than one location: Our perception is that the adult core self carries the primary responsibility for sinful choices, and also the primary truth-based guilt associated with these sinful choices. However, our experience indicates that it is also possible for one or more internal parts to carry both responsibility and truth-based guilt for sinful choices. Internal parts that carry agenda that drive the sinful choices will carry truth-based guilt, and internal parts that were “connected”/participated in the sinful choices will carry truth-based guilt. If one or more of these parts do not participate in the prayer, their respective portion of truth-based guilt will remain. See “General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids” for additional discussion.

Common problems: There are a number of common problems that can get in the way of resolving sin and truth-based guilt.

1. Lies still present: The most common reason the person receiving ministry doesn’t receive relief from the subjective experience of guilt is that the guilt being addressed is not purely truth-based guilt. The enemy is happy to add lie-based condemnation to any legitimate, truth-based guilt. The subjective sense of guilt will not be completely gone until both lie based condemnation and truth-based guilt have been identified and resolved.
2. Guardian lies: As with almost every other aspect of emotional healing work, guardian lies can block the attempts to resolve sin and truth-based guilt. “I need _____ (*name the sin in question*) to be happy. It’s the only source of joy in my life,” and “I need _____ (*name the*

⁵For additional discussion regarding how to deal with demonic infections, spiritual strongholds, and curses associated with sins and/or trauma, see the “General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids” essay (available as a free download from the “Kclehman.com Website Archives” section of our Immanuel Approach website:

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sin in question) to cope with the pain in my life” are common guardian lies blocking confession, renunciation, and release of sin. “I deserve to suffer. I have to keep this guilt in order to pay for what I did” is a common guardian lie that hinders the release of truth based guilt.

As with any emotional healing target, guardian lies can be detected by asking “Are you sure you are ready to release this sin and guilt?” and then investigating any sense of uncertainty or lack of internal unity. If the guilt is not gone after going through the prayer, you can also scan for guardian lies by going through the prayer again and having the person watch for any guardian-lie type statements that come into her mind during the process.

3. Vows: Vows can block the release of sin and truth-based guilt. Guardian lies often have associated vows. For example, if an alcoholic father really believes “I deserve this guilt. I have to keep it to pay for what I did to my children,” he might make the vow “I *will* keep this guilt.” If a man really believes “Pornography is the only source of joy in my life, and I have the right to use it because my wife won’t go on a diet,” he might make the vow “I *won’t* let go of it.”
4. Demonic interference: The demonic spirits associated with the sin and guilt in question will certainly try to hinder the adult self and/or internal parts from participating in prayer to address the sin and guilt. As discussed in “Dealing with Demonic Interference/Opposition during the session...,” it is helpful to “focus the target” when dealing with demonic interference. If I were dealing with possible demonic interference hindering prayer to address sin and truth-based guilt, I would address my commands to “all demonic spirits connected to ____ (*describe the sin*) and the guilt associated with it.”
5. Internal parts that do not participate: As discussed above, it may be possible for internal parts to carry separate responsibility and truth-based guilt for sinful choices. For complete resolution of the sin and truth-based guilt, all internal parts carrying responsibility and truth-based guilt for the sin in question must be present, stay connected, and participate in the prayer. See “General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids” for additional discussion.

It is ideal to identify and resolve these problems before going through the prayer. Ask the person if she is sure she is ready to release the sin and guilt in question, and check for any sense of uncertainty or lack of internal unity. This usually picks up guardian lies, and often picks up internal parts that aren’t ready to participate. See “General Introductory Comments Regarding Ministry Aids” for additional comments.

If it doesn’t work: My experience is that we still sometimes miss something, especially quiet vows and deeper traumatic memories that are carefully protected. It is easy to tell when you miss something because the subjective sense of guilt will still be there when the person is done with the prayer. If the person receiving ministry does not experience relief from his subjective sense of guilt, ask the Lord “what do you want ____ (*name of the person receiving ministry*) to know about this guilt?” and then watch especially for the common problems discussed above. Return to the sample prayers and commands when the blocking problems have been addressed. The Lord will always release a person from his or her subjective sense of guilt when lie-based condemnation has been resolved, the sin has been confessed and released, and blocking problems have been resolved.

These prayers and commands do not address the roots of the sin: Note that these prayers and commands address truth-based guilt and unconfessed sin as clutter hindering the emotional healing process, but they *do not* address the wound and lie roots of the ongoing pattern of sinful behavior. These prayers and commands will therefore routinely result in removing *unconfessed* sin so that the healing work can continue, and will routinely result in relief from subjective guilt. But they will not result in ongoing freedom from the sin in question. Freedom from the sin will come with resolving the wounds and lies that drive the ongoing pattern of sinful behavior. See *Beyond Tolerable Recovery*, chapter 14, especially pages 229-236, for an excellent discussion of the way in which lies contribute to sin.

Sin as Clutter, Truth Based Guilt: Sample Prayers and CommandsAdapted from Genuine Recovery, 1996 ed. by Edward M. Smith, p.54

This ministry aid addresses sin that is a willful act of disobedience (see separate ministry aids for reactive sins). Never assume recipients are ready to release their sin. Always ask “Are you sure you are ready to release _____ (name the sin)?” If there is any sense of anger, uncertainty, or lack of internal unity, look for guardian lies, unresolved trauma, and internal dissociated parts that are not ready to release the sin in question.

“Lord Jesus, I confess that I sinned against you when I chose to _____ (*describe the sinful behavior*). I have hurt You and _____ (*name any others that were injured*), and for this I am very sorry. I ask you to forgive me for _____ (*sinful behavior*). I renounce _____ (*sinful behavior*).”

“I acknowledge that I cannot change my own heart and mind regarding this sin, so I ask You to give me true repentance – I ask you to change my heart and my mind regarding this sin. I also acknowledge that I cannot free myself from this sin or the guilt it has produced, but I am willing to be freed. I cooperate with Your desire to free me by asking you to free me, by choosing to confess, renounce, and release this sin, and by choosing to turn away from this sin and turn to You.”

“Lord Jesus, I ask now that you would wash me with your blood, cleansing me and freeing me from this sin and from the guilt it has produced.”

Coach the recipient to connect with the memories being addressed and help them to stir up the guilt and shame associated with the sin in question. Sometimes the guilt and shame will already be gone. If they are still present, help the recipient to establish an interactive connection with Jesus *inside* the memories in question, and then coach them to ask the Lord, “What’s in the way of resolving this guilt and shame? Please help me to find and resolve the blockages.” And then help the recipient to watch especially for the common problems discussed above. Return to the sample prayer when the blocking problems have been addressed. The Lord will always remove guilt and shame when the sin has been confessed and all hindrances have been resolved.

Optional: *If you and recipient feel lead to do so, you can tear down spiritual strongholds (2 Cor. 10), deal with demonic spirits, and break curses. Help them go through something like the following sample commands:*

“In the name of Jesus, we command that all spiritual strongholds connected to or associated with _____ (*name the area of sin being addressed*) be torn down now.”

“In the name of Jesus, we now command all demonic spirits connected to or associated with _____ (*name the area of sin being addressed*) in my life go immediately and directly to the feet of the true Lord Jesus Christ. You will go bound, you will not touch or harm anything or anyone on the way, you will never return, and you will never send anything in your place. He will deal with you as He sees fit.”

“In the name of Jesus, we command that all curses in any way connected to or associated with _____ (*name the area of sin being addressed*) in my life be broken and rendered powerless, null, and void.”