

Seven Keys to SUCCESS

Lesson 3—Confess Your Sins

Series: “Seven Keys to Success: Habits for Christian Living”

- Surrender it all to God
- Unite with God Every Day
- Confess Your Sins
- Continually Study God’s Word
- Encourage Others to Know Christ
- Stay the Course
- Share Your Resources

OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: Isaiah 6:1-8

Key Verse: 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.”

BEFORE CLASS

Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- How does being in God’s presence and knowing God’s holiness affect your life?
- How have you confronted sin issues in your life?
- Is there anything God might be calling you to do?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed Sunday School.
- Pray for each student by name.

CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.

CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.

CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.

THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, “It really doesn’t matter if you’re here or not.” Small things communicate great messages. Let the three “small” things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Discussion

SAY: We've been discussing *Seven Keys to SUCCESS*. The word SUCCESS is an acrostic that represents these keys.

- *What key to success does the "S" stand for? (Surrender it all to God)*
- *How are you doing as far as living a totally surrendered life to Christ?*
- *What key to success does the "U" stand for? (Unite with God every day)*
- *How did you do this past week in spending time with God every day?*
- *How do you think uniting with God every day will make you successful?*

SAY: Today we're talking about the first "C" in *SUCCESS*. It stands for "Confess Your Sins." Let's take a look at it.

BIBLE LESSON

Turn to Isaiah 6.

While they are turning, SAY: Here's the background of what we are about to read. King Uzziah's 52-year long reign had brought Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, peace and prosperity. Then King Uzziah died and in the year of his death God revealed himself to the prophet Isaiah. Let's take a look at what God showed him.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Isaiah 6:1-4

- *What do you notice about God here?*

SAY: Notice three things about God:

- (1) *His throne is high and lifted up*—God was not a part of Judah's sins and ruled over them as Judge and King and though the physical king had died, there was still a King on the throne.
 - (2) *God's robe filled the temple*—In that day people visually witnessed the wealth and power of a king by the length of his robe. God's robe filled the entire temple.
 - (3) *God is Holy, Holy, Holy*—He is holy and perfect in nature. He is holy and righteous in actions. His glory and holiness require our worship.
- *What do you think about the Seraphim, the creatures that were giving honor to God? (The Bible doesn't tell us a lot about these angels. The Hebrew word for these creatures literally means "to burn," probably because they had a fiery appearance. They also had six wings although each seraphim covered his face and feet in God's awesome presence. This action of covering themselves showed their deep sense of humility before a Holy God.)*

- *How do you think you would react if you saw God's glory the way Isaiah did?*

SAY: Let's take a look at how Isaiah responded.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Isaiah 6:5

- *What was Isaiah's reaction to seeing God's holiness? (When he encountered God's holiness, he also encountered his own sinfulness.)*
- *What were the two reasons that Isaiah feared he was ruined? (He confessed that he was a man of unclean lips and that he lived among a people of unclean lips.)*
- **ANSWER THE FOLLOWING TO YOURSELF:**
 - *On a scale of 1 to 10, how clean are your lips? Do you speak evil things, tell lies, gossip, cuss, etc.?*
 - *On a scale of 1 to 10, how clean are your hands? Do you do things you know are wrong—Do you steal, smoke, abuse others, or use your hands in other evil ways?*
 - *On a scale of 1 to 10, how clean is your mind? Do you think evil thoughts, lust, watch things you know aren't right, listen to things you know you shouldn't?*

SAY: There is a saying that says, "God will not pour Himself into a dirty vessel." Isaiah knew that before he could preach against the sins of others he had to confess his own sin.

- *Are there things in your life that you know hinder God from pouring Himself into you—that hinder Him from using you?*

SAY: Also, notice how Isaiah responded when he experienced God's presence. Because of his sin, instead of embracing and enjoying God's presence, he shrunk away from it in fear.

- *When was the last time you truly enjoyed or experienced God's presence in your life? Last week? At camp? In the worship service today? Do you think this has anything to do with how much uninterrupted time you are spending with God each day?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Isaiah 6:6-8

SAY: The seraph took a glowing coal from the altar. This altar was a reference to the altar of incense that stood before the entrance of the holy of holies in the earthly temple. Glowing coal laid on the top of the altar. The priest would place the incense on the top of the burning coal so that incense could ascend before the most holy place in the tabernacle. The incense altar represented the prayers of the people of God (Rev. 8:3-4). The angel touched the coal to Isaiah lips to represent his cleansing.

- *What message did the angel bring with the coal? (Your guilt is taken away; your sins are atoned for.)*
- *How did Isaiah respond when he knew he was forgiven? (He was ready to serve God.)*
- *What do you think holds most Christians back from serving God? (For most it is because they are not willing to let go of their sin—They are not fully surrendered to God. They are still living for themselves which is a form of idolatry because they have placed their own wants and desires above God’s wants and desires. They are “looking out for number one” instead of having Christ as number one.)*
- *Are you ready to serve God in your life? Are you willing to say, “Here I am. Send me!” If not, what is holding you back?*

KEY VERSE

Choose a volunteer to read—1 John 1:9

SAY: This is God’s prescription for sin: confess your sins and turn away from them and He will forgive and cleanse you.

A few other things to understand about God’s forgiveness:

- *You cannot earn God’s forgiveness.*
- *You do not deserve God’s forgiveness—This is grace.*
- *God’s forgiveness is complete—Your sin is gone.*
- *God’s forgiveness includes the removal of your guilt.*
- *Like Isaiah, with true confession and forgiveness, there comes the willingness to do whatever God wants you to do.*

A few other things to understand about sin:

- *Sin is the opposite of God and will always give you the opposite of what God wants you to have.*
- *Sin will always hurt you.*
- *Sin will always lead to more sin.*
- *Sin will always affect the people around you.*
- *Sin will never give you what you want in life.*
- *You cannot be right with God and have sin in your life.*
- *The path of sin leads to emptiness and ruin.*

Consider the following legend:

How does an Eskimo kill a wolf? First, the Eskimo coats his knife blade with blood and lets it freeze. He continues this process of adding coats of blood and then letting them freeze. Before long the blade is hidden deep within a thick layer of frozen blood. Then he buries the knife—blade up—in the frozen tundra. The wolf catches the scent of fresh blood and begins to lick the blade. He licks more and more feverishly, until the blade is bare. Because of the cold, the wolf never notices the pain from the blade as it cuts him and the animal eventually bleeds to death. Satan works in much the same way. He gives you a taste of sin, knowing

you will crave more. You go deeper and deeper to satisfy your desires or to cover up the original sin. You may not notice the hurt or damage until it's too late. ¹

Have everyone in the room, close their eyes: Then SAY:

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS TO YOURSELF...

- Have you been playing around with sin in your life?
- Is there anything holding you back from fully following Jesus?

- Are there unconfessed sins in you life? If so, then right now I am going to give you a moment of silence to confess your sins to God and ask Him for cleansing, but part of confessing is also repenting. To be forgiven you must be willing to turn from your sin and turn to Christ.

Give your students a moment of silence...

SAY: Finally, God can not only forgive your sin, He can remove your guilt. Remember what the angel said to Isaiah when he touched his lips with the coal: "Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." The Bible also says in Romans 8:1: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." If you still feel guilty about a sin you committed in the past, give this guilt to God. If you have been forgiven, don't hold onto guilt or self-condemnation. Whom God has cleansed is fully clean with no cause for guilt.

WRAP IT UP

SAY: You can never accomplish God's full purposes in your life while you are holding onto sin, but if you confess your sin God will forgive you through His grace.

Prayer Time

Pray specifically today that your students never hold onto sin but will always confess it and seek God's forgiveness.

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

¹*One Thousand Illustrations: Stories for Life*, (Texas: Student Discipleship Ministries, 2000) CD-Rom, story #150.