

CASE STUDY # 4: Confessing to others

Welcome

Scenario

Matt is a 17-year-old with his new driving license. His parents have a house rule that Matt is not allowed to drive without first gaining permission from them. One evening while Matt's parents were gone, Matt's friend Jake called. Jake had just broken up with his girlfriend and was upset. Without contacting his parents, Matt immediately went out of the house, taking his father's Jeep. When backing the Jeep out of the driveway, Matt backed into a retaining wall and broke a taillight. But he was in such a hurry that he didn't notice. He then picked up Jake and drove around so that they could talk. He returned home before his parents and parked the Jeep back in the driveway. When his parents came home, his father saw the damaged taillight. He checked the mileage on the Jeep and noticed that the seat had been pushed back and the mirrors changed. He came into the house to confront his son. His father raised his voice, accusing Matt of taking the Jeep without permission and damaging it. Matt denied taking the Jeep. Matt's dad became angry, yelling and accusing him. Matt responded in anger, denying his actions and showing disrespect for his father. Without resolving the matter, Matt walked out on his father muttering, "Whatever!"

These questions can apply to the above case study or to a current conflict from your personal life. For the case study, assume either Matt's or his father's role. For a conflict from your life, apply these questions to yourself, writing out your answers.

1. If you could go back in time and do anything differently in your encounter with the other person, what would that be? Reflecting on your answer, what have you failed to do as a child of God?

1. Continued

2. Consider whether you have any bitterness against the other person. Read Ephesians 4:26-27. How long have you been angry? How has your bitterness become a foothold for the devil?

3. Reflect on your words in your conflict with the other person. Compare them to Ephesians 4:29-32. What words have you spoken to the other person that were not helpful for building up?

4. Think about others you have talked to about this situation. Comparing your speech to the Commandment on not bearing false witness, how have you sinned? (Note especially the proactive requirements of this Commandment, such as those in Proverbs 11:13; 1 Corinthians 13:7; and Philippians 4:8.)

5. Read Philippians 2:14-15. Whether or not you talked to someone else, have you grumbled or complained about the other person?

6. What behaviors did you exhibit that failed to follow God's commands?

7. Compare your thoughts, words, and actions to what the Bible describes in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. How have you failed to love the other people involved?

8. Write out your confession on a piece of paper. Or.....write a prayer for God's help in confessing to the other person. You could use the following:

8. Continued

Gentle Savior, I am often blind to my own faults. By nature I want to defend and protect myself. But you did not protect yourself when dying on the cross for my sins. Instead, you willingly laid down your life for me, taking on my punishment, that I may be restored to God and live eternally in heaven. Help me see my faults in conflict, especially my dispute with [name]. Grant me insight that I may see where I have failed you and others. Assure me of your love as you guide me in confession that I may hear your promise of forgiveness. Then, according to your will, grant my reconciliation with all those I have sinned against. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.