

Who Is Your Personal Savior and Mediator?

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Why and What Do I Need to Confess to My Bishop?
October 2013



You may wonder why you are taught to confess to your bishop or branch president when you have committed serious sins. You may say to yourself, “Isn’t repentance a personal thing between me and the Lord? If I have stopped my wrong behavior and have confessed it to God, why do I need to talk with my bishop?”

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What Do I Need to Confess?

I know that you have tried to be obedient, but maybe you have made some mistakes—even some serious mistakes. Most of the mistakes people make can be resolved through personal prayer and sincere repentance. Some mistakes, especially those regarding immorality, require confession to the bishop before you can receive the Lord’s forgiveness.

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November 2008

The short answer is that you need to confess “serious transgressions” to your bishop. These include (but are not limited to) serious violations of the law of chastity and acts of violence or dishonesty that cause serious harm or damage to others.

May you exercise faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. I testify in the name of Jesus Christ that through repentance, including confession to your bishop when necessary, you will become clean. In addition, through the Savior's grace—His enabling power—you can be strengthened in your ability to resist temptation in the future. Thus, you will have peace of

According to the LDS website, Church doctrine states that if you commit a serious sin (breaking the law of chastity), what are you then required to do in order to be forgiven and cleansed of your sin?

Imagine that a faithful member of the LDS Church committed a serious sin and felt great sorrow for disobeying God. So the person confessed their sin to God and to their friends. They asked their friends to pray for, support and encourage them...that person would still not be forgiven of their sins because they have not confessed their sin to their bishop.

A mediator is someone who is "in between" you and God. He is the one who can reconcile your relationship with God and declare that you are clean and forgiven. We have all broken God's law (Romans 3:23; James 2:10). According to God's Word, who must we confess all of our sins to as our personal mediator in order to become forgiven of our sins?

1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

According to God's Word, Jesus alone is the only mediator between man and God. A mediator ***is someone who you can directly approach***. By confessing our sins directly to God and God alone, we can find forgiveness. If I am required to confess my serious sins to my bishop, who has become my personal/direct mediator?

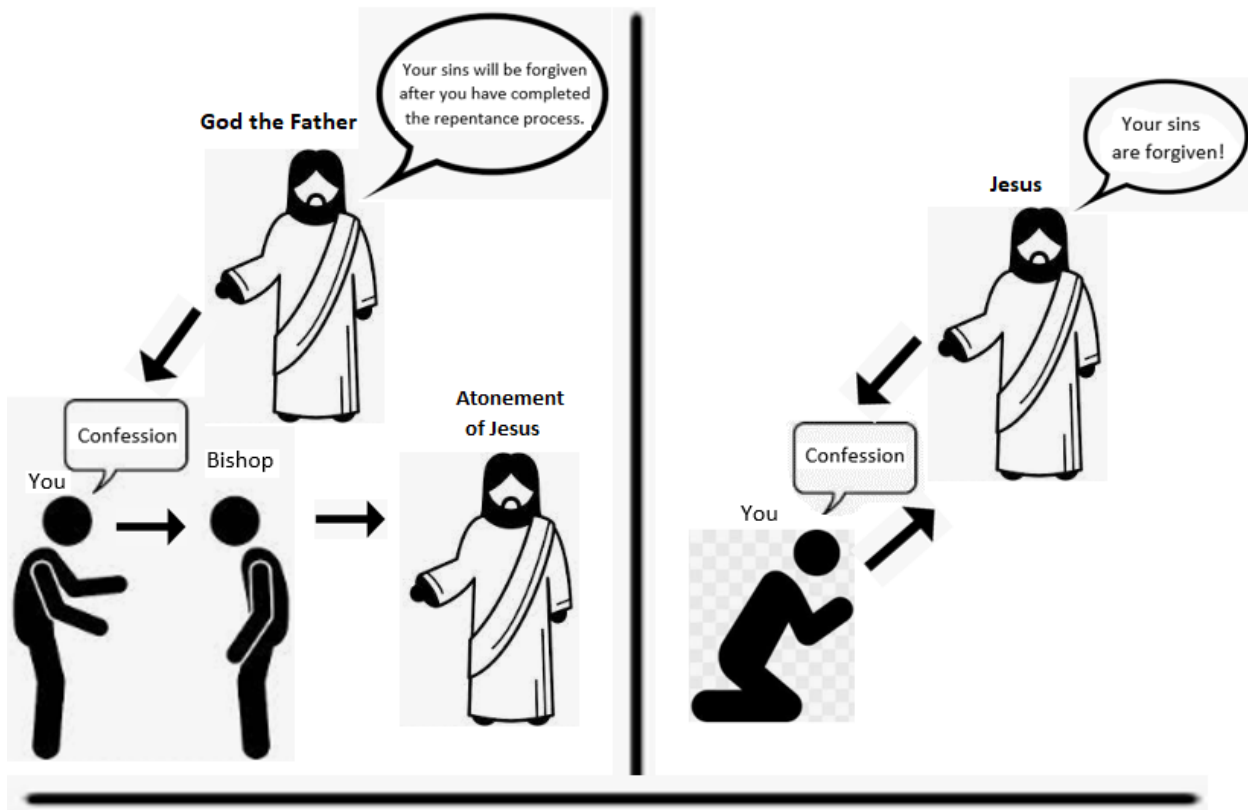
James 5:16 “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

We read here that it is good to confess our sins to one another. This is for accountability, prayer, and support. Is it good to confess our sins to one another to help us overcome them? Absolutely! Are we required to confess our sins to a specific individual on earth in order to receive God’s forgiveness? Absolutely not!

“In July 2023, I invited some missionaries to my work office. I bought them lunch and we had a great discussion. Towards the end of our conversation, I said to one of the missionaries, “I strive to die to myself and live for Christ. I pray for him to help me to resist sinful temptations. I have confessed all of my sins directly to Jesus. I am sincerely trying to do better each day and love God by obeying His commands. God has captured my heart. But I have never confessed my sins to a bishop. Have I been forgiven of my sins?” The missionary politely responded by saying, “It’s not my place to judge but it’s possible that you might not have been forgiven.”

Let us remember what Scripture has stated: that we can go directly to Jesus alone as our mediator, confess all of our sins directly to Him and he will personally forgive us of all our sins and unrighteousness. There is no one else that we are required to confess to in order to receive forgiveness of sins. This privilege of being able to have that direct access to Jesus, going directly to Him as our personal mediator, and laying all of our sins (regardless of how serious they are) down at the foot of the cross is what it means to have **a personal relationship with the precious Savior, Jesus Christ.**

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There are a number of Latter Day Saints who aren't aware that the LDS Church teach that confession to the bishop is required in order for serious sins to be forgiven. The primary concern is that Latter Day Saints are missing out on this deep and personal relationship with Jesus and the hope is that one day you will have a relationship with Jesus like the right side of the picture above.

I invite you to ponder and pray about these things and look to the teachings of Jesus and his apostles for guidance. God bless you, my friend!