



A Word Study of 'Confess'

Romans 10:5-15

A young boy in a blue shirt and khaki shorts is kneeling on a blue cushioned seat in a confessional, with his hands clasped in prayer. He is looking towards a priest who is seated in a wooden chair. The priest is wearing white vestments and a purple stole with a gold cross. He has his hands raised in a gesture of blessing or listening. The confessional is made of light-colored wood with vertical slats. The background is a plain wall with a small framed picture.

Confessing to a Priest





Definition of ‘Confession’?

- ὁμολογέω

- **homologeō**; from ὁμόλογος **homologos** (*of one mind*); *to speak the same, to agree; confess; praise*

- *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance*

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

(1 Corinthians 1:10 NKJV)



Translation of '*homologeō*' in the New Testament

- acknowledge(2)
- assured(1)
- **confess(7)**
- **confessed(4)**
- **confesses(6)**
- **confessing(1)**
- declare(1)
- made(1)
- praising(1)
- profess(1)
- promised(1)

New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance



Definitions

- To confess, declare, admit – John 1:20; Acts 24:14
- To confess by way of admitting oneself guilty of what one is accused of, the result of inward conviction – 1 John 1:9
- To declare openly by way of speaking out freely, such confession the effect of deep conviction of facts - Matthew 7:23; 10:32; 1 John 2:23
- To confess by way of celebrating with praise – Hebrews 13:15
- To promise – Matthew 14:7



W.E. Vines's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words – Confess, Confession #1 homologeo

Confess, Declare Admit

- John confessing that he was NOT the Christ
John 1:20
- The apostle Paul confessing he worshipped God
according the Way (Christ) – Acts 24:14
- The faithful saints confessing they were strangers
and pilgrims on the earth – Hebrews 11:13



Admitting Oneself Guilty Of What One Is Accused Of, The Result Of Inward Conviction

- One who acknowledges sin to receive forgiveness and obtain the advocacy of Jesus – 1 John 1:9



To Declare Openly By Way Of Speaking Out Freely, Such Confession The Effect Of Deep Conviction Of Facts

- Jesus denying He does not know those who work lawlessness – Matthew 7:23
- Jesus acknowledging those who confess Him and denying those who deny Him – Matthew 10:32-33
- The rulers refusing to confess Jesus for fear of the Pharisees – John 12:42



To Confess By Way Of Celebrating With Praise

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- Christians acknowledging Christ by prayers and songs we offer to God – Hebrews 13:15



To Promise

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- Herod's rash promise to Salome that he would give her whatever she asked – Matthew 14:7



A Similar Word

- ἑξομολογέω
- **exomologeō**; from 1537 and 3670; *to agree; to confess; to praise*:— confess(2), confessed(1), confessing(2), consented(1), give praise(2), praise(2).

New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance



People from the whole Judean countryside and all of Jerusalem were going out to him, and he was baptizing them in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. (Mar 1:5 NET)

Definitions

- A public acknowledgement or confession of sins – Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5; Acts 19:18; James 5:16
- To profess or acknowledge openly – Matthew 11:25; Philippians 2:11
- By way of celebrating giving praise – Romans 14:11; 15:9



A Public Acknowledgement or Confession of Sin

- When John baptized Israel for repentance they confessed their sins – Matthew 3:6; Mark 1:5
- While the Jews and Greeks were obeying the gospel in Ephesus some confessed their sins of magic – Acts 19:17-20



This became known to all who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks; fear came over them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was praised. Many of those who had believed came forward, confessing and making their deeds known. Large numbers of those who had practiced magic collected their books and burned them up in the presence of everyone. When the value of the books was added up, it was found to total fifty thousand silver coins. In this way the word of the Lord continued to grow in power and to prevail.

(Acts 19:17-20 NET)

To Profess or Acknowledge Openly

- Jesus praises or thanks God for hiding and revealing the Gospel – Matthew 11:25
- The necessity of every tongue and knee to confess Jesus is Lord to the glory of God – Philippians 2:11



By Way of Celebrating, Giving Praise

- Paul explaining that all men will stand before Christ, bow and confess - Romans 14:11
- Paul affirming that the Gentiles will confess and sing praises to God - Romans 15:9



What about Simon the Sorcerer?

But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could acquire God’s gift with money! You have no share or part in this matter because your heart is not right before God! Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that he may perhaps forgive you for the intent of your heart. For I see that you are bitterly envious and in bondage to sin.” But Simon replied, “You pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of what you have said may happen to me.”

(Act 8:20-24 NET)



- Did Peter command Simon to confess his sin?
- Did Simon confess his sin?
- Was this a public or a private incident?

James 5:16 (NET)

“So confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great effectiveness.”

NOTE: W.E. Vine classes this passage among public confession of sins. However, let us examine the Scripture closely.



Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praises. Is anyone among you ill? He should summon the elders of the church, and they should pray for him and anoint him with olive oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick and the Lord will raise him up – and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. So confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great effectiveness. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain and there was no rain on the land for three years and six months! Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the land sprouted with a harvest.

(James 5:13-18 NET)

James 5:16 (NET)

“So confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great effectiveness.”

Do these instructions appear to be describing public or private actions?



Is There Authority for Public Confession of Sin?

- Yes. If a brother or sister wishes to make a public confession to request prayers of the church. (James 5:16)
- Yes. If a brother or sister are concerned their actions have affected the church/ congregation. (Matthew 18:15-18)
- Some people confuse repentance with penance. Repentance is changing one's mind; penance is a voluntary self-punishment.
- There is no New Testament example where public or private confession of sin ever compelled.





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