

Grace for Regrets

"He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name."
Psalm 23:3

"The Lord is my shepherd,
I have all I need."
(Ps. 23:1)

The Mauve Sofa
by: John Ortberg

We have all stained the sofa.

Some stains are small.
Some bleed through the entire fabric of our lives.
We wrestle with the reality of living in grace.
Therefore, God has given us the gift of confession.
But how does that work in our daily lives?
A 6-step stain removal process might be helpful.

1 → Preparation

This means that I place myself under the care and protection of the Holy Spirit.

WHY?

To avoid 2 **destructive** tendencies.

1- Mauling myself.

2- Glossing over truly ugly stains that demand attention.

Again—I place myself under the
protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2 → Self--Examination

This involves reflecting on the thoughts, words, and deeds of my life,
acknowledging that I have sinned.

Richard Foster—"It's not dreadful. This is the scrutiny of love."
Without apology or defense we ask to see
what is truly in us.

This is for our good, for our healing, and for our happiness!

3→ **Perception** . . . When did I depart from the path of righteousness and WHY?

- Some thoughts:
 - ✓ **Sin** is often tied to some need or another.
 - ✓ Perhaps I have lied in order to escape painful consequences resulting from honesty.
 - ✓ Is it that I might need to tolerate a high level of pain in my life for the sake of speaking truth when lying could get me out of a tight spot?

4→ A New **Feeling** . . .

- True confession is not just an exchange of information:
 - It involves entering into the pain of the one I've hurt and into God's pain over sin. *Godly Sorrow* is described in scripture.

"For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death."

II Corinthians 7:10—The New Living Translation

GOAL = finding the spiritual balance to genuinely say: "I'm sorry", and to seek reconciliation. This repentance pushes me to change and grow. It is good pain leading me to grace.

5→ A New **Resolve**

Confession also involves my intentions about the future. As God does his work in me, I feel a deep desire **never** to do this hurtful thing again. I resolve that, with God's help and the help of others in Christian community, I will change. This may include setting right what I did wrong. Listen with fresh interest in the words of Zacchaeus—Luke 19:8

"I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

6→ Healing **Grace!**

The final step in confession—the top of the mountain is **grace!**

This is not just grace as an idea, but the reality of it, being immersed in it, given life by it. God-honoring confession begins in sorrow and results in JOY!