

A Prayer Of Confession

*"...we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled;
we have turned away from your commands and laws.*

*We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings,
our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land."*

Daniel 9:5-6 (NIV)

*"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips,
and I live among a people of unclean lips,
and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."*

Isaiah 6:5 (NIV)

I am grateful for a good education in history and theology. I can usually hold my own with my colleagues. However, when in the university lecture hall, I knew I was the student, and our professor was the teacher. He/she imparted information and I asked questions. There is a very clear and obvious distinction between the teacher and the student.

As we start our prayer with worship, we are soon made aware of how sinful we are in the presence of the holy God we serve. This was the experience of Isaiah and Daniel as today's verses demonstrate. Thus, we move from adoration, the first part of our prayer, to the second part, confession. The distinction between the one praying and the One to Whom prayer is offered becomes very clear as God is worshipped.

Confession is detailed and repeated. This is a very thoughtful part of prayer and some find it helpful to reflect on their recent past as Daniel clearly did prior to praying. You will see, from reading this part of Daniel's prayer, that he detailed carefully where the people went wrong. It is worthy of noting that Daniel did not speak of the nation as "they", rather he includes himself with the nation by saying,

"...we have sinned against you. The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets..." (vss. 8-10).

Perhaps you might consider developing your prayers one aspect at a time. You might begin with worship. Recite a hymn of praise such as the following or one of your own choosing which centers on descriptions of our great God:

O worship the King,
all glorious above!
O gratefully sing his power
and his love!
Our shield and defender,
the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendor,
and girded with praise.

O tell of his might!
O sing of his grace!
Whose robe is the light,
whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath the deep
thunderclouds form,
and dark is his path
on the wings of the storm.

The earth, with its store
of wonders untold,
Almighty, thy power

hath founded of old,
hath 'stablished it fast
by a changeless decree,
and round it hath cast,
like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care,
what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air;
it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills,
it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distills
in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust,
and feeble as frail,
in thee do we trust,
nor find thee to fail;
thy mercies, how tender!
How firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender,
Redeemer, and Friend!

O measureless Might,
ineffable Love,
while angels delight
to worship thee above,
the humbler creation,
though feeble their lays,
with true adoration shall all sing
thy praise

-Robert Grant
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