

Introduction

Positive confession is a biblical truth. Like any other truth, it can be misused on the one hand, or maligned on the other. The important thing is to accept all biblical truth, including positive confession. Then, it is vital to walk in the light of all truth.

Confession as Diagnosis

Since *homologeō* means to agree with God in one's speech, what is the implication when we discover that one is not "saying the same thing" that God says? It means two things: (1) one needs correction in that particular area and (2) one has a decision to make: one must change and agree with God.

By listening to oneself and comparing one's confession with the Word of God, one can diagnose his own spiritual pathology. Then, with God's help, he can begin a course of treatment.

The logical progression of God's work in the Christian begins with *God* himself:

1. God speaks, producing *the Word of God*.
2. The believer *listens* to God's Word.
3. The believer *believes* God's Word.
4. The believer *thinks* in line with God's Word.
5. The believer *speaks* in line with God's Word.
6. The believer *acts* in line with God's Word.

"God said it, I believe it, that settles it," is a popular saying. A more accurate way of stating that principle is, "God settled all truth in eternity. God spoke the truth through his Son and in his Written Word and I believe it."

Receiving the Word of God into the heart produces New Testament faith:

. . .faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).

Unless one is deliberately being a hypocrite, what he says comes from his heart. It is his faith speaking. Jesus said,

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You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned (Matthew 12:34-37, NIV).

Salvation and Confession

Confession is essential in our salvation:

But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Romans 10:8-10, NIV

We are justified by faith. (See chapter one). We are kept justified by faith. The writer of Hebrews tells us to maintain our profession (*homologia*, "confession") of Christian hope:

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Hebrews 10:23, NIV)

As we continue to believe, we continue to confess our hope in Christ.

Christian Walk and Confession

The Christian's speech is an essential part of his life. Let us analyze some Christian roots of confession as found in some Old Testament saints.

Old Testament Examples.

Joshua and Caleb. Joshua and Caleb were two of the twelve spies sent out by Moses to gather intelligence from Canaan. [Adapted from Kenneth E. Hagin, *Confession Brings Possession* [Cassette Tape] (Tulsa: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, n.d.)]. Before God sent them, he told Moses that he was going to give Canaan to Israel:

The LORD said to Moses, "Send some men to explore the land Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders."
Numbers 13:1-2, NIV

Joshua and Caleb received this Word from God into their hearts. The other ten spies chose to believe what their own senses and mere human reason told them instead of what God had spoken. Israel believed the majority report that, in this case, was not right.

Joshua and Caleb's confession was:

Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."
Numbers 13:30, NIV

Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."
Numbers 14:6-9, NIV

The other ten spies and Israel rebelled against God by rejecting God's Word and accepting "common sense":

But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them." That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the

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sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt? And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."
Numbers 13:31-14:4, NIV

From a military analysis, Israel was no match for the Canaanites. However, Israel as a whole discounted both the Word of God and his faithfulness. God had already proven his faithfulness to Israel by his past protection and providence through miracles.

The LORD charged Moses and Aaron,

"So tell them [the Israelites] 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: In this desert your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.' "
Numbers 14:28-30, NIV

God rewarded everyone according to his own faith and resulting confession. That generation of Israel said that they could not conquer and possess Canaan and they did not. Joshua and Caleb both said that they were able to conquer and possess Canaan and they did. However, they had to wait until the present generation of Israel had died in the wilderness.

David and Goliath. The familiar fight between David and Goliath also has an important lesson about "saying the same thing that God says." David was a teenager with little or no training as a soldier. Goliath had been trained from his youth as a soldier and was a combat veteran. Goliath was a giant and had full fighting equipment. He even had a shield-bearer.

Goliath believed in himself and based what he said on his experience:

He [Goliath] looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field."

1 Samuel 17:42-44, NIV

David believed in God and based what he said on God's will that this enemy of Israel be defeated:

David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

1 Samuel 17:45-47, NIV

David's confession was quite a proclamation for a young shepherd boy. Today, one who made a statement like David would be considered presumptuous. Presumption is based on human desire. Faith is based on God's will. Notice that David believed God, confessed his faith and acted out his faith. Then, God brought his will to pass—David received what he said.

Abraham and Isaac. God appeared to Abraham and told him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering:

Sometime later, God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."

Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and the wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

"Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

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Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place [YAHWEH-YIREH] The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided."

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me" (Genesis 22:1-18, NIV).

From the time God promised Isaac to Abraham and Sarah until Isaac was born, they had to wait twenty-five years. (Joshua had to wait forty years and Noah had to wait one hundred twenty years until God's word was fulfilled.) Faith looks to God and not to the calendar. One must not become discouraged. However, it usually does not take this long for prayer to be answered!

Abraham's faith was severely tried during the three day trek to Mount Moriah. The command of God seemed to contradict the nature of God. God commanded not to offer human sacrifices. Jesus was the only human sacrifice he ever required and he raised Jesus from the grave on the third day. Yet Abraham had the promise of God that, ". . .through Isaac your descendants shall be named" (Genesis 21:12, New American Standard Bible).

Abraham revealed his faith in what he said to his servants:

He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."
Genesis 22:5, NIV

Some have wondered if Abraham were lying--telling a half truth--again as he did previously concerning Sarah. The writer of Hebrews sets our minds at ease:

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.
Hebrews 11:17-19, NIV

Abraham placed God first in his life by not sparing his son Isaac. His speech revealed his faith in God. [For a more full treatment of this story of Abraham, see the "First Commandment" in my

ebook *The Ten Commandments*. Go to <http://www.bustersoft.com/JRCM/> to download this book free.

New Testament Examples

The Woman with A Hemorrhage. Moving to the New Testament, we see an excellent example of Jesus healing a woman who had an incurable disease:

And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

(Mark 5:25-34, NIV)

Before coming to Jesus, she had said to herself, "If I can just touch Jesus' clothing, I will be healed." Her confession was silent, but *God* heard her faith speaking.

Possibly the enemy and the angels heard, too. Sometimes it is not wise to make a confession of faith openly. She had quite a few obstacles to overcome:

1. She was ceremonially unclean and was supposed to be segregated.
2. She was a woman. Culturally, the proper thing was for her to stay in the background.
3. She would have to fight crowds.

Some may not have understood if she had spoken out loud. The beautiful story ends with Jesus healing her. She received what she said.

Jesus and Lazarus. Before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Jesus made quite a bold statement:

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

John 11:41-44, NIV

Jesus confessed that the Father had heard (past tense) him. Jesus was speaking as though Lazarus had already been raised from the dead! He was "practicing what he preached," because he had just told Martha that if she believed, she would see. Most people practice this in reverse: they believe *after* they see, because they have not listened to God.

Paul and Glorification. One of the boldest statements Paul makes is the ultimate confession of faith.

He speaks as though Christians were already glorified!

And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also *glorified* [Italics Mine].

(Romans 8:30, NIV)

Ralph Earle comments on *edoxase* (glorified) in this passage. First, he quotes Denney and then concludes in a single sentence:

. . . Denney declares: "The tense in the last word is amazing. It is the most daring anticipation of faith that even the N.T. contains" (*EGT*, 2:652) [*Expositor's Greek Testament* (5 Vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.)] In the divine foreknowledge our glorification is already seen as an event accomplished. [Ralph Earle, ThD, *Word Meanings in the New Testament: Romans* Vol. 3. (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1974), pp. 167-168].

Paul's confession reached way into the future, where we would be glorified. He so believed God's word that he spoke as though we were already glorified, that is, that our salvation were already completed. To God, it was. To Paul, it was. Therefore, *it is biblical to say that Christians are "saved."*

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Christians are usually taught that they have been

- 1 Justified (have been saved);
- 2 Sanctified (are being saved) and
- 3 Glorified (will be saved). Paul exceeded this teaching by proclaiming that he *was* glorified!

Conclusion

If one listens to God, he will talk like God, that is, he will say the same thing that God says. A diagnosis of one's faith can be made through his speech. The prognosis is good if one will accept scriptural correction. The prescription is the Word of God.

As one internalizes the Word, speaks the Word and acts on the Word, he becomes conformed more and more to the image of Christ. Self-esteem will rise correspondingly.

Assignment: Meditate on the scriptures in this chapter.

Chapter 7 of my eBook, *How to Raise Your Self-Esteem Using Proven Biblical Principles*. Download this eBook free at <http://BusterSoft.com/JRCM/>

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In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity

—Peter Meiderlin 1626

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