

SERIES: THE PROCESS OF BREAKTHROUGH
PART 4: ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR WRONGS

We're in a series that I've been calling The Process of Breakthrough. We're using the word Breakthrough as an acronym on how to break through the barriers and blockades that are obstructing God's purposes and plans for your life. Father God wants to teach us how to remove those things that hinder and oppose God's desires for our lives.

This step in the process is where we turn our attention to the obstacles that hinder and hamper our growth, maturity and healing and health. This step has been called by some to be the house-cleaning step.

“A” in breakthrough stands for: Acknowledge my wrong and confess my faults to myself, to God and to someone I trust.

This step has to do with cleaning up the clutter of the past that created guilt, shame and fear and helps you develop a clear conscience and how to initiate living with a clear conscience and the way God wants you to live. If you'll take this step with me today you will experience the kinds of breakthroughs that you could never imagine.

Step four is based on the three scriptures in your notes. I am going to ask you to read each one of these with me please. First, Lamentation 3:40, **“Instead, let us test and examine**

our ways. Let us turn again in repentance to the Lord.” Matthew 5:8, **“God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.”** Psalm 32:1-2, **“Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! ²Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!”**

Why is this a part of the recovery process? **Guilt keeps us stuck in the past. Guilt keeps us from growing, from becoming all God wants us to be.** If you're going to learn how to really enjoy life, you've got to learn how to let go of guilt. The truth is, none of us is faultless. We all have sins, we've all made mistakes. So we all have regrets. We all have remorse. We all have things we wish we could turn back the clock on and say, “I wish I would have done that differently,” but you didn't. So you feel bad about it, feel guilty about it, carry it with you. As a result we carry guilt around—sometimes consciously, but most of the time unconsciously. There are a lot of ways you react in life that are caused by unconscious guilt. Things you're not even aware of. Things you feel bad about. We may deny the guilt. We may repress the guilt. We may blame other people for our guilt. We may excuse our guilt. We may rationalize our guilt. But we still feel the effects of it. If you're really going to recover from the hurts, and habits, and hang-ups in your life, you've got to learn how to breakthrough the stranglehold that guilt has on all of us. How do you get rid of guilt? By taking Step 4. The good news is that this step is the key to freedom. Loved ones, unconfessed sin is the leading obstacle to our **Living out our freedom in community together... Acting in faith bathed**

in love. And if you take the steps to The Process of Breakthrough I'm sharing with you, you'll be able to experience Psalm 32:1-2 that states that there is a supernatural joy for those whose rebellion has been forgiven.

I. The purpose for this step

A. Guilt destroys my confidence

You cannot be a confident person if you have guilt in your life. It makes you feel insecure because you're always worried, "What if somebody finds out? What if somebody really knows the truth about me, then they may not like me, they may reject me, I may not be all that I'm cracked up to be?" As a result, we're afraid of other people, and it destroys our confidence.

Many years ago Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, writer of the Sherlock Holmes novels, was quite a prankster, and one day he played a prank on five of the most prominent men in England. He sent an anonymous note to these five prominent men, and it simply said this: "All is found out, flee at once." Within twenty-four hours all five men had left the country.

Guilt robs you of confidence. It's like a cloud hanging over your head, and you're thinking, "I just can't get on with my life, because I'm afraid somebody is going to find that skeleton in my closet, that deep, dark secret that I know about, and obviously God knows about, but nobody else

knows about it, and it carries a heavy, heavy weight.” And it robs your confidence.

B. Guilt damages my relationships

Guilt causes me to respond to people in wrong ways. Guilt can make me impatient with other people. Guilt can cause me to overreact in anger. Have you ever seen somebody overreact in anger, like a nuclear explosion to a firecracker cause? Often that's motivated by guilt, when you get down behind it. Sometimes the persons themselves don't even know that. Guilt can cause you to spoil people, indulge people. “I feel like I'm guilty in this relationship, so I buy them lots of things.” Parents often feel guilty and overcompensate by indulging. Guilt can cause you to avoid commitment in relationship. You get so close in the relationship but then no closer. Why won't I do that? Why won't I let people get close to me? One of the reasons is guilt and shame. So it damages my relationships, because it keeps me responding to people in ways that sometimes I don't understand. A lot of marriage problems today are caused by things that happened prior to marriage that a spouse still feels guilty about. And it causes marriage problems today.

C. Guilt keeps me stuck in the past

What guilt does is it tends to replay in your mind over and over and over the things you wish you could change but you're never going to change. Guilt cannot change the past

just like worry cannot change the future. But it just makes today miserable. On top of that it can make you sick.

I read a report the other day that said psychiatrists say that probably seventy percent of the people in the hospital could leave today if they knew how to resolve their guilt. When I swallow my guilt my stomach keeps score, and if I don't talk it out to God and to others I take it out on myself. This is a very important step. It's a scary step. This is the one that separates the mature from the immature. This is the one that separates those who want to talk about Breakthrough and those who really mean business saying, "I'm going to get on with my life. I want to take responsibility for my life. I want to grow. I want to let go of the past. I want to resolve my past.

II. How to put this step into action

Here's how you do it. How do you take these steps? The procedure is very simple; it just requires a lot of courage.

A. Take a personal moral inventory

What that means is that you get alone by yourself. You get a pencil and a notepad and you sit down and say, "What is wrong with me? What have I felt guilty about? What have I regretted? What have I felt remorseful about? What are the faults in my life that I know need changing?" And you ask God to help you out. You ask Him to bring to your mind, "What are the things I consciously feel guilty about, and what

are the things I unconsciously feel guilty about that I don't know about but are messing up my life?"

Lamentations 3:40: **“Let us test and examine our ways. Let us turn again in repentance to the Lord.”** God says we need to examine our lives and then we pray and ask God in this time to help us. Psalm 139:23-24: **“Search me O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my thoughts. ²⁴Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”**

When you take this moral inventory, you need to take your time, don't rush it. I have a profound need in my life to do this. It must become a regular habit, a discipline, in my life and in yours. This keeps me and you in tune, growing, healthy. This doesn't work unless you are ruthlessly honest with yourself. And you say, “I'm going to be dead honest, quit pretending, I'm going to lay out what's wrong with my life,” and you sit down and start writing it down.

Why in writing? Because it forces you to be specific. Why can't I just think about these things, pray about them?

Thoughts disentangle themselves when they pass through the lips and the fingertips. That means if I've thought about it and I can say it and I can write it down, I've really got it clear. If I can't say it, put it down in writing, it's still pretty vague. You can't just say, “God, I've blown it in life.” We all know that. Specifically, you need to write it down. This helps you be specific, face reality, helps you stop denying problems in your life.

Step one is you make a moral inventory. You sit down and write out what's bugging me, how I have bugged others. What are my faults, my sins, my mistakes?

B. Accept responsibility

Proverbs 20:27, **“The Lord’s searchlight penetrates the human spirit, exposing every hidden motive.”** The greatest holdup to the healing for my hang-up is me. The greatest holdup to the healing for your hang-up is you. It starts with being radically honest and saying, “I’m the problem.” I keep saying, “If I just change relationships, just change jobs, or just change towns, just change locations, then everything will be fine. The only problem is wherever I go, I’m there. And I keep messing it up.” So you accept responsibility for your faults. Don't rationalize. Don't say, “It happened a long time ago, or it's just a stage, or everybody does it.” You don't rationalize it. You don't minimize it. You don't say, “It's no big deal.” If it's no big deal, how come you still remember it twenty years later? And you do. Don't minimize it. Don't blame others, “It's mostly their fault.” It may be mostly their fault, but God holds you responsible for the ten percent that's your fault. It may have been mostly their fault but what about your ten percent? And you just admit you messed up. 1 John 1:8 says, **“If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth.”** Phillips translation: **“We live in a world of illusion.”** The point is that if I really want to stop defeating myself, I've got to stop deceiving myself. And pretending that it's everybody else's

fault—when the issue really is me. What are you pretending to not feel guilty about, but in your heart you still do? Don't you think it's time to finally deal with it and get over with it so you can get on with your life? You make a moral inventory and then you look at that list and say, “Yes, that's me. I accept responsibility for my faults, and I'm willing to identify them.”

C. Ask God for forgiveness

1st John 1:9: “**But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.**” If we freely admit it, God will forgive us. What is the right way to ask God for forgiveness? How do I do this?

How to get forgiveness from God:

You trust God, and take Him at His word. You believe that He will forgive you. When we freely admit that we have sinned, we find God utterly reliable. He forgives our sin and makes us thoroughly clean from all that is evil. Admit.

“Admit” is a Greek word that we get the word “confess” from. And the word admit there is *homo*, meaning “same” (like homogenized milk), and *logo*, meaning “word” or logo. It means to speak the same. To admit or to confess means to speak the same thing about the stuff on your list that God says about it. I say, “God, You're right, it's wrong.” That's what it means to confess. It just means to say, “God, You're right, it's wrong.” Agree with God. *(SHEA, GET THE HANDHELD MIC AND STAND NEXT TO ME NOW.)*

The basis for forgiveness is because He's utterly reliable. It's God's nature. But you say, “If I make that list you don't know what's going to be on that list, I know. And I could never be forgiven for that.” You're wrong.

SHEA ALLEN - testimony

As a pastor, nothing shocks me anymore. I've heard it all. There is no sin you could think of that I haven't already heard of and somebody's told me personally. And every time I've taken people through this step, I have seen dramatic change in their lives. Every single time. There is no sin too bad, too great.

Awhile back, I heard a story about a woman, who is not part of our church, who came to her pastor and she said to him, “I'm depressed. I've been in bed for weeks, and I don't have any energy to get out of bed and live anymore.” This pastor said to her, “Is there something you really regret in your life?” She began to pour it out. Yes, her husband travels, she had an affair and got pregnant and had an abortion, and she had never told him about it. He explained to her how Jesus Christ said, “I can forgive, and I can cleanse you of every sin.” She said, “It just doesn't seem fair. Somebody's got to pay for my sin.” He said, “Somebody has. His name is Jesus Christ. That's why He died on the cross. And He died for that sin and every other one you've confessed and committed and ones you're going to.”

We humbly come to God, and we ask God for forgiveness. Isaiah 1:18: **“Come now, let us argue this out,’ says the Lord. ‘No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can remove it. I can make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you as white as wool.’”**

Three actions to stay away from in seeking God’s forgiveness:

1) Begging. You don't have to beg for God to forgive. He already wants to forgive you. God wants to forgive you more than you want to ask for forgiveness. He is a forgiving God. You don't have to beg.

2) Bargaining. Don't say, “If You'll just forgive me, I'll never do this again.” If that's your area of weakness, you're probably putting yourself on. You don't have to bargain with God to get His forgiveness. You don't have to beg.

3) Bribing. Don't say, “God, if you’ll forgive me, I promise to do a bunch of good things. I'll go to church, I'll tithe, I'll do this or that...”