

Start At The Epicenter

Faults | 1 John 1:9

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

As we begin this new series called "Faults," we are going to begin with the place where every relationship must begin if it is going to be fixed and fixed right and that is in our relationship with God. We are going to start at the epicenter. Do you know what the epicenter is? The epicenter is the location directly above the surface of the earth where an earthquake begins. The epicenter of every fault that causes every earthquake in our relationships is this: Sin is always against God first. You can sin against God and not sin against others, but every sin against others is first a sin against God. The first step that must always be taken to restore relationships, fix friendships, and mend marriages is confession. Confession in most cases always has two dimensions: vertical and horizontal. When our sin or our thought has hurt someone else, we must confess that sin first to God and then to others. So today, we are going to show you, in one verse of scripture, the most important step anyone can ever take that want to solve the problem caused by our fault. **KEY POINTS** 1. We Confess Our Sin Listen to the first few words of this verse, "If we confess our sins, he ..." The "he" that John is referring to is obviously God. Confession does not always end with God, but it must always begin with God. The reason for that is every sin, first and foremost, is always against God. Remember this principle: Whenever you sin against anyone full and final forgiveness only comes through confession to that one you have sinned against. Since our sin always begins with God confession begins with God.

first though not necessarily the last person you talk to is God. When you talk to God you do confess. You talk openly, transparently, and honestly. As painful as it may be, first of all, you've got to fess up to your mess up. You don't have the right to remain silent before God. You can't plead the fifth Amendment against God. Let me put it this way. If you want to come clean you must confess completely.

When you are in the wrong, or you have done someone wrong, the

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NOTES 2. God Cancels The Debt Even though the New Testament was written in Greek, Jesus spoke in Aramaic. The Aramaic word for sin literally means "a debt that is owed." The Aramaic word for "forgive" literally means, "to cancel or forget a debt." We owe God absolute, perfect, obedience. Every time we disobey God, we run up a debt called "sin." The amazing thing is every single time you go to God and ask God to cancel that debt, to wipe out that debt, He gladly does it. 3. God Cleanses Us Completely God doesn't just take the debt off the books. God wipes the record clean. God doesn't just forgive our debt of sin, but He forgets it. God said through the prophet Isaiah, "I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25). That doesn't literally mean that God forgets that we've done something wrong. That would be impossible. God knows everything and He has a perfect memory. When God says He forgets our sins what it means is He does not hold our sins against us anymore. He doesn't hold a grudge. The only way He remembers our sin is as forgiven sin. In effect, God buries our sin in the grave of His grace, and we never need to dig up what God has buried.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1.	Are you quick to confess your sin when you mess up, or do you hesitate to
	talk to God about your mistakes?

- 2. Have you ever felt like God was holding a grudge against you for your sin?
- 3. What is an unconfessed sin that you haven't talked to God about yet? Take the time to confess that sin to Him right now.

Seismic Shift

Faults | 2 Corinthians 7

NOTES INTRODUCTION Last week, we talked about confession. We said that the first person we must ask forgiveness from whenever we do wrong is God. The good news is we found out last week that God has a perfect record. Every time we sincerely confess our sins to God, God surely forgives us. The problem is too many people stop at confession and they think that all they have to do is just confess and all is well. But there is a second step that must be taken. I call it the seismic shift. A seismic shift is when there is a shifting in rocks so great that it causes another earthquake. There is a seismic shift that must take place with us and our sin if we are going to truly maintain our fellowship with God and that is found in the word "repentance." **KEY POINTS** 1. We Must Truly Realize Our Sin One of the most loving things we can do for other people who have committed a sin and have done something wrong is when it is appropriate then it is our place to let them know it. This is exactly what Paul had done. He had founded this church. He was the spiritual father of many of these people. He confronted them with the fact there was sin in the church, and they had not dealt with it and therefore they had become a part of the sin. He read them a letter to rebuke them and exhort them to do the right thing. When they received this letter, they could have had a lot of emotions. Anger, arrogance, apathy, but instead they were full of grief and full of sorrow. Paul said that was a good thing. Do you know why? Grief and sorrow are signs of a broken heart. Whenever we sin, we should have a broken heart, because we have broken the heart of God. Though it hurt Paul to hurt them, it actually gladdened Paul that they were hurt. 2. We Must Sincerely Regret Our Sin Anybody with any conscience at all will regret when they do something wrong, especially when they hurt someone else. Paul wisely points out there are two different kinds of sorrow over sin. There are two different types of guilt-trips. One puts you on the freeway of forgiveness and the other one is a dead-end to death.

Seismic Shift

Faults | 2 Corinthians 7

God doesn't want you feeling sorry for yourself. He wants you feeling sorry for your sin. We tend to look at sin for what it does to us. When we should be looking at sin for what it does to God. The words "godly-grief" in the original language is literally, "and according-to-God grief." Godly grief has God as its focus. Let me put it this way. Worldly grief says, "OopsI broke the law." Godly grief says, "Oh GodI broken Your heart." There is a difference between tears that leave you where you are and tears that move you where you need to be.	NOTES
3. We Must Fully Repent Of Our Sin Repentance involves conviction. You can be genuinely convinced you've done wrong and convicted that you've done wrong, but that is still not repentance.	
Repentance includes confession, but you can confession your sin and still not repent. Repentance includes contrition. You can genuinely feel sorry and be grieved over your sin, over hurting someone, over doing something wrong, but that alone is not repentance.	
Real repentance always includes change. There is an intellectual change. The word "repent" as you may know means to "change one's mind." When you truly repent you change your mind about God, about Jesus, about sin and about yourself. It is not a solely intellectual issue. Even Judas changed his mind, but repentance is not just a change of mind, but a change of heart.	
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Seismic Shift

Faults | 2 Corinthians 7

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1.	In your	own wor	ds, hov	y would you	ı differentiate	regret and	repentance?
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2. When you do something wrong, are you typically more upset that you got caught, or that you broke God's heart with your sin?

3. Is there a sin you need to repent of in your own life right now?	

Planting Your Feet

Faults | Psalm 32:1-5

NOTES INTRODUCTION In Psalm 32, David wrote a song that talks about how he found the way back to redemption, restoration, and reconciliation. At this point in his life, David would have been a prime candidate for the series that we are in, because we've said that the first step you must take in order to make things right when you are in the wrong is to confess your sin. David had done that. We said the second thing you must do is repent of your sin and with God's grace turn away from it. David had done that. Now, in this song, David tells us how to plant your feet on the solid rock of forgiveness and turn the sadness of a fault into the gladness of forgiveness. There is a reason why some of you in this room have confessed things you have done wrong and repented of them and have truly asked for forgiveness, but you still don't feel forgiven. You struggle with guilt and I know why. I hear it all the time, "I still can't forgive myself." I am going to show you how to do that today once and for all. **KEY POINTS** 1. Recognize Your Sin At first, David tried to hide what he did and we all have this tendency to cover up when we have messed up. We all carry a broom with us that just wants to "sweep things under the rug." How many times do we do something wrong and then we try to analyze it and rationalize it when we say, "Everybody is doing it" or "This is not going to hurt anybody." Then oftentimes, we blame the problem on something else or somebody else, because we are living in a "no fault" society. David finally realized you will never get clean until you come clean. David was not put on the freeway of forgiveness until he finally recognized his sin and did it fully. 2. Realize God's Forgiveness When we try to cover up our sin, God will reveal it, but when we confess our sin, God will conceal it. Do you know the phrase, "Out of sight out of mind?" When Jesus Christ died on the cross, His blood covered all of our sins. God cannot see your sin through the blood of Jesus Christ. It is out of sight and out of mind. That is what God's word means when it says, "God forgets our sins."

Planting Your Feet

Faults | Psalm 32:1-5

This is so important that I don't want you to miss it. Until our sin is forgiven, God knows about it, and God remembers it. It is a barrier between us and God. When God forgives our sins, God forgets our sins, and we should too.

3. Receive God's Grace

When you empty your sin basket, God fills it with forgiveness. No matter how dirty you are when you get into the shower of God's grace you are completely, immediately, and permanently clean. If God has forgiven you, you must forgive you. If God has cleansed you, you need to act cleansed. When you've worked all day and you get into a shower and completely wash off, you just normally put on a fresh set of clothes. You don't put back on the clothes that you have been wearing all day long, because you have accepted what that shower has done for you. That is what David did and what we need to do.

When you have sinned against someone else as David did, when you go to God and get forgiveness, then you go to others that you have hurt and done wrong, and you ask their forgiveness. What if they refuse to forgive you? What if they want to hold on to their grudge and bitterness? At that point, their problem is no longer your problem and never let anyone keep you on the freeway of guilt when God has put you on the exit ramp of grace.

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Planting Your Feet

Faults | Psalm 32:1-5

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1.	What is a sin that took you a while to recognize, but now you realize is a sin?
2.	Do you struggle with accepting God's forgiveness for your sins? If so, why?
3.	Do you find it hard to forgive yourself when you make a mistake? Why or why not?

Surviving The Big One

Faults | Matthew 18

NOTES INTRODUCTION How do you repair a relationship when you are not the one who ruptured it? It is not me. It is you that broke this. It is not us. It is them that caused the problem. In other words, we are going to answer the tough question, "What do you do when you are not the one that needs to get forgiveness, but the one who needs to give forgiveness." For many of us, that is going to be a much tougher thing to do, because it is easier to seek forgiveness than it is to show forgiveness. It is easier to ask for it than it is to give it. C.S. Lewis wisely said, "Everybody thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive." When someone has offended us, someone has hurt us, someone has sinned against us, and it is their fault, we are going to see what God has to say about why we are the ones that should take the first step and how we are to do it. **KEY POINTS** 1. Be Willing To Confront Personally When somebody offends you there is one of two was you can deal with it. You can overlook it, or you can confront it. And while there are times it's best to just overlook an issue, there are also times when confrontation is necessary. When we have an issue with someone that needs to be addressed, we are to go. We don't have the right not to confront someone that has sinned against us. Even though you are not the one who broke it, Jesus said you are the one that should take the initiative to try and fix it. Understand that when someone hurts you, offends you, or sins against you, you don't think about it. You don't pray about it and you don't talk about it. You go to that person personally and tell them. 2. Be Willing To Confront Privately Confrontation is for the purpose of rescue, not retribution. You are not trying to win an argument; you are trying to win a brother. You are not trying to avenge a wrong. You are trying to restore a relationship.

Surviving The Big One

Faults | Matthew 18

The way to restore a relationship that has been ruined or ruptured is to go to the right person and there is only one right person and that is the person who has done wrong. This is important. Whenever conflict occurs, keep the circle of people involved a small as possible for as long as possible. If someone hurts you and you go to any other person, before you go to that person, you've gone to the wrong person.

3. Be Willing To Confront Patiently

When you take other people with you are showing the person you are not on a personal vendetta. You are showing this person how serious you are about restoring a relationship. The other reason is if the person still refuses to listen then you have other people that confirm that not only have you done the right thing, but it is not your fault, but the person who is at fault still has fault. Bringing other people along brings both objectivity — they are not emotionally involved as you are, and they bring accountability to both parties. And not only that, but it shows you're not giving up on the person or the relationship. Just because the first confrontation didn't go well doesn't mean you're throwing in the towel, you're being patient because you care about the person, and that's what matters.

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Surviving The Big One

Faults | Matthew 18

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1. How do you typically handle confrontation? Are you quick to confront or do you often sweep things under the rug?
- 2. When was a time you should have confronted someone but didn't? How did that situation pan out? What would you do differently if you could go back?

3. Is there someone you need to confront in your life right now but you've been hesitant to do so?

Shockproof

Faults | Ephesians 4

NOTES INTRODUCTION Forgiveness must always be the rule of the day between two followers of Jesus Christ. Both the offended party and the offending party have a biblical responsibility to heal the relationship and to restore what has been ruptured. Now we are going to get into the nitty-gritty of the process of forgiveness itself. It is one thing to know that you need to forgive. It is one thing to know that you want to forgive, but it is an entirely different thing to get to the point where you do forgive. I will warn you though the steps are simple the steps are difficult. But this is the one thing to remember: I must choose to forgive others just as God has forgiven me. **KEY POINTS** 1. Eliminate Bitterness Paul's advice is real simple. If you have any bitter feelings toward somebody - get rid of them. Are you still mad and upset at someone, because of what they did to you? Stop it. You may be thinking to yourself, "Well, that is easy for Paul to say" when it really wasn't, because when Paul wrote these words he was sitting in a Roman cell unjustly incarcerated, unfairly treated and eventually would lose his life for telling the truth. Yet, you could look through a microscope or a telescope and find no bitterness, no rage, and no unresolved anger in his heart. Well you say, "Paul is just a lot more spiritual than I am." It is not just a matter of being spiritual; it is a matter of being smart. What do I mean by that? Bitterness is an acid that eats its own container. It is a cancer that destroys its own body. Somebody said bitterness is like drinking poison and then waiting for the other person to die. Your bitterness has absolutely no effect on the person you are bitter toward. When you are bitter towards someone, you are thinking about that someone, but that someone is not thinking about you. Does your bitterness ever keep you up at night? They are sleeping like a baby. Does your bitterness ever give you indigestion? They are eating like a pig. The problem with bitterness is it grows, and it controls, and it consumes, which is why we must eliminate it.

Shockproof

Faults | Ephesians 4

2. Demonstrate Forgiveness

Paul tells us to forgive others as Christ forgave you. It is a simply profound statement and a profoundly simple statement. The basic reason why you ought to be a forgiving person is because you are a forgiven person. Only forgiven people are really motivated to forgive. You forgive, because you are forgiven. You are forgiven, because Jesus Christ died and was raised from the dead so you could be forgiven.

You will never be able to forgive someone else until you remember how God has forgiven you for what you have done to Him. You will never forgive anyone if you always focus on the one who has hurt you. You will only forgive the one who has hurt you if you begin to focus on the one who died for you, because you hurt him.

That is the motivation of forgiveness, but what is the method? How are we to forgive? How has God forgiven us? God forgives us freely. Jesus Christ didn't charge us anything when He died for us. He didn't extract a pound of flesh. He didn't take His revenge first. He didn't say, "Pay me what you owe me." He didn't say, "Clean up your life and get it together and then I'll die for you." He died for us so that we could be forgiven freely. The way He forgives us is the way we are to forgive others – freely with no strings attached, no fine print at the bottom of the contract and no conditions.

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Shockproof

Faults | Ephesians 4

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1.	Do you struggle with harboring bitterness? Are you harboring bitterness
	against someone right now?

2. When was a time someone forgave you for something that you didn't think they'd forgive you for? How did that make you feel?

3.	Put yourself in Dawn Smith Jordan's shoes: would you have had trouble forgiving the way she did? If so, why do you think that is?