

AGREE WITH GOD

“In confession, we open ourselves to healing, reconciling, restoring, uplifting grace of him who loves us in spite of what we are.”

— Louis Cassels

Imagine trying to run a three-legged race if the two people are facing different directions. Imagine how much easier the race will be if the runners agree which direction they are going, and they agree to start with the legs that are tied together. **Agreement means that they will run the race *with* each other.**

Jesus came to establish a relationship with us and give us the opportunity to live life *with* God. This “with God” life, an abundant life, happens as we follow his will and his ways. Enjoying that love relationship with God means that we are loving God more than we love anything else. More than we love having our own way.



Unfortunately, we are like wandering sheep who tend to follow our own way. (See Isaiah 53:6.) We all have the tendency to obey our own “wants” and let our own ambitions direct our lives. From the beginning of time, humans have wanted to have the final say instead of submitting to God’s love. **Whenever we choose our own way, that sin causes a break in our intimacy with God.**

But fortunately, God is loving, faithful, forgiving, and merciful. Confession — agreeing with God — restores that closeness with him. Confession means that I agree with God about sin — a bad thing that I have done, thought, or said — and then I can enjoy restored friendship with him. When I confess, I turn back toward him and his ways.

Living life with God means that I live in a daily relationship *with* him, letting him direct my steps and confessing when I wander. Because my wandering is a life-long issue, confession will be a life-long practice. Agreeing with God is an ongoing process of acknowledging who God is and who I am.

Psalm 32:5 exemplifies living in agreement with God. “Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, ‘I will confess my rebellion to the LORD.’ And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.” **Oh, to know the joy of forgiveness!**

We must invite children to live without the weight of a self-directed life (Proverbs 28:13). We must tell them that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1)! We must show them the freedom of starting over with a fresh slate (1 John 1:9).

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INVITATIONS TO ENGAGE

Start the conversation with your child!

“Come and sit with me a minute. Let’s imagine that we are running a race with God ...”

EARLY CHILDHOOD (2-6 years old)

Let’s run a race **with each other**, with two of our legs tied together. Which way do you want to face? Well, **I don’t agree**, so I’ll face the other way. I’ll tie our legs together with this piece of cloth. We will each **go our own way**. Let’s see how quickly we can get across the room. Something isn’t working! What do we need to do to run this race **with each other**? If we can just **agree about which way to go!**

Before we fix our race, let me show you Isaiah 53:6. Sometimes God tells us to do something, and we do something else. This means we are going a different direction from God. That makes life hard. It’s better if we go the way that God is going, **so that we can go with him**. When we realize we are going the wrong way, we can tell him we are sorry, and he will forgive us. And he will help us to go his way with him.

Let’s sit a minute and ask God how he wants us to pay better attention to his ways. Now let’s run the race **with each other!**

ELEMENTARY AGE (5-10 years old)

(Have the child sit cross-legged on the floor holding a large pan in their lap. Slowly fill the pan with heavy objects.)

“When we insist on going our own way instead of **going with God**, we start to get weighed down by regrets and guilt. We feel heavy inside, and we don’t have closeness with God.” (Ask the child to stand up without letting go of the pan.) “Would you agree that it would be helpful for me to take the pan for you? Will you agree to let me take the weight off from you so you can stand and walk **with me?**”

When we confess our sins to God, he forgives us and takes the penalty, the weight, away from us. Then we are free to walk with God again.

Let’s take a few minutes to **ask God what is keeping us from walking with him.**

PRETEEN/EARLY ADOLESCENT (10-14 years old)

If you were giving directions to small children for running a three-legged race, what would you say? What would happen if they couldn’t agree which direction to run and headed in different directions? (See the Early Childhood segment above.)

Lots of times when we ask God for help, we forget to ask him to help us by forgiving us. **Confessing to God — agreeing with him — is such a healing life practice.**

Slowly write Psalm 32:5 in your journal and ask God to show you where you might need to agree with him more, where you might need to confess that you are following your own way. We all need this practice!