



All Christians' Fellowship International

P.O. Box 1193 * Frederick, MD 21702 USA * Phone (301) 695-4328 * Fax (301) 591-4013

Interactive Sunday School Outline

TOPIC: True Confessions

TEXT: Nehemiah 9:1-5; James 5:13-20

Instructions - *Let the above passages be read each time you come together to study this topic so that everyone can participate fully. The teacher should provide additional background information on the topic and come up with follow-up questions. Participants should be brief in their responses and use relevant Bible references to illustrate their points. They should be careful not to dominate the discussion to allow everyone equal opportunity to participate.*

Introduction – The classic play and movie Twelve Angry Men deals with the jury in a murder trial. In the beginning, the twelve know nothing about each other. They are simply juror number one, juror number two and so on. They discuss the case with detachment. But as the hours wear on and the tension builds, the reserve of each begins to melt away. The jurors begin to share facts about themselves -facts that often reveal their biases. The seclusion of the jury room brings down barriers, encourages honesty and builds a community. The Christian community also involves transparency, and it may take stress to bring it about.

The book of Nehemiah tells of the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls- and its community-after a generation of foreign exile and captivity in Babylon. When the walls were completed, Ezra the priest began to read the book of the Law to the assembled people. After celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days, the people regathered to confess their sins.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you find it helpful to tell your sins to another person? Why or why not?
2. What was the mood of this assembly?
3. How did the Israelites prepare for confession (vs. 1-2)?

4. Does the idea of public confession of sin appeal to you or repel you? Explain why you respond as you do.
5. How did the Israelites use their time at the confessional gathering (vs. 2-3)?
6. The reading of the Law (the first five books of the Old Testament) was followed by confession and worship (v. 3). Why do both make sense as a response to hearing God's Word?
7. Levites (vs. 4-5) were the priests of Israel. How can church leaders be involved in helping the Christian community in confession?
8. Nehemiah 9 portrays people confessing sin with each other. Many years later, James wrote about confessing sin to each other-a more difficult and humbling challenge. Read James 5:13-20. What point does James make about trouble, happiness, and illness in verses 13 and 14?
9. How are confession and corporate prayer connected (vs. 14-16)?
10. What example of righteous praying does James set forth in verses 17-18?
11. How does James stress the urgency of our accountability to each other (vs. 19-20)?
12. What, are some helpful guidelines you've learned for when, how and what to confess to others?
13. In what areas do you need to become more transparent with your fellow believers?