

Guided DAWG

Freedom through Confession

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Notes

This Date Alone with God is a gift to you. While you were actually created for it, intimate time with the King of the universe and Author of love, for many, can seem awkward and uncomfortable. That's okay. First dates (and sometimes tenth dates) can sometimes take adjustment. Here are few truths, tricks and tips that will help you get the most out this treasured time and rare opportunity:

- Know that God wants to meet you honestly and authentically wherever you are—whether at your worst or best. This is the place to let down your guard and trust that, more than anything, God really loves you, is awfully fond of you, and has your very best interest in mind.
- This is not an “exercise” to be checked off but an “encounter” with God to be experienced! Don't concern yourself with “getting it all in” or doing it “right” as much as “getting all of God you can” as you spend time together.
- God knows how you're wired (how you think, feel, and understand) ... trust Him to meet you in a way that connects with the “you-nique” way He designed you. If you seek Him with your whole heart, you won't miss a thing He has for you. Take on the posture of Samuel, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”
- Make God's presence your focus, not time. When longer dates aren't a familiar occurrence, minutes can seem like hours. Resist minding the time. It's okay for silence and spaces of inactivity to do their work. Whether listening, walking, eating, or sleeping know that God simply wants to be “with” you in all of it.
- Don't have an agenda other than God's. It's fine to have a plan, just be open to having it altered. Don't anticipate, participate—set aside expectations of what you will hear, feel, experience, or learn. Be attentive to God's movement in and around you ... and relax, leave the results to God.

Understanding that God has the ultimate agenda for your time alone with Him, here is a prayerfully thought-out plan in four movements to help guide your time together as you find freedom through confession.

Notes**RE-POSITION (30-60 min)**

Activity, noise, and distraction fill the bulk of our lives. Life gets so loud we can barely hear ourselves think, let alone hear what God is saying. Jesus often withdrew to out of the way places for commotion-free time with God (Luke 5:16). Shifting from craziness to solitude takes some re-positioning of body, mind, and spirit. Here's some guidance on how to do just that:

- **Resist:** Avoid making this “the perfect date.” Don’t waste time on trivial things like the perfect location, music, phone calls, etc. God wants to meet you. Satan wants to distract you.
- **Relocate:** Find a comfortable place away from the things that distract you. For some, that may be a single place, for others it may be several places as you walk and talk with God. Do what fits you. Decide this way, “Where can Jesus and I talk personally for awhile?”
- **Relax:** Slow waaaay down. Begin to listen to yourself breathe. Close your eyes and picture Jesus with you (because He is!). Ask God to release any tension you may be feeling in your body, mind, or spirit. “Breathe in” God’s peace.
- **Release:** “Exhale” the worries, thoughts, cares, and tasks that enter your mind ... acknowledge them and release them to God. Ask God to keep you from being pre-occupied by them. If it’s helpful, write your concerns on a list that you can return to later.
- **Rest:** Rest is sometimes the holiest thing you can do. Take a short nap if needed. Thank God for resting with you and for making you more alive and alert.
- **Remember:** Recall God’s goodness and work in your life and in the world. Thank Him for what has been—the good and the bad, the smooth and the rough, the clear and the confusing.
- **Rejoice:** Praise God. “Let all that is within you bless the Lord” (Ps 103, 105)—whether with speech, pen, music, song, dance, or any other loving expression you can think of ... let it out!

Notes**RENEW (90-120 min)**

To confess is to “agree with God,” which comes in both positive and negative forms. Both forms of confession are loving acts that lead us further in truth and deepen our relationship with God.

1. Peter said to Jesus, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt 16:16). That was Peter’s confession. Who do you “confess” Jesus to be? Take 20-30 minutes to “agree with God” about who He is. Speak and write it out in a very personal way—from your heart to God’s ears: “God, you are ...” If helpful, use the “Biblical Names of God” resource sheet.
2. Like Isaiah before a holy God (Isaiah 6:1-8), when we see how good, perfect, and beautiful God is, we begin to see with greater clarity how “not so good, not so perfect, and not so beautiful” we are. Take the next 60-90 minutes to “agree with God” where you’ve fallen short of His glory (Rom 3:23), perhaps made a mess of things, and have trusted and relied on yourself instead of believing and depending on God.

You will be quite aware of some sin that you have carried with you for awhile and have wanted desperately to somehow, some way, lay down. Other sin may not be so evident to you on the surface. Unfortunately, known or unknown, sin still drives a wedge between God, you, and others. After you’ve “agreed with God” regarding the known sin in your life, read over the “Confession Memory Jogger” resource and allow the Holy Spirit to point out other places that are separating you from God and others. As with exercise #1, write it down, speak it out, and make it as personal as you know how.

3. If you haven’t already, consider people that have hurt you and sinned against you (physically, emotionally, spiritually) that you need to forgive. Ask God to forgive them for the specific ways that they have sinned against you and “release” them to God. Are you holding on to anger, bitterness, jealousy, envy, or resentment toward someone that has hurt you? Confess to God the ways you have sinned toward God and others in response to the ways others have sinned against you.
4. Carefully read David’s confession of sin and his plea for God’s forgiveness in Psalm 51:1-12. With the same heart, go item by item on your confession list and ask God to forgive and cleanse you. Trust God’s promise that as you truly confess your sin, you will truly be forgiven and free.

Notes**RESPOND (30-45 min)**

When God speaks, acts, and renews—it calls for our response. Our action keeps us from just “talking a good game” when it comes to our relationship with Jesus. Love “puts its money where its mouth is.”

1. Give thanks to God for His renewing work in you. Psalm 103:1-5 might be a good place to start.
2. Journal. “What all just took place here? What do I want to say to God? How does this change the story God is writing in and through me?” (... and anything else on your heart and mind)
3. Reflect and write. What are my next steps? In light of my confession, what do I hear God saying that I need to do next? Do I need to share it with a trusted friend? Do I need to ask someone’s forgiveness? Do I need to lay something down or pick something up? Do I need some guided help beyond my own ability to deal with things? Whatever God is saying, write it down, and put a date or time beside it that you will act on it.

RECEIVE (10-15 min)

Let God’s words wash over you. God’s promises are always true—not just for everyone else, but equally for you! Allow His blessing and favor to penetrate your mind, stir your heart, and engage your will. Place your name on the line below, and begin to read slowly and intentionally—as from God to you. Receive God’s life-giving blessing and gift of grace. Don’t rush. Let the real God meet the real you.

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- “... since you are in Me, you are a new creation: the old has gone and the new is here!” (2 Cor 5:17)
 - “... since you have confessed your sin, as promised, I have faithfully and justly forgiven you.” (1 Jn 1:9)
 - “... since I have set you free, you are free indeed!” (Jn 8:36)
 - “... My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in your weakness.” (2 Cor 12:9)
 - “... you are my beloved. I am quite fond and well-pleased with you!” (Luke 3:22)