

## CONVERSION DAY 20 CONFESSION

I was asked to be a keynote speaker at an event where several other ministers were invited to share. At the end of one of the sessions, one of the guys in attendance came up and said he needed to talk. He began to open up to me about some deeply personal issues. At the end of the conversation, I asked him why he had singled me out to talk when other capable men were there. He said he could tell I probably had pastoral experience and just sensed I was a safe place. (That detail is important for where he went next in the conversation.)

He then expressed the need for ongoing interaction with someone outside his normal circle for help in the issue he had shared. I told him I would be glad to support him in any way I could. *At his request*, we exchanged cell numbers and email addresses with the understanding there would be future discussions for the purpose of his spiritual growth and moral protection.

A few days later, I sent a brief text asking how he was doing. No response. A few days after that, I sent an email to check on him. No response. A week later, one more try and nothing. Three strikes. Case closed.

What this guy did was what so many people do today. He expressed that he *needed* a deep connection, but what he actually *wanted* was just a session with a priest — a one-time confessional to talk out an issue — to feel good about the purge and move on. Right back into the same issue and struggle until the next talk with someone.

I have had this dynamic happen enough that I gave it a name: “throwing up” — just getting something bad out of your system to stop the emotional nausea. But 99 percent of the time, the sickness quickly returns with a vengeance, because you never actually get rid of the “virus” until you submit to getting real help.

When Christ died on the cross and rose again, He gave us full access to Himself and became our great High Priest. When He gave us the Holy Spirit, He also gave us the authority of His priesthood to become priests ourselves through Him. That’s one of the reasons James encouraged us to confess our sins to one another, so that we may be helped and healed through an accountable and grace-filled relationship.

So now that the role of Priest is covered once and for all by and in Christ, what we still desperately need as men are brothers who provide ongoing, keep-it-real, stay-current relationships. Of course there are most certainly times we should meet with a priest, pastor, or professional counselor for help with a deep issue. We must decide to create *conversion* and accountability to