

Keeping Silence

Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. – [James 5:16](#)



How ya doing? is a question you can easily ask and answer without much thought.

It's a nice greeting, casually given as a way of saying Hi, good to see you, hope you're well, etc. But generally, the Asker doesn't expect a detailed response from the Askee as to how he's doing, and would likely be surprised and a little embarrassed if he got one.

That's OK to a point, and I think it's silly to criticize people for asking *How Ya Doing?* just because they don't really want the long version. But someone really does need to ask you how you are, meaning it literally, and both wanting and expecting a detailed response from you. That's at least part of what James meant – confess, and not just the nice stuff.

I find prayer requests to be generally safe, i.e., *My Mom has the flu; My son needs a job*, and so forth. But there are unspoken concerns that should be heard as well, such as “I'm two steps away from entering into an affair” or “I flashed onto some porn on the internet and can't get it out of my head.”

Granted, these are things that should be spoken discretely, not during the Sunday AM announcements. But they need to come out, to a designated and trusted person. And they need to come out now, while they can still be dealt with before they become major tragedies. There are two reasons I believe this to be true: Secrets are Heavy; Secrets are Harmful.

Secrets are Heavy

When describing his own un-confessed sins, David said, “When I kept silence my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long.” ([Psalms 32:3](#)). Well put. Secrets lay emotional weights on us, and whatever temporary relief we think we get by keeping them is overshadowed by the inner toll they take on us.

The fearful isolation that comes with secret keeping is a miserable freezer no one's meant to be trapped in. Please, today, if you're in there, get yourself out. It's too much for you to handle alone, as experience will surely and cruelly teach you.

Secrets are Harmful

If you're keeping a habit, action, severe problem or personal heartache in the dark, then you're surely creating a chasm between yourself and the people who love and care for you. Countless

times I've heard wives, for example, claim they knew something was wrong with their man because he simply wasn't *there* anymore. Present, perhaps, but removed, closed, walled off. Secret keeping is a sure way to harm your most vital relationships by putting emotional distance between you and the person(s) most important to you.

Husbands should especially take note of this. I'm fully aware, as a man whose had to miserably confess his own failings and deal with them, how easy it is to say *But I don't want to hurt her, so I'd best not come clean.*

Two problems with that kind of thinking: First, it makes it easier to continue in sin because there's no accountability involved. Second, it's a disingenuous approach to take. After all, if you're that concerned about hurting her, why did you give yourself permission to do whatever it is you're hiding in the first place?

Every day we need to lean on John's promise that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ([1 John 1:9](#)) That's day to day, hour by hour stuff, and it should be a regular part of our routine. But the accountability that comes with person to person confession should be regular as well, keeping us from the heaviness of isolation and the harm of blocked intimacy.

The light, of course, can seem merciless when it exposes us, but walking in it, exposed but honest, makes the walk indescribably freer; immeasurably healthier.