

RESOLVING EVERYDAY CONFLICT

**Week 5: Confession and Repentance:
Making an Effective Apology**

“I’M SORRY” VS. REPENTANCE

“I’m Sorry”	Repentance
Expresses sorrow for a certain effect or result	Expresses sorrow for one’s behavior or actions
Does not include ownership of sin or failure	Highlights ownership of sin and failure
Keeps the ball in the offender’s court	Leaves the ball in the offended’s court
No implications for the future	Tied to different future efforts and actions

DISCUSS

- **In your past efforts, which unique elements of repentance (as opposed to merely “I’m sorry”) have been the most difficult to implement?**

8 A'S OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

- **Address** everyone involved (Lk. 19:8)
 - The confession should go as far as the offense.
- **Avoid** 'ifs' and 'buts' (Ps. 51)
 - These words ruin your confession. 'If' means, "I'm not actually confident I did anything wrong," and 'but' shifts blame to other people or circumstances.
- **Admit** specifically.
 - We love to be vague about ourselves, but amazingly specific about others. Confess both your specific actions and underlying attitude.
- **Acknowledge** the hurt
 - Express understanding and genuine sorrow for the way you affected that person. Validate any wounds you may have caused—pain is not true or false.

8 A'S OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

- **Accept** the consequences (Luke 19:8)
 - A willingness to accept the consequences is often the mark of a genuine confession.
- **Alter** your behavior (Eph. 4:22-32)
 - Repentance is an implicit promise—words are tied to future actions.
- **Ask** for forgiveness (Lk. 17:3)
 - This gives the person an opportunity to respond and express forgiveness.
- **Allow** time for healing (Prov. 12:18)

DISCUSS

- **You are out to eat with friends and notice that one of them is receiving quite a bit of affirmation and praise for a recent promotion at work. Sensing that all this praise might go to their head and feeling left out, you coolly say during a lull in the conversation, “We all know that if you didn’t flirt with your supervisor, you would never have gotten that promotion, but I’m happy for you.” As the table quiets to an hush and awkward glances are exchanged, you know in your heart you made the wrong move. What does confession and repentance look like here?**

FINAL REFLECTIONS

- Don't use your confession as an opportunity to point out the sin of others, regardless of how clear it is. Save the removal of that speck for a different conversation, unless you are in a context where it is expected.
- Do you have genuine sorrow over your actions? Going through the 8 A's is a way to *express* genuine sorrow, not genuine sorrow itself. If you do not believe you have sinned, don't repent and ask for forgiveness just to get along.