**A Simple Liturgy for the Struggling Christian**

The liturgy presented here is not a magical incantation but a spiritual discipline. It is a structured way to quiet the mind, focus the heart, and articulate faith. It is designed to be a tangible act that allows a person to move from the feeling of condemnation to the knowledge of forgiveness.

**Step 1: The Examination of the Heart (Preparation)**

Begin this discipline by taking a moment to quiet the mind and center the heart. Before focusing on sin, first, intentionally reflect on God's character. Bring to mind His lovingkindness, His tender mercies, and the finished work of the cross. This is a crucial pastoral safeguard for the struggling Christian, who is already predisposed to self-recrimination. The goal is to name the sin without simultaneously condemning oneself. Once a sense of God's character and grace is established, then, and only then, prayerfully call to mind the specific sins that are weighing on you. Acknowledging the particular sin or sins is a necessary step that borrows from the traditional "examination of conscience" 5, but reframes it within the context of grace. The focus is on the behavior, not the identity.

**Step 2: The Proclamation of Truth (Alignment)**

Before speaking a single word of confession, speak a word of truth. This is the practical application of the biblical principle that confession is about "saying the same thing as God".2 Verbally and audibly declare a statement of God's character and Christ's finished work. The physical act of speaking these truths aloud is a powerful antidote to the internal whisper of doubt. For example, a person might say: "God, you are merciful and gracious. Your lovingkindness is everlasting. All my sins were laid on Jesus at the cross, and because of His blood, I am your dearly loved child. I am righteous in your sight".3 This step aligns the heart and mind with God's perspective before the specific sin is named, ensuring that the act of confession is placed within a context of security, not a context of precarious standing.

**Step 3: The Act of Confession (Expression)**

With the foundation of truth established, proceed to the act of confession itself. Verbally acknowledge the specific sins that you have recalled in Step 1. There is a power in giving voice to the thing that has held you captive. As a model, you may use the humble prayer of the tax collector, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner," or you may echo the heart of David in Psalm 51, who confessed his transgressions directly to God.3 The goal is to bring the acknowledged sin into the light of the Proclaimed Truth from Step 2.

**Step 4: The Reception of Forgiveness (Reception)**

This is the moment designed to provide the assurance the struggling Christian craves. After confessing, read aloud a promise of forgiveness from Scripture. A powerful verse for this purpose is 1 John 1:9, which states, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.4 Once the verse is read, in faith, declare, "I believe this promise. My sins are forgiven and washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ." This verbal, external act serves as a tangible marker of the internal, spiritual transaction. It is a powerful way to combat the lingering doubt that plagues the mind. By speaking God’s promise and declaring their faith in it, a person moves from passively hoping for forgiveness to actively receiving it. This act of reception grounds the feeling of forgiveness in the unchangeable fact of God's promise.

**Step 5: The Final Declaration (Affirmation)**

Conclude the liturgy by thanking God for His mercy and grace, and by affirming your identity. This final step draws directly from the grace-focused view of confession, reinforcing the core truth that one’s relationship with God is secure, not dependent on the cycle of confession. For example, a person might say: "Thank you, Father, for your lovingkindness. By the Holy Spirit, I cry out 'Abba, Father!' for I am your child. I go in peace".3 This act of thanksgiving cements the identity shift from "sinner" to "child of God" and provides a final note of peace and assurance.

For clarity and ease of use, the following table summarizes the methodology, purpose, and biblical foundations of this simple liturgy.

| Liturgy Step | Purpose | Biblical Foundation and Rationale |
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| **1. The Examination of the Heart** | To prepare the heart by first focusing on God's character before naming specific sins. | Psalm 51:1, Luke 18:13-14.3 Acknowledging specific sin is necessary for genuine confession, as seen in biblical examples. The reordering of this step is a pastoral necessity to prevent self-condemnation. |
| **2. The Proclamation of Truth** | To align one's heart with God's perspective before confessing. | The Greek word *homologeo* meaning "to say the same thing as".2 This is an act of agreeing with God that one is already His "dearly loved child".3 |
| **3. The Act of Confession** | To verbally express and acknowledge the sin. | 1 John 1:9, Acts 19:18.4 This is the direct act of acknowledgment of sin to the Lord, a practice taught in the New Testament.1 |
| **4. The Reception of Forgiveness** | To provide a tangible, verbal marker of the reception of forgiveness. | 1 John 1:9.4 This step provides a "visible sign of forgiveness" 4 that a private, silent confession lacks, thereby combating lingering doubt with a concrete act of faith. |
| **5. The Final Declaration** | To conclude with an act of thanksgiving and renewed identity. | Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6.3 This reinforces the core truth that one's standing before God is not based on performance but on a permanent identity as His child, secured by the Holy Spirit. |