

## Confessing Your Own Log

“Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is a log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

--Jesus, **Matthew 7:3-5** (ESV)

I don’t know why I see the speck in your eye so much better than the log in my own, but I’ve developed quite a talent for it. Sadly, despite my clear ability to take everyone else’s inventory, I can walk through life oblivious to the log protruding from my own eye. How is that? I once heard a fellow say, “It’s hard to read the label when you’re inside the bottle.” Maybe that’s part of the problem.

So, what can we do to remove the log from our own eye? I’d like to share an exercise I’ve learned that helps me. I’ll just call it “Confessing Your Own Log.” I wish I had come up with it on my own, but someone shared it with me and I’m passing it on to you.

The process takes six steps, but they are not easy steps. I fight against them because I’d much rather work on you than on me. The problem is I’m the only one I can change. So, I have to keep coming back to this exercise. Here are the steps.

*Step #1: Who or what do you resent?*

*Step #2: What did they do?*

*Step #3: How did it affect you?*

This is where it starts to get hard.

*Step #4: What was your part in it?*

*Step #5: Confess your part to God and ask for His help to overcome it.*

*Step #6: If you’ve actively wronged the person because of your part, apologize and make amends for it.*

As I said above, the last three are the hard ones. Remember some important keys. Be painfully honest. Don’t minimize, justify, or excuse your part. Finally, don’t wait for them to get their part right. Paul said as much as it depends on you be at peace with others (**Romans 12:18**). After you remove your log, you may have an opportunity to help them with their speck. But quit trying to remove the speck from their eye as long as that log in your own is still between you and them.

Now, please don’t misunderstand. I’m not suggesting that because of your part whatever sin someone has committed against you is justified and you can’t talk to them about it, develop boundaries about it, or even rebuke them. I’m simply pointing out that the only person we can actually work on is us. That means in every situation we need to start by working on us. We need to confess our own log first.

Let me give you a practical example of how I’ve personally worked through the first four steps with a particular situation in the past. The last two steps are pretty obvious without illustration.

Step #1: I resented \_\_\_\_\_\_. (I’m not going to include the name. It’s just a friend that you don’t likely know.)

Step #2: I resented her because in her behavior, I sensed condescension like she thought she was better than me. She seemed to think she was a better parent than I was, better friend, better family member, etc.

Step #3: It impacted me by making me feel inferior. It stressed my family relationships because it was always in the context of our families. It impacted my own sense of peace and serenity. It hindered my own sense of self-worth, value, and meaning.

Step #4: There is so much here it is almost embarrassing to share. First, she never actually said she thought she was better than me. So, my part is that it is all my own story based on my own perceptions and those could be wrong. Do you know what we call that? Being judgmental (maybe that is why Jesus talked about this log and speck thing in the context of being judgmental). Second, I asked myself why it mattered that she might think that. Why? Because I thought I was better and she needed to see that. Do you know what we call that? Arrogance and pride. Third, I was in a competition mindset. Instead of being happy for her where she was successful in her Christian walk, her parenting, her marriage, all I could see was a competition and wanting to be better. That meant I didn’t rejoice when she was rejoicing or weep when she was

weeping. In fact, I would do the exact opposite. I rejoiced when she was weeping because that meant I was better. I weeped when she rejoiced, because that meant she was better. Do you know what we call that? Selfishness and self-centeredness. I was having the problem because I didn't love my friend. I was being selfish. I could go on, but you get the point.

When I confessed my own log to God, suddenly her speck didn't seem so bad. All of a sudden, the little things that caused my resentment looked completely different. Once I recognized my own harsh judgments, my own useless competition, my own arrogance, and my own self-centeredness, what she did no longer looked like condescension and superiority. The log in my own eye was blurring my vision. Don't get me wrong; sometimes I still struggle even in that relationship. But it is getting better because I'm no longer trying to confess her specks; I'm focusing on my own logs.

In **Matthew 7:3-5**, Jesus wasn't trying to place some arbitrary hardship on us. He was trying to help us see how to have better relationships. His way works. Why not spend some time this week trying to figure out your own logs and confessing them, apologizing where you need to? I guarantee it will help you in your relationships with others and especially with God.

--*Edwin L. Crozier*