

Pray One For Another

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“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

James gives us some very good advice and I want us to note it for our benefit. It is in the context of my message based on James 5:13 – 15. You may find yourself in these three categories of people:

- **For those in trouble**
They should pray.
- **For those who are happy**
They should sing song of praise
- **For those who are sick**
They should call the elders to pray and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.

Notice that verse 16 begins with “Therefore”. Whenever there is a ‘therefore’, stop and find out what is before and what is after it, so that the truth that is given is better understood. What is before verse 16? “If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.” That is the important truth. And what is after verse 16? “Confess...” This gives the purpose and the reason for confession. Why do I need to confess? Because I will be forgiven.

Three Persons You Can Sin Against

Do you know that there are three persons you can sin against?

Firstly, you can sin against GOD. Secondly, you can sin against you NEIGHBOUR. Thirdly, you can sin against YOURSELF.

How do you sin against God? By breaking His laws. When I am disobedient to God or do something which my sinful nature desires, I sin against Him. How do I sin against my neighbour? By my words and actions. When I say things that are hurtful or bring any kind of suffering to my neighbour, I wrong him. I also sin against my neighbour when I steal from him, hit him or do him harm. Yes, I can wrong my neighbour by my words and actions. And how can I sin against myself? When I abuse my body and do not treat it well. God says my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. I also mistreat my body if I take drugs indiscriminately or don't give it the kind of rest my body needs. When I break the natural laws, and don't sleep when I am suppose to, for example, and eat all the wrong kinds of food, I am not taking care of my body, and therefore I sin against myself.

Do you want your prayers to be effective? Follow these three steps. First, confess to God and repent or turn away from that which you know has brought displeasure to God. Second, seek forgiveness from the neighbour whom you have wronged. Then admit to yourself if you have not treated your body, mind and emotions well and begin to do what is right to the glory of God in your body (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Confession and Prayer

Confession is not an option if you want to pray and be healed physically, mentally, emotionally and socially.

What does the Bible say about confession and prayer?

1. There must be agreement (Matthew 18:19) “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.” Can you see the power of agreement here? The only way that can be agreement is when we understand what confession is, i.e. realizing how and who we can sin against. Confession brings unity, removes the barrier that stands between God and us, between our neighbour and us, and between us and our conscience.
2. A husband's prayer can be hindered (1 Peter 3:7) “Husbands, in the same way be considered as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”
What has respect for your wife got to do with prayer? A lot. If you do not have respect for the way God has made her, you have disunity in your home, and when you kneel to pray, “Oh, God, bless or change...” your wife may be praying on the other side and praying the opposite of what you are praying for. So there is a conflict in the request made to God and thus your prayers are hindered.
When the Bible calls the woman the weaker partner, it does not mean she is inferior to the man. It, however, refers to the way in which men and woman are made. Men have been given the broad shoulders. God wanted man to be masculine and muscular. On the other hand, God wanted the woman to be feminine and to be the gentle one. We are living in a very confused world, which sometimes forgets who is man and who is woman in the

way they dress and style their hair. Men, don't be effeminate; behave like men. And ladies, don't act like men; be feminine.

3. "Leave your gift and be reconciled and then pray" (Matthew 5:23,24)
We are still considering this verse in the context of confession and praying. Do you wonder why sometimes there is no breakthrough in your prayers? That there is no victory in your life? The Bible teaches that the way by which healing, deliverance and blessings come is by the way of reconciliation.
4. "If you do not forgive, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:14,15)
That is a very strong statement to make. You may have heard some people say, "I just can't forgive that person – not him (or her)", etc. If you are like them, then when you pray, God will say: "You can forgive, so I can't forgive you either." Here, Jesus is telling us that in order to be forgiven, we must forgive others.
Do you know that there is tremendous power in your prayer for another when you have made things right in your heart and with God, with your neighbour and yourself?

Power of Intercession

God has made us a glorious powerful ministry – the ministry of praying for others. The church is calling you to pray not only for yourself and your own needs but also for others and their needs. Enlarge your prayer and include your neighbours, the work of Jesus Christ in other parts of our city, country and other lands.

There was an incident in Abraham's life which illustrates the power of prayer of prayer on behalf of others. Genesis 18:22-33 records this incident, where three men visited Abraham. They were actually angels sent by God to reveal a secret to Abraham. By them, God told Abraham that He is going to wipe out Sodom and Gomorrah. When Abraham heard this, he was troubled. His nephew Lot lived in Sodom. So Abraham petitioned God: "Please Lord don't do it," and pleaded with God to spare it if he could at find least fifty righteous men in it.

You know the story, don't you? Abraham pleaded with God for the sake of 50, 45 and so on. Each time God agreed to spare the city. But Abraham could not find even ten righteous men. Finally, only Lot and his daughters were saved.

This incident illustrates to me the power of intercession. Like Abraham, you could be the key of salvation of some people you know. Pray. Be willing to stand before the Lord for them.

There is another incident to me the Bible found in Mark 5:22 & 23. This was about Jairus who came to Jesus, pleading earnestly for this daughter's healing. Thank God for the men like Jairus, who would stand in the gap and pray for others.

Put Legs To Your Prayer

Sometimes we need to put legs in to our prayers and do what the four friends of the paralytic did (Mark 2:1 – 5, 11 & 12). These men brought their paralyzed friend to the house where Jesus was, but the house was full. So they made an opening in the roof and then lowered their friend through it. And listen to what Jesus said to the paralytic man: "So, your sins are forgiven."

Jesus was illustrating a great truth: that you must get right first, then pray and you will be healed.

But when Jesus said those words, there were some teachers of the law who thought, "Why does this fellow talk like that? ...Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And Jesus knew. So He said to them, "Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?'"

You see, if Jesus only said, "Your sins are forgiven," who can tell? Nobody. But if he said, "Take up your bed and walk," and if the man did accordingly, then everybody would know.

So Jesus continued, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

Immediately the paralytic did just that, and that silenced His critics.

There is a way for you to bring about those miracles into your life. The Bible says, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."