

Writer's Ministry Lesson

Special Prayer Focus for April 2021: *That we will be quick to confess our sins and repent when we have fallen short of God's Word*

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. James 5:16 [NASB]

From a Christian perspective, you have probably observed the confusion, chaos, and ill will toward others in the world today. Sin and self-centeredness are rampant in these uncertain times. Fewer people want to walk upright and do what is good, right, and safe for others. Thank God for new leadership in this nation with a godly conscious and compassion for others in this decline of morality, economy, and health. We praise God for the free vaccines that are being made available to all. Yet, there remain some people who are fearful or in denial about the seriousness of the coronavirus putting their families and others in grave danger. However, as believers, we know that there is a certainty of hope because we are convinced that our All-powerful God is in control and our lives are a living testimony of the saving power of Jesus Christ. How comforting it is to know that we have been freed from the power and penalty of sin in the face of rising crime and sin revealed on every level of society. Even so, we realize that we will encounter struggles and face challenges in the vicissitudes in life that might lead to sin, but when we confess and repent of our sins to God, we will be forgiven, cleansed and restored. [1 John 1:9]

The Bible says that there is none righteous, no not one. (Romans 3: 10) All of us have need to confess. What does it mean to confess sins? It is an acknowledgement or admission of sins. In other words, "to own it", so to speak, meaning to take responsibility for having done it. Some have said it is to agree with God that we have sinned. Repentance takes it a necessary step further. To repent is to have a change of mind and attitude which results in a new behavior with regret over the former acts. Genuine repentance involves a turn; to turn from the sin to obedience to God. This pleases God. When we have fallen short of God's Word, let us be *quick* to confess and repent of our sins. No Christ follower should want to be out of relationship with God for long. Our rendered hearts should lead to transformed living and right relationship with God.

“Continual confession of sins is an indication of genuine salvation.” [Study Bible Footnote (1John 1:9): John MacArthur Study Bible, KJV]. That is why it is necessary to commune and fellowship with each other by sharing our needs and being open and honest. What is shared should remain confidential. This enables us to uphold each other in our spiritual struggles. When we confess our sins to one another and pray fervently, this strengthens us for our spiritual journey by placing us on the path to experience the compassionate heart of God.

Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. [James 5:13- 15 NLT]

There is a remedy in plain sight for all that ails us:

¹⁶ *Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.* [James 5:16, NLT]

James 5:16 expresses an essential truth that many have heard yet few believe or practice. Most of us are familiar with and sing with sincerity the words of the following song:

*O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!*

We need to practice what we preach and sing. Let's start now and watch God turn things in the right direction. Let's stop hiding our faults and troubles. Instead, pray for one another and watch God work.

Prayer:

Father, awaken us to the great privilege and access You have given us to boldly come to Your Throne of Grace. Let us finally call on You to be the Difference Maker in all our turmoil and pain. Make us transparent about our faults and weaknesses – You know them all anyway. Make us compassionate, honest and trustworthy so that we may safely confess our faults and fears to one another and pray for each other.

Lord we come to you recognizing that TAB did not make it to 100 years on our own efforts. You are the One who has been gracious and merciful to us. Please forgive us for any time we may have taken credit for the successes You granted that we have experienced down through the years. Forgive us for times we lift ourselves up in any way suggesting it was our efforts. You are the One who has supplied us with all we have given. You are the One who has given us gifts and abilities to work in Your kingdom. Thank You Lord, for Your grace and mercy to us. May we be just as gracious and merciful to one another. Amen.