

James 5:16 (ESV)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

### **Confess Your Sins to One Another**

#### **1) Only God can heal. Only God can forgive.**

Mark 2:1-12

#### **2) The call to “confess your sins to one another” is the call to genuine community**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Life Together

"Those who remain alone with their evil are left utterly alone. It is possible that Christians may remain lonely in spite of daily worship together, prayer together, and all their community through service—that the final breakthrough to community does not occur precisely because they enjoy community with one another as pious believers, but not with one another as those lacking piety, as sinners. For the pious community permits no one to be a sinner. Hence all have to conceal their sins from themselves and from the community...However, the grace of the gospel, which is so hard for the pious to comprehend, confronts us with the truth. It says to us, you are a sinner, a great, unholy sinner. Now come, as the sinner that you are, to your God who loves you."

#### **3) Christian community is the only community that can truly love and accept one another because it is based on God’s love and acceptance of us**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Life Together

"Whoever has once been appalled by the horror of their own sin, which nailed Jesus to the cross, will no longer be appalled by even the most serious sin of another Christian; rather they know the human heart from the cross of Jesus. Such persons know how totally lost is the human heart in sin and weakness, how it goes astray in the ways of sin—and know too that this same heart is accepted in grace and mercy. Only another Christian who is under the cross can hear my confession. It is not experience with life but experience of the cross that makes one suited to hear confession."

Timothy 1:15-16 (NLT)

15 This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them all. 16 But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.

## **What confessing your sins to one another is NOT**

Galatians 6:1-2 (ESV)

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

## **What confessing your sins to one another does**

Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 (ESV)

And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Proverbs 28:13 (ESV)

Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper,  
but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

2 Chronicles 7:14 (ESV)

if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.