

Confession and Forgiveness

Scripture Reading — James 5:13-18

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. — James 5:16

As we serve and bear with one another in our Christian living, sin will happen. It's unavoidable. Sin occurs and has consequences, and followers of Jesus Christ deal with both. We learn that we need Christ and his Spirit to help us avoid sin and to help us confess and forgive it when it happens. James advises us to "confess [our] sins to each other and pray for each other." That process leads to healing.

Though we often sin against one another in the church, we're also in the best of places to deal with it. We do so by acknowledging it, confessing it, and forgiving it, and that can even lead to forgetting it. Churches are made up of forgiven sinners who also become forgivers!

God can use forgiven and forgiving followers of Jesus Christ in amazing ways to attract others into fellowship with him and with each other. People have even been known to say, "There's forgiveness and acceptance with those folks."

Confessing and forgiving are also the hallmarks of a healthy marriage and family. Just as God loves and forgives us, he calls us to love and forgive the people around us. When we have sinned against one another, we must confess. And then, though it can be difficult, we must also forgive, for we are called to love one another.

Prayer

Jesus, you teach us to ask for forgiveness daily. Help us also to forgive any who sin against us. Give us the grace you have shown to us by your sacrifice for our sake. Amen.

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