

## Confess Sins to One Another

**Tell each other your sins so healing can begin to take place. Confess only when a person or group has proven to be safe.**

**Acts 19:18-20; Romans 3:23; James 5:16**

Confessing our sins to one another now is critical for increasing the purity of our spirits for heaven later. The benefit of becoming more pure and less tainted by sin this side of death is that it opens up so much more closeness with God now and forever in heaven. We can only connect with God through that which is holy and pure in our spirits.

Each evil and sin is the opposite of something pure in God. That part of us that is pure can fellowship with God. The percentage of our spirits that is sinful and impure will not go to heaven and will not be available for a relationship with God for all eternity.

I want to help you learn the great value of confessing your sins to those in your Christian Inner Circle who have proven to be safe, those who will keep your confession confidential and only use it for the healing process. Getting ready for heaven means purifying your spirit one impurity at a time. You will know when your spirit is purified of something because when the opportunity to sin arises, you will think, "That is not me. This temptation is no temptation at all. That's not who I am any longer. I am a new creature in Christ who no longer does that."

James instructs us in Chapter 5, verse 16, "*Therefore 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.*" We should really want to be healed from sin and its consequences. Those who care about us the most cannot help us rid ourselves of a sin if they don't know what sin we want to eliminate from our spirits, and thus from our lives. That is why we must confess to one another.

We must decide we do not want a particular sin in our lives or it will continue to linger in our spirits. Those in our Christian Inner Circles can pray that we will decide to get rid of some sin we are hanging on to. But, without our desire for repentance, they cannot help us actually rid our spirits of that sin and help us heal to become pure and holy as God is with respect to that particular sin.

For example, suppose it is obvious to many close Christian friends and family members that a Christian holds grudges and cannot forgive. Unfortunately, that Christian resists any suggestion that God's way of forgiveness is better. So, these concerned Christian friends and family members are limited to praying that the person will decide to rid his or her spirit of any desire to hold grudges and hold onto unforgiveness. But, if that person comes to them and confesses being grudging and unforgiving and asks for help in changing, then they can pray for that person's success in becoming a very forgiving person. They can also offer supportive Bible verses and lessons, ask for reports on progress, and help that person find security in the Lord and not hold grudges when things do not go right or others treat him or her unfairly.

It should be easy to admit sins; they have already been paid for. God invites us to simply confess our sins and receive forgiveness. To really scrub ourselves clean, we look for things out of sync with God's will and eagerly confess them to Him.

Most likely, we confess only a few of our most obvious sins to God. Unfortunately, we usually stop there. Since only God can forgive sins, we think it is only to Him we are to confess.

But, for persistent sins, an additional confession is commanded in Scripture, just not as a confession for forgiveness. Its purpose is to get help from other Christians to heal our spirits by getting rid of the old self and expanding the new self. Confessing to one another opens the avenue for spiritual healing after the cleansing of forgiveness from God.

The process of purification of our spirits usually starts by experiencing the warning signal of guilt. This feeling can arise from our conscience, our internal sense of right and wrong. This helpful guilt can be increased by Bible study which brings increased knowledge of God's purity. When guilt signals to us where we have gone against God's will – that is good. Guilt is not given to us to make us feel bad, but to show us a sin to rid ourselves of and find God's better way of living.

Our motivation to stop some sin in our lives should not be to avoid the guilt that has brought it to our attention. To love God is the only real reason to stop as many sins in our thinking, feeling and acting as we can. His love saved us from eternal death and gave us eternal life in heaven forever. As an expression of our thankful love, each and every repentance will build one more bond of love with God.

When a sin is identified by discomfort or guilt and is confessed to God with a conviction of sorrow and regret, that sin is forgiven. That is the first step.

Second, with God's forgiveness comes the elimination of guilt. Any sense of that guilt needs to be released. With the emotion of guilt gone, you need to decide not to remember that sinfulness out of love for God who brought you salvation and eternal life. You need to decide to eliminate it from your spirit. If that sin is a recurring part of your life, you need to work on getting rid of it. Therefore, ask God to help you. He will send two powers for eliminating that sin from your life. Scripture indicates that both are necessary.

First, the Holy Spirit's help is available to you. The task for you here is to be open to the Holy Spirit's help. You will recognize that help when you are tempted to sin. Automatic sin will not be so spontaneous, giving you time to decide against it. Soon, if not immediately, you will be helped supernaturally to think and feel that you are the new creation in Christ that you actually are. The desire for that particular sin will diminish.

The second power God makes available to you so that you can conquer sin in your life is the help of His people. There are many ways that other Christians in your life can help you. For example, if you are on a diet, a friend can go with you when you go shopping and help you resist forbidden foods. If you are prejudiced, a trusted Christian can take you to meet people of different races and help you understand them and grow to love them. If you have forbidden sexual attractions, other Christians can go with you for any one-on-one potentially dangerous meeting, or, when that is impossible, hold you accountable for your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when you were with that dangerously attractive person.

Private sin is hidden and persists. Confession of sins to one another sets off a process that leads to many of the other "Togethers" that can bring change and healing. Friends, family members and spouses dedicated to putting the Bible into practice need to discern from the confession of another what further actions are ordered by Scripture. This will most likely include warning and admonishing, prayer for God's help to accomplish repentance, Bible study to discover correct ways of behaving and thinking, encouragement to obey, and a host of other "Togethers." Only closer Christian relationships can remember to assure that progress is being made in areas of confessed sin. This cannot be done in larger or less tenacious groups.

We have to get over our discomfort about talking with one another about our sins. The worst is when a

sin is confessed and those in the Christian Inner Circle never bring it up again. We must remember that the confession to one another is the start, not the finish, of the repentance process.

If those in Christian friendships, Christian families and Christian marriages will regularly confess sins to one another, they will prove that it is safe to do so. Individuals will then feel more free to admit their grievous mistakes and sins in the company of others willing to be so vulnerable.

Disinfecting our spirits is always needed because our unlikeness to God is so extensive. Thus, confession for forgiveness and repentance is a continuous process for cleaning our spirits more and more that never stops this side of heaven.

By confessing our sins to one another, we set in motion a process that can end not just sinful actions, but even sinful thoughts and emotions that precede behaviors. Even temptations can cease to be.

It should be obvious that the purer our spirits are at the time of death, the higher quality of life will be experienced in heaven. Surely we don't think that when we get to heaven we will be made as pure as God.

God's purity contrasts now to our impurity, but in heaven His purity will contrast to our limited purity. We will have no impurities, but we will not have full purity. God's purity is and always will be infinite in scope. Ours will be more limited. Purities that are gained through resistance to sin must be gained now. If we go to heaven without them, we will never have them because there is no sin in heaven to create opposite purities.

For example, a Christian in heaven who lied without spiritual change before death will not lie in heaven. But, he or she will not have as much purity in truthfulness, only the absence of lying. His or her spirit will not have one of God's qualities more fully, and will have limited ability through truthfulness to connect with God in some aspect.

Quality of life in heaven is the issue. Everyone will love whatever quality of life they have. But, before we get there we seem to have a say in how much wonderful quality of life we will experience in heaven. If we think of purifying our spirits more and more by eliminating one sin after another, then life in heaven for the purer spirit will be more full of wonderfulness than the lesser-pure spirit that did not purify itself so much.

Let's keep in mind that we should be attacking the old selves still within ourselves for God's glory. He has loved us so much that He deserves us to eliminate sin without concern for getting something for ourselves. Even so, purifying our spirits will have its rewards. I hope you will confess your sins to other trustworthy Christians and have a higher quality of life in heaven.

Therefore, confessing sins to one another is huge! In heaven nothing will be more precious than your relationship with God. Don't you want it to be more of a relationship than less of a relationship? Certainly, God wants it to be more of a relationship.

\* \* \*

There is more about confessing sins to one another at our website [ChristiansTogether.org](http://ChristiansTogether.org). Just go down the list of the Togethers and click on "Confess Sins to One Another".

**Prayer to Embrace this Together**

*O Lord who redeems, I and those in my Christian Inner Circle will need Your help to grow our spirits to confess our sins to one another. Help us to yield to the work of the Holy Spirit for all of us to give You more glory in the way we deny our pride, trust Your grace, and confess our sins.*

*Please help us all to help one another through confession to eliminate sins from our lives and become a little more like our completely holy and pure Savior, Jesus Christ.*

*Help us to honor Your costly love for us by replacing our pride with humility and confessing our sins to one another. We want the healing in our spirits that Jesus purchased for us at Your command. Help us never to be satisfied by the state of our purity, but to continually praise You by confessing more sins and leaving them behind over and over again.*

*Make us strong in Your power to defeat the devil who originated all of the sinfulness of mankind. We want to face the sins Satan has contaminated us with and confess those sins to one another that we might be cleansed from his infectious evil.*

*Help us all to prepare for heaven by growing more completely to trust Your forgiveness and not be afraid to admit our sins to one another. Please have the Holy Spirit strengthen us for this cleansing of our spirits that will later open up heaven's beauty for us to enjoy.*

*In Jesus' Name, Amen.*