

Confessing Our Sins

The Power of Prayer

Prayer has been established by God for the purpose of calling upon the Lord. We find that truth in Isaiah 62:6-7 (NLT), *O Jerusalem, I have posted watchmen on your walls; they will pray day and night, continually. Take no rest, all you who pray to the LORD. Give the LORD no rest until he completes his work, until he makes Jerusalem the pride of the earth.*

Our lives should reflect those watchmen who pray fervently; acknowledging humbly to the Lord that whatever we attempt to do in His name cannot be accomplished without Him moving in and through us. Without prayer covering our actions we simply are working unto God in the flesh and God does not even acknowledge that which has been done in the flesh. As we pray, we should ask God to exhibit His character and love in each one of our team members. The goal of our prayer is not simple activity of speaking to God but rather each team member should be constantly involved in seeking God's will and committing ourselves in doing His will. The nature of our faith should lead to action in our lives and our community of faith.

For this to happen the very first step is to come before our Holy and Righteous God, asking Him to cleanse us from all our sins, both of commission (those we actively committed) and omission (those activities we should have done but failed to do). Why is it important that we do this first? James 5:16 (NLT), *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.*

A prayer warrior can only be ready for true battle in the spirit realm when he/she is clothed in the righteousness of God won by Jesus as He shed His blood on Calvary's cross. When our spiritual position is that of His righteousness, then our prayers have that power that only the Holy Spirit can bring on this earth. That power is accessed by confessing our sin to Him in prayer, acknowledging that only Jesus can forgive us of our sin. 1 John 1:9 (NLT), *But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*

How do we know that we have confessed all our sins? Again, God has provided for us through His Spirit a way to meet that goal. Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT), *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

The author of Hebrews brings even more clarity to the subject of our sins: Hebrews 12:1 (NLT), *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.*

As we ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts, we need to begin thinking not only of sins but also of the areas of our lives that may not be sin but are practices that slow us down in growing in Christ. These are what the author of Hebrews is referring to when he writes, *'strip off every weight that slows us down.'* Here are some examples of these practices:

- Not spending enough time alone with Him (like the story of Mary and Martha).

- Maybe a habit we have that is not sinful, but does not really honor the Lord (video games, what we watch on television, books we read, how we take care of our body in what we eat, etc.).
- Focusing too much time on 'doing' things for God rather than simply 'being' with Him. Remember, activity for God does not replace adoration of Him in our lives.
- This list is not all inclusive. Ask the Holy Spirit to point these areas out to you.

Then there are sinful behaviors that we need to confess to Him. Use the verse from Psalms mentioned earlier and wait upon the Lord and listen to Him. Name each sin that the Holy Spirit brings to your mind (unforgiveness, arrogance, coveting material goods, lying, cheating, losing your patience with a child or loved one, etc.).

I have found that by naming each sin, I begin to grow tired of repeating some of them on almost a daily basis. I then ask the Lord to make me begin to hate the sin as much as He does. Through this process the Spirit has effectively removed some of those sins from my daily life.

Remember, the blood of Jesus that was shed intentionally for you and for me, when applied with true repentance in our lives (that means we turn away from the sin and go the other way), is bigger and more powerful than anything you or I could ever commit. It tells us in Romans 8:1-2 (NLT), *So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.*

Prayer is a great tool when used in the minds and hearts of people cleansed by the blood of the Lamb of God. When it comes to spiritual warfare, there is no greater weapon than the prayer of faith in Jesus.