



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## THE EFFECTIVE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN! – JAMES 5:16

COLORADO

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*Through the righteous prayer of godly men, God will restore, will rescue, and save those who are His. The situation is never helpless or hopeless. James reminds us that no matter what comes our way, we can take comfort in that truth.*

### THE EFFECTIVE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN!- JAMES 5:16

*James 5:16-“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 continues to instruct believers regarding suffering, affliction and the importance of prayer. Prayer is not only critical in our personal relationship with God, but also with one another as believers, for that prayer support will serve our needy brother or sister in the body of Christ.<sup>1</sup> We must remember that the efficacy of prayer will always and only come from the power and grace of God and not the “goodness” or “merit” of the one who is praying. James is concerned with those who are spiritually weak and weary, exhausted from the sufferings of this life as well as those struggling with not just affliction, but maybe also the sin that can accompany it. Prayer not only can bring comfort and encouragement but restoration with one another, fellowship and power as well.

#### I. EFFECTIVE PRAYER -JAMES 5:16

*James 5:16-“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.”*

##### A. “THEREFORE, CONFESS YOUR SINS”– JAMES 5:16A

In view of the effectiveness of prayer that James has just established, and calls for in the previous verses by the individual believer and the elders of the church, he now appeals for all the body of believers to make as a habit of their lives to keep on confessing sin. The word “confess” is a present, imperative verb.

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“confess” Greek **ἁπομολογεῖσθε** a compound verb conveying open, honest, or full admission of guilt, a verb that refers to saying the same thing, agree with, accepting responsibility.

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James calls for believers to have a mutual, honest, open admission of sin. Agree with God that you have sinned. This is what “confess” means. Because this verb is a present imperative, James demands that we make a habit of confessing our sin every day. He calls for this to be a continual practice in our life. And James isn’t talking in general terms when he says to confess sin. He points specifically to “your sins”, the ones you are guilty of. James knows that unconfessed sin has an upward as well as an outward impact on the life of a believer. Such sins can block prayer and hinder relationships. <sup>2</sup> So

confession of sin is a believer’s duty; making a continual and constant habit of it.

If we have sinned against someone, we are to go to them and confess that what we have done is wrong. We agree with God that it is sin and we openly, honestly and completely admit our guilt. Sin seeks to remain private and secret, but God wants it exposed and dealt with. So James calls for mutual honesty and mutual confession.<sup>3</sup>

##### B. “AND PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER” – JAMES 5:16B

Such a confession of sin must lead us to pray for one another. Once again, “pray” is a present tense imperative calling for the continual practice of prayer. Prayer is the privilege of all believers. It is the truest response of our concerns for one another as we bring them before God Almighty Who is **not** powerless to save or rescue. Not only is it our great privilege but also our responsibility to pray for one another, especially those who are suffering. It is in prayer that we can daily bear one another’s burdens. Galatians 6:2 says, “Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.”

##### C. “SO THAT YOU MAY BE HEALED.” – JAMES 5:16C

James now states the purpose behind our confession and intercession for one another. “Be healed” can refer to the diseases of the soul or the physically sick and it refers to power that is waiting to be released of course by God Himself. Frequently this healing can refer to spiritual restoration as Hebrews 12:12 refers to. 1 Peter 2:24 refers to healing from sin that Christ purchased for believers on the cross making the repentant believer spiritually whole again.<sup>4</sup> James is concerned about those who are afflicted, the persecuted, the deeply discouraged, the weak and maybe even defeated believers. We confess our sins as the daily habit of our life and we pray for one another as a continual, constant practice so that comfort, restoration, fellowship and encouragement can come. So, keep on confessing your sins and keep on praying for one another.

##### D. “THE EFFECTIVE PRAYER”- JAMES 5:16D

James uses the adjective “effective” to describe this petitionary prayer.

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“effective” Greek **ἁνεργουμένη** refers to a power working inwardly, speaks to power to get things done, powerful to a great degree, where we get our English word energy from.

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Of course the power working inwardly is that of God Himself. James refers to this prayer as effective, accomplishes powerfully as God works inwardly in the lives of believers.

##### E. “OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN”- JAMES 5:16E

James is referring to the prayers of godly men and women. Of course James is not referring to personal sinlessness, but rather to the ordinary believer who is righteous because of receiving forgiveness

### BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR & SPOUSES: TUESDAY AT 7:15AM, CAPITOL BASEMENT, ROOM 0109

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# Colorado

## THE EFFECTIVE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN! – JAMES 5:16

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of sins through Jesus Christ alone and because of daily efforts to conform his/her life to the Lord's will. James refers to character here of a living faith which he has continually stressed throughout his entire letter. "Righteous" can have a forbidding ring to it. It seems to rule us and our poor prayers right out of court. And if we were to understand it in the sense of perfect, moral character and integrity, it must do so. But this is not what James means for we are reminded of the next verse, 5:17, which refers to Elijah who "was a man with a nature like ours."<sup>5</sup> "Righteous" is our standing before God because of the work of Christ on the cross. And "righteous" refers also to the believers' continual pursuit of godliness which gives evidence of a true and genuine faith. James is saying that the prayers of godly men can accomplish much.

### F. "CAN ACCOMPLISH MUCH." – JAMES 5:16F

*James 5:16- "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."*

We must keep in mind that prayer isn't by itself powerful. Prayer is not magic. But it is powerful in that we can call on our heavenly Father of unlimited kindness and unlimited ability to help in time of need. We must remember that the efficacy of prayer will always and only come from the power and grace of God and not the "goodness" or "merit" of the one who is praying.

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"accomplish much" Greek *ἰσχυρὸς* means is strong, is able to do much.

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James says that a godly man's prayer is very strong. It is able to do much. The energetic prayers of a righteous man are a potent force in petitioning the power of God for restoring the weak and struggling believer in whatever affliction they face. In Acts 19:20 it carries the idea of prevailing over opposition. Hebrews 11:6 says that God rewards those who earnestly seek Him. In Scripture there are many examples of the powerful prayers of godly men. For example, remember when Joshua prayed and the sun stood still in Joshua 10:12-13. What about Elisha's prayer in 2 Kings 4:32-35 when God brought the Shunammite woman's son back to life? And remember when Hezekiah prayed for deliverance from the mighty Assyrian army and God sent His angels to slay 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Truly God's Word is sure and true when He says that "the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

All too often though, we wonder if prayer really can make a difference in life. James would answer that question emphatically and with certainty. "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."

Is it your habit to pray for Christians you know who are discouraged or struggling? To do so would require a personal involvement in their lives.

How often do you share your own need for prayer when you are discouraged or defeated? Go today and seek out those whom you know will pray for you.

And are there sins you need to confess? Is there someone you have wronged? Go to the one you have sinned against and make things right. Seek forgiveness and admit you are wrong. Don't hesitate to accept responsibility for your sins.

Then, make confession and intercession the daily habit of your life.

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<sup>1</sup>MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on James*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.275.

<sup>2</sup>Hiebert, D. Edmond, *James*. Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, Illinois, 1992. Pg. 299.

<sup>3</sup>MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on James*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.279.

<sup>4</sup>MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary on James*. Moody Press: Chicago, 1998. Pg.280.

<sup>5</sup>Motyer, J.A., *The Message of James*. InterVarsity: Downers Grove, Illinois, 1985. Pg.204-205.