

Fervent Prayer

2 of 3 | James 5:16 | Praying With Passion

SLIDE 1 Introduction

Our first message of the new year focused on the theme verse of this series:

SLIDE 2 James 5:16 (KJV) *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

In my last message I spent a lot of time expounding on the first word of the verse—"confess." It is important if we want to break into this new year with invigorated personal prayer life that gets results, we must leave old grievances behind through confession and forgiveness.

What I mean is we have to confess anything we may hold against someone else and ask their forgiveness. I know it seems odd, but you are asking for their forgiveness usually when they are the ones that wronged you. That's the deception of the devil. They hurt you and now you hold something against them because of it. Now you become the one in the wrong and you did nothing but suffer the wrongs of others.

This is a common occurrence among believers and it hinders a great deal of our personal, private, and public prayer lives, making them ineffective and useless to us or others. We need to *"confess our faults,"* recognize the devil's work in it, and begin praying for one another with a true passion for restored relationships.

Be forewarned. When you confront a person with the wrong they have done to you and wholeheartedly forgive them, it will not always go well. Now the devil turns his tactic to the offender and places the same opportunity for offense on them. And on and on it goes. We must be better than this. Don't let them now conceal a bitterness toward you and the devil once again hinder our prayers.

SLIDE 3 Receive Them Again

This is the case of the man in the Corinthian church who was having sexual relations with his father's wife. Obviously this was not his mother, but either a step-mother or the father had multiple wives, which was not uncommon then.

In Paul's first letter to the church, he instructed the leaders to put the man out of the fellowship. This is where we get the verse, *"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."* (Galatians 5:9 KJV)

The man was shamed and repented as a result. So in Paul's second letter, he instructed them to receive him again. Why? Paul said this:

SLIDE 4 2nd Corinthians 2:8-11 (NIV) *"⁸ I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹ Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. ¹⁰ Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven –if there was anything to forgive–I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake,..."*

SLIDE 5a ¹¹ ...in order that Satan might not outwit us. **For we are not unaware of his schemes."**

The King James Version states it this way:

SLIDE 5b 2nd Corinthians 2:11 (KJV) *"¹¹ Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: **for we are not ignorant of his devices.**"*

This is a carefully orchestrated device the devil uses to cause an entire church to be hindered before the Lord. Just little things in a church can devoid it of power in prayer. That's why our theme verse says *"of a righteous man."* A clean life results in a powerful prayer life that gets results.

In know at this point many are arguing in their minds about this, but tell me, "How effective is your prayer life?" Are there areas where you feel self-condemned in your prayers? Are there areas where the Lord keeps bringing up the same person over and over again?

The beginning of a fervent and effective prayer life begins with personal cleansing.

Look at how the NIV states it:

SLIDE 6 James 5:16b (NIV) *"The prayer **of a righteous person** is powerful and effective."*

So let me clue you in on a thing or two:

SLIDE 7a 1. It IS About You

When you go into your secret prayer closet, your initial active prayer life is going to be more about you than it is about others. Your responses from the Lord are going to be about *"confessing your faults"*—first to the Lord, then to others as you grow in his grace.

SLIDE 7b 2. It Is About Change

Secondly, as the Lord begins to change you and heal you of your wounds incurred from others, you will become more compassionate, more understanding towards them.

Your prayers will begin to drift towards others with a renewed heart of compassion. Like Jesus, your prayer will be, *"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."* (Luke 23:34)

The righteous standing of your prayers avail much when they emanate from a heart that is like God's heart. An intense love for others is what begins the fervency we need in our prayer lives. You mix fervency with faith and it will knock the devil down every time.

One more big, "Ouch!"

SLIDE 8 1st John 3:21-23 (NIV) *"²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us."*

Remember: Personal righteousness (a pure heart) is an essential prerequisite for prayer that gets results. The pure heart you attain through the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit in your private prayer life will bring about rewards everyone can see.

Without a pure heart (your motives) your prayers are nothing more than a pretense to make you seem like the good guy and others seem like the bad guys.

SLIDE 9 Reasons for Unanswered Prayer

To top this all off and answer a lot of questions, in light of what we have covered, let

me share just three reasons for unanswered prayer:

SLIDE 10a 1. You're Not Ready

God is still working on you to be able to offered pure prayers in line with his will, and not yours. Concentrate on confessions and resolutions in your relationships and your prayers will become more effective.

SLIDE 10b 2. You Ask Amiss

Too often our prayers are not for ourselves, but about others. We think we see what the need is and ask God to enforce our will , not his, on others.

And Finally,

SLIDE 10c 3. You Ask With Wrong Motives

Our hearts can be deceptive, especially when we've been hurt. We need the illumination of the Holy Spirit to not only guide our prayers for others, but to reveal in us our true motives. Again, initially prayer is more about how God wants to change us than how we want others to change.

SLIDE 11 Transformed by Glory

Boldness in prayer, fervency in prayer, and effectiveness in prayer all come from a heart that has been transformed by the cleansing glory of God.

"For our God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:29 KJV)

SLIDE 12 Altar Time

So far we have outlined two major hinderances to a fervent and effective prayer life:

SLIDE 13a 1. Talking to Others Rather Than to God

SLIDE 13b 2. Not Recognizing the Impure Motives of Our Own Hearts

May we bow down before the Lord and confess our shortcomings. repent of anything we harbor in our hearts towards others, and allow the cleansing stream of the Holy Spirit's revelation to renew us inwardly and revive our personal prayer lives once again.