***The Technique of Confessing Sins, No. 6

Techniques of the Christian Life

TL04-02***

We have found in our study of the technique of the confession of sin that when a Christian performs a specific act of sin, he breaks temporal fellowship with God, and the old sin nature takes control of his soul. We have found that confession of that sin to the Father restores our temporal fellowship with Him. Failure to confess results in forming callouses upon the soul, and it hardens the facets of the soul in their expression toward God. You read about this in Ephesians 4:18-20. Then, in time, we have said that the Christian becomes so disoriented to God that he goes what we may describe as being spiritually insane. 2 Thessalonians 2:11 describes this condition in the words "great delusion."

**Triple Discipline**

We have pointed out that once the known sin is confessed, it has no further effect whatsoever on the believer's life in time or in eternity. The sin is automatically forgiven by God and it is permanently forgotten. No records are kept on earth or in heaven. Therefore, if you and I remember someone's sin, including our own, and bring it up, it is a new act of sin. We have found that the bringing up and the passing of judgment on the sins of other Christians results in a triple whammy discipline. First of all, we get whammed for the mental attitude which leads us to bring up another person's sin. This could be an attitude of hatred, envy, contention, competition, and so on. We get a second whammy for the overt slander and the gossip which stems from that mental sin that cause us to discuss our victim in the first place. Then we get a third whammy in that we receive the discipline which is due the sin that we brought up about the believer (Matthew 7:2). It makes no difference whether the person was actually guilty of the slander of which you have accused him or not. The results of the triple discipline are the same. This is the same principle as in Romans 12:19. The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer demands letting every Christian be responsible for living his own life as unto the Lord.

Therefore, we again caution you not to allow anybody to let you listen to their slander about another believer. Do not allow anybody to make you a victim of their problem--because that's what it is--they have a problem. If you listen, or if you deliberately go out and say, "Say, what are you unhappy about?" and they unload on you, you enter their frame of reference, and you will put upon yourself a certain destructive impact in the nature of your taking their frame of reference and thus entering into their sin. Pretty soon, you might even be agreeing with them. Remember that you suffer great loss of reward in heaven for listening. In this life, you open yourself to the loss of vitality in the form of emotional depression, great physical sickness, and even premature death as taught in 1 Corinthians 11:30.

The carnal and immature Christian is emotionally dominated in his soul because of his negative volition. Therefore, he seeks release from these inner conflicts with some kind of an emotional purging in public. This is what happens when a person spews off to you or has an emotional outrage to you about somebody else. This is taking an emotional purging. Pride and bitterness is thus spewing out in vengeance of any emotional tirade in the attack upon someone else in the presence of others. This brings great emotional release for the attacker. It actually brings to the attacker the illusion that somehow they have been spiritually cleansed, and then they feel very virtuous about the whole thing--very righteous. So after having splattered everybody in the vicinity of their hearing with this emotional sewage (which is what it is), a carnal Christian becomes very pleasant, and he will seek acceptance among believers as all being well and we're all going to continue to love one another.

I cannot warn you enough about a person who slanders, gossips, or has an emotional outrage in your presence against another believer. Detach yourself as quickly as possible and as definitively as you can. The long-range results will cost you both now and in eternity. You will have great loss now because immediately you are out of fellowship since you listened to it, and often unless you're aware that that happens, you won't even be ready to confess. Plus, you will have infinitely greater loss in eternity. This kind of a person is a high risk factor to your walk with the Lord. The person should be avoided. The potential discipline that you may bring upon yourself through some malcontent is not worth keeping company with that individual.

**Discernment**

We do want to stress again that there is a legitimate judging which a Christian may engage in on a scriptural basis which is a form of discernment. This can only be done by believers who are in a spiritual status. The carnal Christian will fall into judging whereas a believer can judge in terms of discernment. There were certain words we looked at. First of all, there was the word "krino," which means "to judge." We have this word used for judgment in the bad sense as in Matthew 7:1. It is used as judgment in a good sense, as discernment, in 1 Corinthians 10:15. The second word was "anakrino," and this is used as discernment in Act 17:11 about the Bereans. It requires a spiritual status here again to avoid judging (1 Corinthians 2:15). The third word we looked at was "diakrino," which is used as judgment in 1 Corinthians 4:7. That's a bad way. However, it is also used in the good sense, as discernment, in 1 Corinthians 11:31. So, what we have discovered is that you can judge in a way that is acceptable and it is not a sin.

There are a couple of more words that we ought to look at that the New Testament uses concerning judgment which are a legitimate evaluation, and there are times when you as a Christian must perform them. Another one of these is "diakrisis." "Diakrisis" means "to distinguish." In Hebrews 5:14 we have it used in terms of discernment. A mature Christian in a status of spirituality can and must distinguish between good and evil. So, here's a word for a legitimate kind of judging. Another word is "kritikos." This word is found in Hebrews 4:12. It's the only place where it is used in the Bible. This is the verse that says, "For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is (and here's the word) a discerner of the thoughts and intense of the heart. Here it is used in the sense of being a discerner, a "kritikos" in a legitimate sense.

Then there's another word "dokimazo." We have this used in 1 Corinthians 16:3 in the words "you may approve." In Philippians 1:10 it's "may approve," that is, discernment in separating what is better from what is best. In 1 Thessalonians 2:4, we have this word translated as "we're allowed," meaning "approve." 1 John 4:1 uses the word "try" which means "to scrutinize for evaluation" or "to test a religious spokesman" with doctrine to discern his genuineness. So, "dokimazo" is another word for judging with the idea of approving to establish discernment and understanding of what you are studying.

Let's make a comparison between judgment and discernment. They have certain characteristics.

**Judgment**

Let's take judgment first. Judgment will be characterized by these qualities among others:

1) It accepts the appearance and presumes to be able to interpret accurately what is observed (1 Samuel 16:7). Man has a way of looking on the outside and having the arrogance to believe that he can interpret what he sees and interpret accurately so that he can judge something about that person's motives.

2) Judgment accepts hearsay at face value and then presumes to form opinions about another's motives (Proverbs 14:15).

3) Judgment openly shares its opinions with others. A person who is acting in a judgmental way is quite ready to tell everybody that will listen to him about what he thinks. That's where you bring in the triple discipline.

4) Judgment releases guilt feelings for certain sins of one's own by zealously attacking them and others. A person who is acting in judgment is taking the heat off of his own emotional tension by attacking sins in others of which he himself is guilty.

5) Judgment reveals its own character by the fascination which it has with certain sins in others which one is obsessed to judge. There are certain sins in other people. This is kind of a vicarious sinning. There are certain people that are extremely fascinated by certain sins. They think they can find them in other people, and they engage in them vicariously by exercising judgment on those people. They themselves would hesitate, perhaps, to enter those sins but they don't mind dwelling upon them internally.

6) The spirit of hostility is projected toward another in the form of self-righteousness by the person who is acting in judgment.

7) Judgment does not differentiate between the sin and the sinner, so it rejects the sinner as a person.

8) Judgment has little interest in being helpful to others in dealing with their own natures. It seeks mainly to cut other people down to one's own size--to the size of the one who is judging.

So here are eight characteristics that you find generally true about people who judge. If you get these generally in mind, then you will spot what people say to you. You'll be able to classify them in this way. It'll give you some idea and some indication of the motivation.

**Discernment**

Discernment, on the other hand, is something else:

1) We may say of discernment that it respects the privacy of the priesthood of other Christians for dealing with their own sins before God. You may well be right on the beam in what you see in another Christian that is wrong and that God too condemns. But if you are acting in discernment you will respect that person's priesthood, and you will not seek to bring vengeance upon him. That's the trouble with the arrogance of the carnal Christian. He wants to bring vengeance upon the Christian who is out of line. He thinks it is his job to bring correction. He thinks it is his job to bring up the subjects; to get everybody informed; and, to get everything straightened out. Now, the old answer to that is the great answer of the Lord Jesus. That gang was doing this to the woman taken in adultery, and they were all picking up their stones to do what indeed the law prescribed for that case. The Lord said, "Now let's go ahead and stone this woman of whom there is no doubt of her guilt. I'll tell you how we're going to do this. I want the person who is without sin to lead the way, as the person who should show us how we are to maintain the justice of God." The Lord was very sarcastic. Pretty soon when He looked up, there was nobody around. They had all left. None of them could face up to the fact in the presence of the Lord Jesus that they weren't qualified to exercise the vengeance of God.

2) Discernment leaves the interpretation up to the Lord for what is observed about another believer, and what to do about it (Isaiah 11:3).

3) Discernment refuses to listen to attacks upon other Christians and thus to dignify their slander (Isaiah 11:3). A discerning Christian will not listen.

4) Discernment disapproves of evil in another Christian without presuming to be above the same thing himself. That's what's so ludicrous about the character who's going to exercise God's judgment and get everybody straightened out. This is the one who's going to be the paragon of virtue and the keeper of justice when he himself is not qualified to be above that same thing.

5) Discernment accepts the offender as he is and leaves his case with the Lord while being open to help in correction if invited.

6) Discernment is smart enough to leave discipline up to the Lord lest one get between God and his whip on the offending believer. This is exactly what we have pointed out as the third phase of the triple whammy of discipline when you get yourself between God and the whip that he is exercising against the offender.

7) Discernment keeps its opinions to itself while praying for the offending Christian and any correction which may be needed.

**Confession is to God**

Now there is one verse in the Bible that seems to pose a problem on the principle that we have been laying out in the interpretation the first John 1:9. This principle is that we confess sin to God the Father because the Word of God tells us that against God and against Him only have we sinned. Our sin may indeed include other people, and it usually does. However, the scriptural principle is that since sin is against God, the confession of sin is to God.

It was David who was the psalmist in his confession following the sin of adultery with Bathsheba. He wrote the words which are rather amazing when you read them because David said, "Against Thee, and Thee only have I sinned." When you think back on the historical incident, you realize that there were a lot of people who were involved and injured by this sin: Bathsheba; her husband; and, the battalion of men whom her husband led as an officer in the field in the midst of the battle, and the place they were put in by being placed in an untenable position without supporting units. Any number of individuals were involved. And yet David could say without any hesitancy, "Against Thee, and Thee only have I sinned." Consequently, the confession that David made was to God. Furthermore, after that confession, David had many many years (something like maybe 25 years) of his most outstanding service for the Lord.

**James 5:16**

Yet, we come to James 5:16, and we seem to have a problem here. James 5:16 declares, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed." "Confess your faults one to another."

Before we look at this verse in detail, let's review for just a moment some of the context. Verse 14 tells us about a Christian who is suffering a certain illness. He is instructed to call in the pastor-elder to ask him to pray for him in connection with his physical illness that he may be healed--prayer along with medical aid which is applied. Verse 15 says that the Christian is restored to health as per the plan of God for him. When it says, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick," it means that he will get well. This does not refer to salvation. So, the pastor prays with faith in the Lord's power and with respect for the will of God relative to this person's life. The result is that the person is physically healed. If the illness is caused by sin, the verse says ("if he had committed sins"), they shall be forgiven him. In other words, if this illness for which he called in the pastor-elder for prayer was caused by sin in his life as a believer (sin which he has not confessed), then when he is healed, the healing also indicates that the sin has been forgiven. Because of what we know from other Scripture, we know that the requirement for the sin to be forgiven would be for him to have confessed it. Therefore, we may interpret that this individual who is sick has confessed sin. Then, when he was prayed for, he was healed, which confirms that his sin was indeed forgiven and he is restored to fellowship. "If he has committed sins:" This is third class condition. Therefore, he may be sick for other reasons than the fact that he has committed sin. For other reasons, because he is sick, he may yet call in the pastor-elder for prayer in his behalf--not because he is suffering illness because of sin. But if that is involved, healing will indicate forgiveness.

That's the background, and verse 16 ties into that context. There is a word in the Greek which you do not have in the English. It is an introductory word which ties together to what has come. You should begin that with the word "therefore." It's the Greek word "oun." "Oun" ties back to the preceding context. In other words, "therefore" indicates that verse 16 is a conclusion which is drawn upon what has preceded in the immediate context, and for that matter even farther back in this chapter. The context is the fact that a Christian suffering physical discipline for unconfessed sin may suffer that discipline in the form of illness. Sins which are not confessed as per 1 John 1:9 do bring active discipline from God upon us. This discipline may affect a Christian's body.

**Weakness**

There are certain stages by which this discipline will affect the Christian's body. We have this described in 1 Corinthians 11:30. It says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep." The first stage of discipline for unconfessed built-up calluses upon the soul is to be weak. The word "weak" here refers to lack of physical stamina. A person has little drive. He is more than tired. It is more than being tired, and just because you're tired doesn't mean that you're on the first stage on your way out. But this is more than just being tired. So relax. Usually this is also accompanied by an emotional turmoil, and thus a depression, and the depression saps the energy. This first stage of weakness ties to emotional turmoil and depression within the person so that you are just washed out. You lack drive, and you begin to sense a certain lack of physical stamina. That's what he means by weakness.

**Sickness**

If you persist in that unconfessed sin, the hardness of the soul continues to build up, and you go to stage number two which is described here as "sickly." "Sickly" means to be physically ill. In stage number one (weakness), there is no disease. There is no organic infection. In stage number 2, you have now come to organic infection. The body is beginning to break down under the discipline of God, and you find yourself increasingly incapacitated and tied up in caring for your physical ills. You are running around forever taking care of your sicknesses. In the context, it says, "If he has sinned," so maybe if you are having physical problems, it may not be connected to sin. However, if you find yourself in a series of physical breakdowns and forever chasing your health condition, one of the first places to look is to the matter of unconfessed sin, and the hardening upon the soul which has built callouses upon the soul.

I remind you again that when you confess sin, it does not immediately remove the calluses from your soul. This is similar to when you stop the irritation on some part of your body, like on the palm of your hand, that builds up a callous. The callous does not leave immediately. It gradually peels off, and the same thing happens spiritually as you begin taking in the Word of God. Breathing in the Word of God gradually peels off the callus.

So you have a big problem that develops if you ever get to this stage where you have physical weakness and a diseased condition because of the judgment of God due to unconfessed sin. That will gradually unravel itself. You will not confess, and the next day you will be feeling just great. It's going to take time to unravel the buildup.

**Physical Death**

Stage number three is described as "sleep," which is a euphemistic term for a Christian's physical death. Sin which is unconfessed leads to the sin unto death, where the Christian is removed from earth and he is transferred to heaven. So a Christian in this way dies before his time. He may move very suddenly from stage two to stage three and then check out. He checks out up into heaven. The two may come very close together.

So now we come back to James 5:16 with that background on the matter of illnesses and the problems that may develop because this is what is involved in this verse. The first word we have is "confess." Immediately, when you see the word "confess," you think of 1 John 1:9 where we had the word "homologeo." However, the word that you have here is a little different. It's "exhomologeo." This is a very significant difference. It's a different word from the one we have in 1 John 1:9. This is a triple compound word as you can see" "ex," "homo," and "logeo." "Ex" comes from the proposition "ek." "Ek" means "from out of," and it connotes bringing something from the inside to the outside. Here it means bringing something out of one's soul out to the outside of the person's physical being--from the innermost place of one's being; that is, the mentality. Bringing something from within your soul to the outside. "Homo" comes from "homois," and that means "the same as." It means common. It means agree. So here it connotes agreement between two partners on an issue. The partner is the carnal Christian on the one hand and God the Holy Spirit on the other hand. The carnal Christian and God the Holy Spirit agree on something relative to being brought out from the innermost part of the being of the believer. The last part "logeo" comes from the Greek word "lego," which means "to say." It comes from the Greek word "logos' which is the word for "word." "Logos" means the outward form by which the inward thought is expressed. A word expresses an inward thought. It's the externalization of some inner thought or inner conviction.

Therefore, when we put it all together as "exhomologeo," what we have is this: "to agree with someone else in the innermost recesses of one's soul, and to speak out publicly about it." A person agrees with someone else in the innermost recesses of one's soul and he speaks out publicly about it. This word is used in several other places in the New Testament which give us an indication of how to translate it here. It is used for example in Mark 1:5. In Mark 1:5, it is translated as "confessing:" "And there went out unto him all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized by him in the river of Jordan confessing ("exhomologeo") their sins. What this connotes is "acknowledging" their sins, and that's the word that we're dealing with. This is an acknowledgment, "to admit." They were not here referring to a specific sin. They were not naming a specific sin. When they came to John to be baptized, they were acknowledging that they were sinners. At their baptism in the River Jordan at the hands of John the Baptizer, they did not stand up at that point and then reiterate all of their sins that they could think of. They simply came and by that act said, "I'm a sinner, and I now want to identify myself with a Messiah who is now among us and His kingdom which he has come to bring us." They acknowledged that they were sinners. They acknowledged their need of identification with the Messiah and His kingdom.

We have this word also used in Acts 19:18 where it is translated as "confessed:" And many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds. Here it is used in the sense of a public acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as Savior, and in the case of these people, abandoning their spiritism and their magical arts that they had been engaged in. To confess meant simply publicly acknowledging Jesus Christ. Luke 22:6 tells us about the deal that Judas made concerning the betrayal of Jesus Christ. In Luke 22:6, this word is translated as "promised." "And he promised and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude." The word "promised" here is in the sense of "consented." He acknowledged publicly that he would do this--he would betray the Lord Jesus Christ. In Luke 10:21, we have the Lord Jesus Christ expressing praise to the Father and He uses this word "exhomologeo." Luke 10:21: "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in the spirit and said, "I thank You (I 'exhomologeo' You) O Father;" that is, "I make acknowledgment with praise Father, Lord of heaven and earth, You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent," and so on. There it is used in the sense of expressing publicly of praise. We have this also in Matthew 11:25.

In Romans 14:11, we have this word used once more. The King James translates it as "confess:" "For it is written as I live said the Lord, 'Every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God.'" Here is a declaration that there will be a public acknowledgment of who Jesus Christ is. We have the same thing in Philippians 4:11. In Romans 15:9, we read, "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His praise as it is written. For this cause I will confess to thee among the nations and sing unto thy name." I will confess to thee among the nations. I will publicly acknowledge among the nations Your name.

Therefore, putting all this together, you can see that this word does not necessarily mean a guilt in the soul such as we have for unconfessed sin. So, in James 5:16, we are not speaking about a sin for which there is a guilt in the soul and which is now to be confessed. In James 5:16, what the word means is to acknowledge the fact that we as Christians are sinners, and that we need each other's prayers to escape the discipline which can lead from weakness, to sickness, and to death itself. It is a public acknowledgment or admission that we are sinners and that we need the prayers of other believers in our behalf because we have this problem of a propensity to sinning.

Now, the word "false" is the same word that you have in 1 John 1:9: "hamartia." This is the standard word for sin in the sense of meaning missing the mark. This is plural, referring to the fact that we very frequently miss the mark. The word means "missing the standard of God's righteousness." The word "your" in James 5:16 is not in the Greek. It's simply "confess sins" (make a public acknowledgment or admission of sins). This is present middle imperative. It is a constant thing that we, as Christians, are willing to do to admit that we have the problem of sinning.

**Imperfect Teachers**

We get the idea that there are some great Christians. In other words, if you are my Sunday school teacher, you are now going to teach me the Word of God. I look upon you as a paragon of great virtue who never does anything wrong. However, if I find out that you do something wrong, then everything you say to me doesn't mean anything. I can't learn anything from you. Do you see where you've gotten yourself? Now what do you have to do? Well, you have to go down the hall and you have to look in and say, "That looks like a nice Sunday school teacher. I'll go in there and listen to this one." And pretty soon you're going to find that there aren't any Sunday school teachers in the world who don't sin.

So where are you going to learn the Word God? You go one desperate place more. You say, "I'm going to sit in church and listen to the pastor teacher. If there ever was somebody who never does anything wrong, that's the guy. He is obviously the sweetest, the best, the nicest, and he's going to be right on. Pretty soon you find he says something that offends you, so you know he's a sinner. So you find yourself another one. Pretty soon this joker does the same thing, and you discover that there aren't pastors in all the world who aren't hung with the same sin problem. Now, where is the Word of God for you? Gone. Why? Because you insisted you were only going to learn it from a perfect person who did not have sin.

For that reason, it was the apostle Paul who said, "I know that in my flesh dwells no good thing." What did he mean? He meant that he knew that within himself was an old sin nature. He was restating what the Lord Jesus said to the rich young ruler when the ruler came and said, "Good Master." The Lord said, "Why are you calling me good? Only God is good because only God does not have an old sin nature. Are you suggesting that you are recognizing me as deity?" He should have said, "Yes. You don't have an old sin nature and therefore you are God, and therefore you are good." The Lord wasn't denying that He was good, but he was trying to point out to this fellow that the reason he was good was that He did not have an old sin nature. And for this reason, the Apostle Paul knew that within him dwelt no good thing; therefore, he was not a great Christian; and yet, he performed some fantastic services in behalf of Christianity, and the cause of the Lord quite obviously. He knew the reason for it was not himself, but he said, "I am what I am by the grace of God." It is not great Christians from whom we learn the Word of God. It is great sinners whom great grace has done something so fantastic with that they can still be the channels of the Word and the mind of God to us.

That is very important, and that is part of James 5:16 to recognize that every one of us on the face of the earth has to stop kidding ourselves and acknowledge publicly that we have the problem of sin. The first thing we learned in this series when we began in 1 John 1:10 was, "If we say we have not sinned, we make him (God) a liar and his Word is not in us." I know there are a lot of preachers who like to pontificate and like to create that image that they are these kinds of virtuous persons that the Word of God says there aren't any of. Well, we make our confession of a public statement that we are sinners and that we are not deceived. For that reason, we covet the prayers of other believers among ourselves one to another. That's the word we have here for publicly acknowledging your sins one to another. The word is "allelon." "Allelon" comes from the word "alos," and "alos" means another.

There's another Greek word "heteros." "Heteros" means another, but "heteros" means another of a different kind. "Alos" means another of the same kind. This is an arithmetical difference. You are a Christian. You are a Christian. You are a Christian. I am a Christian. There is a different number of us by count, but we are all the same kind of beings. We are believers. But "heteros" means we are different from one another. This is what the angels in Genesis 6 are said to have done when they came down and they cohabited with "heteros" flesh. The angels cohabited sexually with a being different from themselves, namely with those human women. That's the word that is used there. This "alos" gives us the word "allelon," which means that we are to speak to one another as believers; that is, we are to admit to each other that we have the quality of sin within us. We have an old sin nature. We do commit sins. We struggle with the problem. We know it's there, and we respect the fact that God has given us a grace system for learning doctrine so that we can take doctrine into the soul to stabilize our lives and to resist the expression of sin within us.

Now to acknowledge this is very very important. "Acknowledge publicly your sins, one Christian to another among yourselves." Face up to the fact. We would say, "Let's face it. Let's face it. We're sinners." That's all he's saying. Let's face it. I don't care if you're a preacher in a pulpit and you've got a very pontifical voice and you're a real smoothie. Let's face it. You're a sinner. Don't give us this stuff, "Yes I know I'm a sinner. But by the grace of God I'm walking with Him." You're not walking with Him. By the grace of God you're lucky if you walk with Him, if you've got the good sense to respond to the Word you know. You're just as capable as anybody else of falling into sin. Therefore, never give people the illusion that it is because of who and what you are, that they should be listening to the Word that you are teaching. That has nothing to do with it. Your life is nobody's business but God's. But your message is very worthy because it is God's message.

The result of this is that we are to pray one for another. The word "pray" is the Greek word "euchomai" which is the word for prayer in general. It is present (constantly doing this); it is middle (we benefit by doing this); and, it is imperative (we are commanded to pray for one another). Why? Because we all admit that we have this problem of sin ("exhomologeo"). We acknowledge publicly that we have this problem of sinning. Therefore, we covet and need the prayers of other Christians--not for a specific sin, like the other word refers to--but for prayer in general. We are not asking for this specific sin I have, and this specific sin, but in general the fact that I sin, I need your prayers in order that I may preserve my life in divine good production, and you may preserve yours in divine good production. "Pray one for another." "For" is the Greek word "huper," and "huper" means "on behalf," for the good of one another, and the result is to be that you would be healed, "iaomai." "Iaomai" means "to be healed." It refers here to physical well-being. It is aorist, passive, subjunctive. Aorist means that at every point that you are faced with sin, and you are now faced with physical discipline because of that sin, Christians are praying for you. You come to confession. At that point you need to confess. At that point of meeting sin, the prayers of Christians are important. It is passive which means that you will receive this healing if you confess. It will be the result to you. Subjunctive mood means that it is potential. You can do this but you might not. However, with people praying for you, you've got something going for you, in your favor, toward being sure that you make this kind of confession.

Therefore, James 5:16 is saying that on the basis of the context, which indicates that Christians suffer physical discipline so that they need to call for special prayer to be restored, and they suffer this not always for sins, but very frequently because they have unconfessed sin. Therefore, verse 16 says why should we suffer this just because we don't confess? Let's pray for one another that we will not be the kind of idiots as Christians that we will fail to exercise the technique of the confession of sin. So let us publicly acknowledge our sins among ourselves as believers so that we may pray for this general problem that we all sustain as believers in the body of Christ in order that we may maintain physical well-being. Now that's what it's all about.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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