What makes prayer effective? (James 5)

James gives us the answer when he declares the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. One’s character will determine the effectiveness of ones prayer. Jesus declares in Matt. not to be hypocritical like the Pharisees in prayer but to pray after this manner… our Father which art in heaven, etc. Only a child of God can declare him Father. God wants one to enter the throne of grace boldly but sin causes one to hide in guilt and condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

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. (James 5:16 KJV)

* **Confess your faults one to another**

In context James declares if prayer is going to be effective then character must be addressed. Everyone has faults because believers go on toward perfection not having arrived yet. Ephesians 4:12 declares the ministry gifts are for the perfecting of the saints meaning no one has arrived yet, but as long as life is in the body there will always be something to work on. So he declares to confess ones faults to another causing a person to focus on themselves and not on everyone else. The publican and the Pharisee both went down to pray (Luke 18:9-14). The Pharisee did not see his own faults (pride) because he was so busy looking at and comparing himself to the publican. Because of this his prayer was ineffective and the bible says he prayed thus with himself. The publican on the other hand was effective in prayer because he humbled himself and focused on his own faults by smiting his breast and saying to God be merciful unto me a sinner. Jesus said this man was more justified than the other man meaning his prayer was effective.1John 2 is God’s sin insurance policy which declares if anyone sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous. For example no one buys a new car with the intent of smashing it up, but car insurance is purchased just in case an accident does occur. So it is with the redemptive work of Christ which assures that his blood cleanses from all sin and makes one new (1 Cor. 5:17). If an unpremeditated sin happens, the guilty party is covered while premeditated sin is covered but warned against (Rom.6:1).Why is it that when prayer meeting is mentioned there are small turnouts? Or why does a person spend little or no time in personal prayer? It could be because prayer may not be effective for those individuals. Jesus said in John 11 at the tomb of Lazarus…Father I thank you that you hear me always. Jesus knew his prayer would be effective because he was praying the will of God. The raising of Lazarus was for the glory of God because Jesus said that it was, so therefore it was the will of God. 1John 5:14 declares if we ask anything according to his will he hears us and if he hears us we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. Prayer becomes exciting and meaningful, therefore effective to the person who sees answers to their prayers.

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. (James 5:16 KJV)

* **Confess your faults one to another (part B)**

What does confessing faults to one another do?

1. **Gives accountability** – After confessing ones sin to God (1 John 1:9) many times a person continues in sin even though Grace is abounding (Rom. 6) because no one is holding them accountable.
2. **It exercises Humility** – The flesh has a tendency to look at the faults of others while ignoring its own.
3. **It gives one confidence in prayer** – condemnation and guilt take away the boldness and faith needed for effective prayer
4. **It brings agreement –** If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask…(Matt.18:19 KJV)
5. **It brings answer to prayer** - If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask it shall be done for them of my Father in heaven.
6. **It brings personal healing** - Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

**The principles of Accountability**

The meaning of accountability is the state of being accountable, liable, or answerable to someone or for some activity, responsibility.

Jesus was not only the Son of God in the earth but he functioned as the son of man. This was necessary so that he could identify with mankind. As the son of man he was subject to others even though as the Son of God he was their creator. He was accountable and subject to his parents, the laws of the land and to the will of his heavenly Father. Accountability sets boundaries for ones actions assuring a right path toward a God given destination and purpose. The authority figure of accountability must not be self –centered or the path toward the God given destination and purpose will not be abtained. Every leadership position holder must say as Jesus…Not my will, but thine be done. Being the authority of Jesus, Joseph and Mary were given clear instructions as to the purpose of their son. Matt. 1 declares she shall bring forth a son and thou shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins. In relation to the laws of the land Jesus paid his taxes just as everyone else did and he obeyed the will of his Father. The prayer life of Jesus was powerful and effective because of accountability. He obeyed the will of his heavenly Father, obeyed his earthly parents and was subject to the laws of the land. Another principle of accountability is that anyone who is approached for help is given the power to hold the approaching person accountable for their actions. This principle is a part of the world system also. For example a person asking for a loan from a bank has given the bank the power to hold them accountable until the money is paid back. People who visit the doctor or dentist for help give the power of accountability to them for following their instructions. Pride and self-centeredness from either party will stop the flow of effectiveness. People asking for help must not be arrogant, but must be willing to submit to the rules and regulations of those they have approached for help. This helps for a smooth transaction. On the other hand the authority that’s being approached must not be self-centered and arrogant also. An example of this can be seen in 2 Kings 5:1 where Naaman was the captain of the host of the king of Syria, but he had leprosy. He had to go ask help from Elijah but did not like how he was treated by Elijah nor the instructions given by him to go dip seven times in the Jordon river. He did not receive healing from his leprosy until he humbled himself to the authority he was under. The Word of God through the mouth of Elijah held Naaman accountable for his actions in obeying them, and when he did… it became effective in his life and he received his miracle.

**The principles of Humility**

Prayer effectiveness greatly depends on the fruit of humility. God hates pride and declares in his Word that pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Proverbs 16:18). The Apostle Paul had an effective prayer life and the Amplified Bible declares in 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 8Three times I called upon the Lord *and* besought [Him] about this *and* begged that it might depart from me;9But He said to me, My grace (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) is enough for you [sufficient against any danger and enables you to bear the trouble manfully]; for *My* strength *and* power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) *and* [[a](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+12%3A8-10&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29030a)]***show themselves most effective*** in [your] weakness. Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses *and* infirmities, that the strength *and* power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest (yes, may [[b](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+12%3A8-10&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29030b)]pitch a tent over and dwell) upon me!

* ONE MUST PRAY IN FAITH

**James 5:14-16**

King James Version (KJV)

14Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15And **the prayer of faith** shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

**James 1:5-6**

King James Version (KJV)

5If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6But let him **ask in faith**, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

[**John 15:7**](http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/John-15-7/) - If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

[**James 4:3**](http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/James-4-3/) - Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume [it] upon your lusts.

[**1 John 5:14-15**](http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1-John-5-14_5-15/) - And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

[**Mark 11:24**](http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Mark-11-24/) - Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them].