Personal confession of sins into the ear of a priest or a minister continues to be part of the religious ritual and worship in many churches today. The National Post of Canada reports on one person who admits that while it is difficult to tell someone else what you did wrong, “there is something liberating about having someone acknowledge it, praying with you and saying this is what you need to do.”

The main issue now is: Why should we confess our sins, and to whom?

**First: To Whom Should Sins Be Confessed?**

The Bible tells us clearly at 1 John 1:9 that there is a need to confess our sins, it states: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Who is that He that the verse is talking about?

**Read Acts 3:19**. (**Ask Audience to keep that Verse open**). Since forgiveness can come only from God, confession must be made to him.

On what basis, though, would forgiveness be granted?

Yes, forgiveness is contingent not only on one’s recognizing and confessing the sin but also on one’s being willing to desist from the wrong course. **This additional step is often difficult. But there is help**.

**Read James 5:16**, The ‘righteous man’ mentioned in this verse can be one of “the elders of the congregation,” whom James mentioned in [verse 14](https://www.jw.org/en/publications/bible/study-bible/books/james/5/#v59005014). In the Christian congregation, these men are appointed to assist those who want to gain God’s forgiveness.

No, such “Elder” cannot absolve anyone of sins, for no man is authorized to forgive a fellow human for a wrong against God.  However as expressed at Gal 6:1, the elders are spiritually qualified to reprove and readjust a person guilty of a serious sin, helping him to recognize the gravity of his sin and the need to repent.

Now We know to whom we need to confess our sins, the next question is:

**Why Confess One’s Sins?**

Whether the sin is grievous or not, the person who committed it has damaged his relationship with his fellow man and with God. Consequently, he may feel troubled or ill at ease. This is the work of the faculty of conscience, with which our Creator has endowed us.

But what can be done?

**Read James 5:14, 15**

Here again, the elders, are called upon to respond to the needs of the flock. How? Not by merely hearing a confession. Rather, since spiritual sickness is involved, something needs to be done in order to “make the indisposed one well.” There are two things James mentioned that can be done.

First, there is the ‘greasing with oil.’ This refers to the healing power of God’s Word. We know that the word of God is alive and exerts power and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart. By skillful use of the Bible, the Elders can help the spiritually sick one to see the cause of the problem and take appropriate steps to correct matters before God.

Secondly,

There is “the prayer of faith.” Although the prayers of the Elder will not alter God’s application of justice (Explain that the sinner would face the consequences of the sin), these prayers do count with God, who is eager to pardon sin on the basis of Christ’s ransom sacrifice. God is ready to help any sinner who is genuinely repentant and who produces “works that befit repentance.

In Conclusion: The foremost reason to confess a sin​—committed either against a fellow human or against God—​is to gain an approved standing with God. Proverbs 28:13 says: “He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving them will be shown mercy.” When we humble ourselves in the eyes of Jehovah God and ask for forgiveness, we will win his favor and be exalted in due course.