

JAMES

GENUINE FAITH ON DISPLAY

PRAYER IS THE REMEDY

GENUINE FAITH PRAYS (PT.1)

JAMES 5:13-18

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¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must **pray**. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

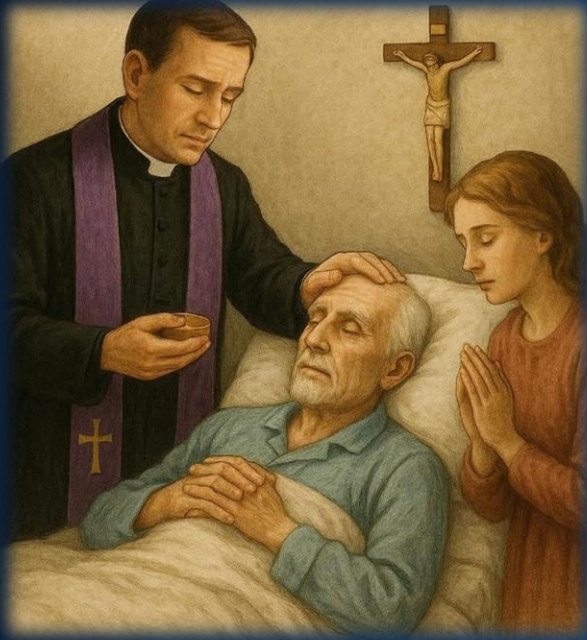
¹⁴Is anyone among you **sick**? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to **pray** over him, **anointing him with oil** in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵and **the prayer** offered in faith will restore the one who is **sick**, and the Lord will raise him up, and **if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him**.

¹⁶Therefore, 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.

¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he **prayed** earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

¹⁸Then he **prayed** again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

UNACCEPTABLE INTERPRETATIONS



- Roman Catholic Church: The sacrament of extreme unction

- Prosperity gospel preachers: faith healers doing miracles



KEY TERMS: SUFFERING (V.13)

¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

κακοπαθέω (*kakopatheō*) — literally “to face difficulty; to experience trouble.”

Example usage

- **James 5:10** - As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word suffering is contrasted with “cheerful” in James 5:13, forming the two ends of the spectrum of our circumstances and emotions.

KEY TERMS: SICKNESS (V.14, 15)

¹⁴Is anyone among you sick?

ἀσθενέω (*astheneō*) — literally “to be without strength”

Example usages

- Often refers to **physical sickness**, especially in the gospels but also twice in the epistles (e.g., Luke 4:40; John 4:46; Acts 9:27; Phil. 2:26-27; 2 Tim. 4:20)
- Also commonly used in the epistles to refer to a **lack of spiritual strength** (Rom. 14:1-2; 1 Cor. 8:11-12; 2 Cor. 11:29)

¹⁵and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick . . .

κάμνω (*kamnō*) — literally “to be weary or fatigued.”

Example usage

- Only other time it is found in the New Testament it refers to being spiritually weary (Heb. 12:3)

KEY TERMS: RESTORE, RAISE UP (V.15)

¹⁵and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick . . .

σώζω (sōzō) — literally “to save”

Example usages

- This word is most commonly used to refer to a person’s salvation (e.g., Rom. 10:13; Eph. 2:8)
- But it can have the meaning to heal or restore (Matt. 9:20-22; Mark 6:56)
- **Context is critical!**

¹⁵. . . and the Lord will raise him up. . .

ἐγείρω (egeirō) — literally “to raise up; rise; get up”

Example usages

- Used in the New Testament for (1) rise up from a sitting position or from bed, (2) rise after healing from being lame, (3) rise from the dead, (4) or even awaken from sleep.

KEY TERMS: HEALED (V.16)

¹⁶and pray for one another so that you may be healed. . . .

ἰάομαι (*iaomai*) — literally “to heal or cure”

Example usage

- This is almost always the term used for healings in the gospels and Acts (Luke 6:18-19)
- This term can be used metaphorically to refer to spiritual restoration (1 Pet. 2:24)
 - **Hebrews 12:3** For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not **grow weary [sick]** and lose heart.
 - **Hebrews 12:12–13** ¹²Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be **healed**.

KEY TERMS: ANOINT (V.14)

¹⁴ . . . they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord

ἀλείφω (*aleiphō*) — literally “to apply oil”

Example usage

- There is another word for anoint (χρίω *chriō*) that is more commonly used for applying oil for ceremonial or religious purposes
- The word for applying oil in James 5:14 is more often used for using oil as a means of showing honor, providing refreshment, or applied in grooming (Matt. 6:17; Luke 7:46)

If James wanted to point to a religious ceremony here that he would have used a different word for anointing. Additionally, anointing is the secondary verb here. Prayer is the primary activity in this verse, not the anointing.

JAMES 5:13-16A

¹³Is anyone among you **suffering**? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

¹⁴Is anyone among you **sick**? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, **anointing him with oil** in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is **sick**, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be **healed**.

¹³Is anyone among you **facing trouble**? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

¹⁴Is anyone among you **without strength**? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, **having applied oil** in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is **weary**, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be **made well**.

CONSIDER THE CONTEXT

The Context of James

- James writes to scattered believers facing trials. The primary instruction given to readers in the beginning of the letter is to endure trials with joy.

The Context of James 5

- The readers were facing severe mistreatment by the wicked rich. The primary instruction given to the believers is to patiently endure these trials, looking to the soon return of Jesus Christ.

The Immediate Context

- When the person without strength comes to the elders there is also the confession and forgiveness of sin. The prayer for one another also includes confession of sin.

Conclusion

- Considering the context, I am convinced that James is addressing spiritual weakness and discouragement.

FOUR INSTRUCTIONS ON PRAYER

1. Go to God in prayer (v. 13)
2. Go to elders for prayer (v.14–15)
3. Go to one another in prayer (v.16a)
4. Know the power of prayer (v.16b–18)

1. GO TO GOD IN PRAYER (V. 13)

James 5:13 — *Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.*

These two questions address the range of human feelings.

- **suffering**: “to face trouble or difficulty”; a repeated theme in James’ letter
 - ⇒ **Right response**: Go to God in prayer! Seek Him for wisdom (James 1:5), cast your cares upon Him (1 Peter 5:7), pray for God’s peace (Phil. 4:6-7), pray for deliverance (Ps. 34:17), pray for God’s will to be done (Matt. 6:10), etc.
- **cheerful**: “to be in good spirits”
 - ⇒ **Right response**: Sing praises! We do this collectively on Sundays, but this command (as the previous one for prayer) is in the present active singular meaning that we are commanded be continually doing this as believers.

2. GO TO ELDERS FOR PRAYER (V. 14-15)

James 5:14 — Is anyone among you sick [without strength]? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil [having applied oil] in the name of the Lord. . .

There may be times you are without strength, both defeated and downcast, and find it hard to pray.

⇒ **Right response:** Reach out to the elders of the church for prayer.

→ **Elders' primary responsibility:** Pray.

→ **Elders' associated action:** Anoint with oil, which is an act of refreshment or encouragement (Matt. 6:17-18a; Luke 7:44-46).

James 5:15 — . . . and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick [weary], and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

We cannot miss that it is **not** the oil that restores, but the prayer offered in faith.

- ⇒ **It is the elders' faith in view here, not the weary person.** And that faith is a faith that God is the one working and He can restore the one who is weary.
- ⇒ **The Lord will then raise up or awaken the weary soul.** God will answer the prayer of the elders and provide encouragement and comfort to the downcast.
- ⇒ If sin has been committed (and confessed to God), God will forgive those sins. Not every time one feels defeated is it because of sin, but that is often the case. God promises to forgive us when we confess sin (1 John 1:9).
- **Summary:** When you are feeling defeated and completely without strength, you do not have to struggle all alone. Go to the elders for prayer.

APPLICATION

1. Live in a constant state of communion with God.
2. Lean on the spiritually mature when you feel defeated.