

JAMES

GENUINE FAITH ON DISPLAY

PRAYER IS THE REMEDY

GENUINE FAITH PRAYS (PT.2)

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.

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.

JAMES 5:13-18

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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.

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PRAYER IN THE BOOK OF JAMES

James 1:5 — But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

⇒ It is profitable to ask God for wisdom because He generously supplies it!

James 4:1–3, 7-8a — What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ² You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. **You do not have because you do not ask.** ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. . . ⁷ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

⇒ It is profitable to draw near to God in repentance because He is a forgiving God who will also draw near to us!

THE CURE TO ANXIETY

1 Peter 5:7 — casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

- Earthly solutions to anxiety include observation of family systems, differentiation of self, and “detriangling.”

But what does Scripture say?

Philippians 4:6–7 — Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And **the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

Philippians 4:9 — The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and **the God of peace** will be with you.

⇒ Prayer is the avenue God has given us to exhibit our trust in Him and by this to achieve victory over anxiety!

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!

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.

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.

- ⇒ **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.

3. GO TO ONE ANOTHER IN PRAYER (V. 16A)

James 5:16a — Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. . . .

Therefore – Recognizing the danger of getting to that point where you feel defeated and without strength, here is instruction on how to avoid that state.

confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another – fellow believers are a gift of God to assist you in your sanctification. You are not made to go through the Christian life alone; we need the encouragement of one another (Heb. 3:13).

Benefits of confessing sins to one another:

- **Prayers** of our brother or sister in Christ.
- **Encouragement** to continue in our fight against sin (Heb. 3:13).
- **Counsel** on how they have battled this sin in their own life and had victory.
- **Accountability** relationship with someone who will come alongside of us in this war against sin.

James 5:16a — Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. . . .

so that you may be healed – the result of the prayers of the saints is spiritual healing (Hebrews 12:12-13; 1 Peter 2:24). God uses the prayers of fellow believers to strengthen you. It is through prayer that others help bear your burdens (Gal. 6:2).

⇒ **Galatians 6:2** — Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

Do my prayers (v.13), the prayer of the elders (v.14-15),
or the prayers of fellow believers (v.16a)
really make a difference?

Yes.

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

4. KNOW THE POWER OF PRAYER (V. 16B-18)

James 5:16b — The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

NASB/LSB The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

ESV The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

KJV The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Literal translation: “Has much force prayer righteous person in its working.”

- **Prayer is powerful** stands at the beginning of the sentence for emphasis.
- “**prayer**” in this verse is referring specifically to prayers of petition.
- “**righteous person**” refers to a person made righteous positionally by Christ and therefore lives a life that is consistent with what Christ has done. Genuine faith results in a changed life!

James 5:17-18 — Elijah 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. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours – there was a natural man (Acts 14:15); he succumbed to fear and discouragement when his life was threatened (1 Kings 19:1-4).

he prayed earnestly – literally “with prayer he prayed.” The emphasis is on the prayer, not the person!

- ⇒ **The power of prayer to stop the rain is not because the person who prayed is special, but because of the unlimited power of our God!**
- ⇒ **God’s sovereignty is not at odds with His promise to respond to prayer. Prayer is the means to which God has chosen to accomplish His purposes.**

APPLICATION

Since the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working . . .

1. Go to God in prayer in times of suffering and praise God in cheerful times.
2. Go to the spiritually mature and ask for prayer when you feel defeated and spiritually discouraged.
3. Go to one another in prayer so that God will grant spiritual healing.