

# JAMES: FINDING A FAITH THAT WORKS

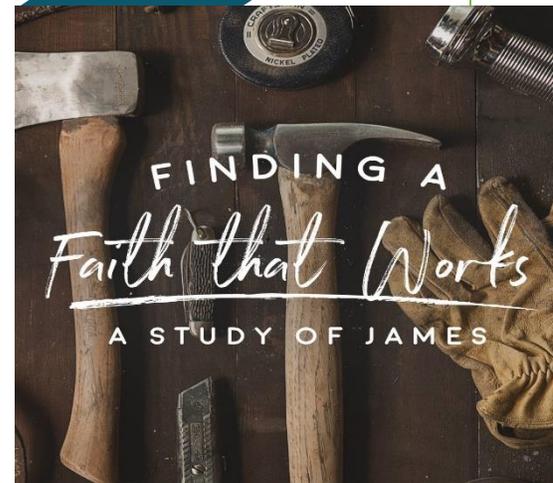
Lesson 12 - FAITH PRAYS FAITHFULLY - James 5:13-18

## INTRODUCTION/THOUGHTS

- This concluding paragraph of the book of James has a clear subject, prayer.
- It is important to note that James is placing emphasis and including a sense of repetition as he finishes his charge to the church.

Notice how he starts and ends the letter:

- James 1:2-4 - Endure in patience - James 5:7-12 - Be patient
- James 1:4-6 - Pray in faith - James 5:13-18 - Faithfully Pray



## 1. WHO IS REFERENCED IN THIS TEACHING ON PRAYER?

- **Suffering People** - "Is any among you afflicted (*enduring evil / suffering affliction*)?"
- **Cheerful People** - "Is any merry (*uplifted spirit / of good cheer*)?"
- **Weak People** - "Is any sick (*weak / feeble*) among you?" - He probably not referring to simply the physically diseased here. He has been constantly referring to spiritual suffering and struggle. It is a picture of what sin is to our souls. The progression in verse 15 pictures those who are standing before sinful temptations in weakness, and it moves to those who have actively committed sins.
- **Sinful People** - "...and if he have committed sins..." - This refers to those who have been fully broken by the weakness and temptation. They have submitted to sin.
- **Church People** - "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another..." - This is a subtle reminder that we are facing this spiritual battle together. It is not a competition! It is a picture of desperate people understanding their weakness and together going to God.

The instruction for every one of these people is the same. PRAY. God does not give different instruction or different plans based on someone's life description. He commands all of us to pray!

Which phase of life do you struggle the most to pray through? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. WHAT TYPE OF PRAYER IS REFERENCED IN THIS TEACHING?

**None of these types of prayer mentioned here are exclusive to a type of person or circumstance. They give us instruction for our prayer lives as a whole.**

- **Prayer for Self** - "...let him pray..." - vs. 13 - It is great to have others prayer for us, but we must pray for ourselves. On a deep, personal level we must be involved with passionate, transparent prayer. **Prayer displays and deepens our reliance on God.** Prayer itself invokes a spirit of humility.
- **Praise from a Joyful Heart** - "...let him sing psalm." - vs. 13 - God has created our heart to be satisfied in Him. A soul that does not sing or rejoice does not find satisfaction in God.
- **Intercession for Weakness and Temptation** - "...Is any sick (*weak / feeble*) let them pray over him... the prayer of faith shall save the sick..."

vs. 14-15 - God has instructed us to pray for the physically sick, and here He plainly states that this prayer is effective. Yet, the narrative of the paragraph refers to those that are spiritually sick, weak, feeble, downtrodden, and broken. He is speaking of those who are on the edge of sin, on the verge of submission, and on the brink of destruction.

-His instruction for how we handle this type of person is consistent, passionate prayer. (Not judgmental prodding or creating further guilt. **The Holy Spirit will convict of sin. It is our responsibility to pray over it.**

Don't be fooled to think that prayer is a gesture of religion instead of an action of faith!

- **Intercession for Sin** - "...if he have committed sins... confess your faults one to another" - vs. 15-16

- James has moved from those looking toward sin to those who are actively involved in it.

- The message here is not saying if we pray for the sins of others God will forgive them based on our prayers. However, it is insinuating that in the same way that we pray for sickness we can pray for sin. Sin is sickness of soul. Sin is more dangerous than physical ailment, yet we pray over it far less.

**God is not asking for us to complain or tattle over sin of others.** This would simply brew a deeper bitterness toward people. God intends for healed sinners to pray in a broken contrite way for "sick sinners".

- **Faithful Prayer** - "Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another... The effectual fervent (*working, energetic, efficient*) prayer of a righteous man availeth (*prevails / is strong*) much."

\*Why this sudden instruction to confide our sins and struggles to each other? It is a preemptive action to combat the coming suffering, brokenness, weakness, and sin. A family of Christians that prays over each other's struggles seems far more refreshing than a church that must constantly resort to pray over each other's failures.

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### 3. WHAT DOES PRAYER RELATE TO IN THIS TEACHING?

- **Prayer and Comfort** - Prayer is tied to our comfort from suffering.

- **Prayer and Restoration** - Prayer is tied to the restoration of the wayward to God and his brethren.

- **Prayer and Fellowship** - Prayer is tied to the comradery and support of the local church.

- **Prayer and Power** - Prayer is tied to victory that comes from God alone.

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### FAMILY DISCUSSION / PERSONAL STUDY

The Book of James teaches us that true faith reveals itself by works. What we do in our Christian life is fueled by what we believe.

Take time together as a family in God's Word. Think throughout the day to reinforce the main truth of the week. Remember significant ways God has worked in your lives.

#### TAKE TIME

Read Galatians 6:1-6

#### THINK

What are some ways in which you would love to be prayed for spiritually? Write them out, pray over them yourself, and then ask someone to pray over them with you (it's Biblical).

#### REMEMBER

Think of a specific answer to prayer that you have experienced spiritually in your own life or others lives. Praise the Lord for that multiple times a day this week, and let it lead you into prayer for God to work in another spiritual way.