



The Oaks
Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Faith and Prayer

James 5:12-20

Maturing in the Faith
A Study in James

Date	Lesson	Text
07/08	Introduction to James	
07/15	Trials and Temptations	1:1-17
07/22	Faith and God's Word	1:18-27
07/29	Faith and Impartiality	2:1-13
08/05	Faith and Actions	2:14-17
08/12	Saving Faith	2:18-26
08/19	Controlling our Tongues	3:1-12
08/26	Faith and Wisdom	3:13-18
09/02	Godly Behavior	4:1-17
09/09	Faith and Money	5:1-6
09/16	Patient Faith	5:7-11
09/23	Faith and Prayer	5:12-20
09/30	Review and Summary	

Food for Thought

Surrounded By Prayer

We give to those we hold most dear No greater help and care Than when we give them to the Lord, Surrounding them with prayer. Prayer prompted by the Holy Spirit is powerful.

Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me
(Rom 15:30 NASB)

From "Our Daily Bread", July 22, 2012)

Which are we to believe in, the power of prayer or the power of the one who hears and answers our prayers? Is any medicinal power inherent in oil the primary thing? Or is the power in the one who gave the directive, "anoint ... with oil" (James 5:14)? Prayer and anointing with oil are responses of faith. We all need to grow in the area of faith. **We should understand that our faith isn't to be in the power of prayer or in anointing, but in our powerful Lord. The prayers of a righteous person are powerful and effective because God responds to that kind of faith.** The challenge to greater faith and trust is ever before us. The sick should fix their faith in the Lord (5:14). **This lesson will encourage us to put our trust in the Lord.** It is a message that cannot be repeated too often. Christians sometimes view themselves to be alone on their spiritual quest to find a deeper relationship with God. However, Christ not only brings us individually into a saving relationship to God, he also brings us into a community. This community is intended to help strengthen our faith. It is also where we exercise our faith in relationship to the needs of others. The lesson text encourages us to honor God within the community of the church. The epistle of James does not conclude with greetings or a benediction as most New Testament epistles. Rather, it returns to the main themes of its opening, prayer and patience (1:2-8), while continuing one of its overarching themes of personal speech ethics.

(adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

With the mention of suffering (5:13), James brings us full circle back to 1:2-3, where he opened the book with the radical command to consider it all joy when we encounter various trials. The only way that we can do that is to **view every difficulty through a God-ward perspective and to depend on God through prayer.** We have to do this first on an individual level, of course. We must mentally process everything that happens to us, from the trivial to the significant, through the grid of God's sovereign love toward us in Christ. That is James' point in verse 13. But then verses 14-16a take on a strong community focus. We are not on individual, isolated spiritual journeys, where we only cross paths with one another here and there. My understanding of verses 14-15 is, if you are seriously sick or have an injury that is debilitating, call the elders for prayer. They will come and talk to you about your situation. They may ask if you are aware of any sins that you need to confess. They will anoint you with oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who is mighty to heal. They will pray with you, believing that God can and does heal. But, we must submit to His sovereign will, which we seldom can know in advance. If He chooses to heal you, give Him the glory, because it wasn't the oil, it wasn't our prayers or faith that healed you. It was God! James has a concluding thought that if you are struggling with sin, find a godly saint to share with in mutual confession and prayer (5:16a). **Generally, the confession should be as public as the sin. If it is a private sin, confess it privately,** or find a godly, trustworthy saint who will keep your confidence and confess it to him or her (men with men, women with women). If your sin hurt specific individuals, confess it to those people and ask their forgiveness. **If it affected the entire church, then ask the elders for an appropriate time and place to confess it to the church.** James' aim in verses 16-18 is to motivate us, wherever we're at with the Lord, to pray more. This assumes that you have trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. You must be reconciled to God through faith in Christ before you can rightly pray. There is no inherent power in prayer itself, but rather that prayer links us to God who is all-powerful.

(adapted from "The God-Dependent Community" Sermon by Steven J. Cole)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

OCCASIONS FOR PRAYER (JAMES 5:12-14)

Responding to circumstances (12-13)

- Respond by praying so that we will not fall into temptation (Matt 26:41)
- Respond by praying in the Spirit on all occasions (Eph 6:18)
- Respond by praying so not to be anxious about anything (Phil 4:6)
- Respond by praying for the spiritual health of others (I John 5:16)

Physical illness (14)

- Pray about illness, but know that some suffering is because of sin (2 Sam 12:15-17)
- Pray about illness, but accept God's will (Matt 26:36-41)
- Pray about illness, but know that some sicknesses teaches that God's grace is sufficient (2 Cor 12:7-10)
- Pray about illness because sometimes sickness is used so that God might be glorified (John 11:4)
- Pray about illness because it is God who sustains and restores (Ps 41:3)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF PRAYER (JAMES 5:15-16)

Healing (15)

- Healing that manifests God's power (Matt 9:2-6)
- Healing through the Name of Jesus because it is the only power that heals (Acts 4:7-10)
- Healing through God's compassion (Matt 14:14)
- Healing through humble repentance and prayer (2 Chron 7:14)

Forgiveness (15)

- Pray for forgiveness because Jesus taught it (Matt 6:12)
- Pray for forgiveness as we repent of our wickedness (Acts 8:22)
- Pray for forgiveness because God is faithful (1 John 1:9)
- Pray for forgiveness of others also (Acts 7:59-60)

Things changed (16)

- Things change because God hears our prayers (Luke 1:13-14)
- Things change because angels are on our side (Job 33:22-26)
- Things change because of asking in Jesus' Name (John 14:12-14)
- Things change because of intercessory prayer (Acts 12:5-7)

PREREQUISITE FOR PRAYER (JAMES 5:17-18)

Earnestness (17)

- Earnestness in faith (1 Tim 1:5)
- Earnestness to draw near to God (Heb 10:22)
- Earnestness to seek and please God (Heb 11:5-6)
- Earnestness in zealousness and prayer (Rom 12:11-12)

Faith (18)

- Steadfast faith is relying on God regardless of the circumstances (2 Cor 1:8-9)
- Steadfast faith is keeping the faith to the finish (2 Tim 4:7)
- Steadfast faith is faith and actions working together to make faith complete (James 2:22)
- Steadfast faith is contending for the faith (Jude 1:3)
- Steadfast faith is refined genuine faith (1 Peter 1:7)

Interceding for others (19-20)

- Praying for restoration (Gal 6:1-2)
- Praying for forgiveness (1 John 5:16)
- Praying for deliverance from Satan's captivity (2 Tim 2:24-26)