

# JAMES – PRACTICAL LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

## PRAY ALL THE TIME – JAMES 5:13-16

1. **James 5:13-16 (NASB)** Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. Is 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; and 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. Therefore, 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.

A. **YOU MAY RECALL FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO JAMES'S LETTER THAT JAMES WAS WELL-KNOWN FOR HIS PRAYER LIFE.**

1. HE HAD THE NICKNAME "OLD CAMEL KNEES" BECAUSE HE SPENT SO MUCH TIME ON HIS KNEES IN PRAYER THAT THEY RESEMBLED THE CALLOUSED KNEES OF A CAMEL.

a. SO IT SHOULDN'T SURPRISE THAT HE ENDS HIS BOOK WITH PRAYER.

B. **INTRODUCTION: WHEN MANY PEOPLE THINK ABOUT PRAYER THEY THINK, "OH YEAH, THAT'S WHAT WE DO WHEN WE ARE SICK, OR THAT'S WHAT WE DO WHEN WE ARE FACING PROBLEMS, OR THAT'S WHAT WE DO WHEN WE HAVE NEEDS, OR THAT'S WHAT WE DO BEFORE MEALS, OR THAT'S WHAT WE DO BEFORE GOING TO SLEEP, OR THAT'S WHAT WE DO ON SUNDAYS".**

C. **HOWEVER... 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NASB) pray without ceasing; ... 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NLT) Never stop praying... 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (MSG) pray all the time;**

D. **FACT: WHENEVER THE SUBJECT OF PRAYER COMES UP, MANY OF US GET NERVOUS.**

1. THAT'S BECAUSE WE ALL INSTINCTIVELY KNOW PRAYER IS AN AREA WE NEED TO GROW IN... SO WHEN THE TOPIC OF PRAYER COMES UP, WE OFTEN REACT WITH EXCUSES LIKE:

a. "I KNOW THAT PRAYER IS IMPORTANT, BUT I JUST DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO DEVELOP A QUALITY, MEANINGFUL, LENGTHY PRAYER LIFE."

b. **HOWEVER, LET ME ASK YOU A SERIES OF QUESTIONS...**

1) DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO WATCH TELEVISION?

2) DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO WORK IN THE YARD?

3) DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO GO PLAY GOLF OR GO FISHING?

4) DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO GO SHOPPING?

5) DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO READ A BOOK?

6) DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO LOOK AT TEXT MESSAGES, OR INSTAGRAM, OR FACEBOOK, OR EMAIL, ET CETERA, ET CETERA?

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- E. ACCORDING TO THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS THE **AVERAGE** AMOUNT OF **TIME** AMERICAN ADULTS SPEND **DAILY** ON **LEISURE** **ACTIVITIES** IS:
1. **WATCHING TELEVISION** = 2.6 HOURS.
  2. **COMPUTER TIME** = 56 MINUTES.
  3. **READING** = 19 MINUTES.
  4. **SOCIALIZING AND COMMUNICATING** = 41 MINUTES.
  5. **PRAYER** = 1 MINUTE.
  6. THAT'S **4.5 HOURS** OF **LEISURE TIME** A **DAY** FOR THE AVERAGE ADULT IN AMERICA THAT **DOES NOT** INCLUDE **PRAYER** OR **BIBLE STUDY!**
    - a. THE **POINT** IS THAT WE **HAVE TIME TO PRAY... BUT**, THE **PROBLEM** IS THAT WE **DON'T PRIORITIZE** THE **TIME TO PRAY**.
- F. WHEN BILLY GRAHAM WAS ASKED, "IF YOU COULD DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT YOUR LIFE?" HE SAID, "I WOULD **STUDY THE BIBLE MORE** AND I WOULD HAVE **PRAYED MORE.**"
- G. THE **PURPOSE** OF TODAY'S STUDY: IS **NOT** TO **GUILT** US INTO **PRAYING... IT** IS TO **GUIDE** US INTO **PRAYING SO MUCH** THAT **PRAYER** BECOMES THE **NATURAL INSTINCTIVE RESPONSE** TO **EVERYTHING** IN LIFE.
1. THAT IS WHAT **PAUL** MEANT WHEN HE WROTE... 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NASB) pray **without ceasing**; ... 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NLT) **Never stop praying... 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (MSG) pray all the time**;
- H. **PRAYER** IS **TALKING TO GOD** AS IF HE WAS YOUR **KIND** AND **LOVING FATHER**, OR THE **BEST FATHER** YOU CAN **IMAGINE**.
1. **BEFORE** YOU **PRAY**:
    - a. **REPENT, CONFESS, AND ASK** FOR **FORGIVENESS** OF YOUR **SINS**.
    - b. **PRAISE** GOD FOR **WHO HE IS** + FOR **WHAT** HE HAS **DONE** FOR **YOU**.
- I. **JAMES 5: 13-16** GIVES A **GUIDELINE** FOR **FIVE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS** IN **LIFE** THAT **REQUIRE** **PRAYER**: (NOTE... THIS IS **NOT** AN **ALL-INCLUSIVE** LIST)
1. **PRAY** WHEN YOU ARE **SUFFERING**.
  2. **PRAY** WHEN YOU ARE **SMILING**.
  3. **PRAY** WHEN YOU ARE **SICK**.
  4. **PRAY** WHEN YOU **SIN**.
  5. **PRAY** FOR THE **SAINTS** (OTHERS).
2. **PRAY** WHEN YOU ARE **SUFFERING**:
    - A. James 5:13a (NKJV) "Is anyone among you **suffering**? Let him **pray**."
    - B. **SO... IS ANYONE** OF "**YOU**" HERE THIS MORNING **SUFFERING**?

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1. THE ANSWER FOR MANY OF US IS **YES!**... BECAUSE **PHYSICAL SUFFERING, EMOTIONAL SUFFERING, SPIRITUAL SUFFERING, MENTAL SUFFERING, FINANCIAL SUFFERING, AND SOCIAL SUFFERING, ARE FACTS OF LIFE.**
- C. PROBLEM: SOME **CHRISTIANS DO NOT PRAY UNTIL** WE, OR SOMEONE WE LOVE, IS **SUFFERING.**
  1. QUESTION: IS IT **POSSIBLE** THAT **ONE OF THE REASONS** THAT WE **SUFFER** IS BECAUSE WE **DON'T TALK TO GOD UNTIL A CRISIS HITS?**
  2. COULD IT BE: THAT **IF** WE MADE **PRAYER OUR FIRST RESPONSE...** IT WOULD **NOT** HAVE TO BE OUR **LAST RESORT?**
- D. NOTE: THE GREEK WORD FOR “**PRAYER**” IN JAMES 5:13 IS IN THE **PRESENT PERFECT TENSE...** WHICH MEANS **ONGOING AND CONTINUAL PRAYER.**
  1. THAT IS THE SAME TENSE USED IN **MATTHEW 7:7 AND 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17** AND IT MEANS “**TO KEEP ON**” ... **TO PERSEVERE.**
    - a. **Matthew 7:7 (NLT)** “**Keep on** asking, and you will receive what you ask for. **Keep on** seeking, and you will find. **Keep on** knocking, and the door will be opened to you.”
    - b. **1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NASB)** **pray without ceasing;** ... **1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NLT)** **Never stop** praying... **1 Thessalonians 5:17 (MSG)** **pray all the time;**
    - c. THAT'S THE IDEA HERE IN JAMES 5:13 ... “**IS ANYONE AMONG YOU SUFFERING... PRAY**”... **KEEP PRAYING... DON'T STOP!**
- E. TRUTH: THIS DOES **NOT** MEAN THAT **WHEN WE PRAY GOD IMMEDIATELY ENDS** OUR **SUFFERING.**
  1. **PRAYER CAN REMOVE AFFLICTION, IF THAT IS GOD'S WILL... BUT PRAYER CAN ALSO GIVE US THE GRACE WE NEED TO ENDURE TROUBLES AND USE THEM TO ACCOMPLISH GOD'S PERFECT WILL.**
  2. HE **NEVER PROMISES TO BRING INSTANT RELIEF** FROM OUR **TRIALS/ SUFFERING... BUT HE DOES PROMISE TO PROVIDE THE STRENGTH FOR PATIENT PERSEVERANCE...** “**ENDURANCE**” AS WE **GROW SPIRITUALLY THROUGH TRIALS AND SUFFERING!**
    - a. **James 1:2-4 (NASB)** “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various **trials** (= **suffering**), knowing that the testing of your faith produces **endurance.** And let **endurance** have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”
  3. IMPORTANT NOTE: OUR **PRAYER SHOULD NOT EXPRESS FAITH IN GOD TO DELIVER US FROM TRIALS BUT THROUGH TRIALS.**
3. **PRAY WHEN YOU ARE SMILING (“HAPPY”):**

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- A. James 5:13b (NLT) “Are any of you **happy**? You should **sing praises**.”
- B. **NOTE: NOT EVERYONE IS SUFFERING... SOME OF YOU ARE DOING GREAT... LIFE IS GOOD!**
1. **AND SO JAMES SAYS WHEN WE ARE “HAPPY” WE SHOULD PRAISE GOD... AND PRAISE IS A FORM OF PRAYER.**
- C. JAMES SAYS IF WE ARE “HAPPY” WE SHOULD “SING PRAISES”.
1. **A SURVEY OF ALMOST 2000 CHRISTIANS DETERMINED THAT PEOPLE LOVE TO SING BECAUSE SINGING BRINGS GREAT COMFORT.**
  2. **Psalm 66:1-4 (NASB) “Shout joyfully to God, all the earth; Sing the glory of His name; Make His praise glorious. Say to God, “How awesome are Your works! Because of the greatness of Your power Your enemies will give feigned obedience to You. “All the earth will worship You, And will sing praises to You; They will sing praises to Your name.”**
- D. **QUESTION: DO WE SPEND AS MUCH TIME PRAISING GOD WHEN THINGS ARE GOOD AND WE’RE “HAPPY” AS WE DO WHEN WE ARE “SUFFERING”?**
1. **IF THE ANSWER IS “NO”... LET THIS STUDY BE A REMINDER TO SPEND TIME PRAISING HIM WHEN LIFE IS GOOD AND WE ARE “HAPPY”!**
4. **PRAY WHEN YOU ARE SICK:**
- A. James 5:14-15a (NLT) “Are any of you **sick**? You should call for the elders of the church to come and **pray** over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. **Such a prayer** offered in **faith** will **heal** the **sick**, and the Lord will **make you well**.”
- B. **NOTE: THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST DISPUTED VERSES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT... AND WITHOUT GETTING TOO DEEP IN THE WEEDS, I’LL TELL YOU WHAT IT DOES NOT MEAN... JAMES IS NOT GIVING A BLANKET FORMULA FOR HEALING THE SICK.**
1. **THE FORMULA OF ELDERS PLUS ANOINTING OIL PLUS FAITH PLUS PRAYER EQUALS ALWAYS HEALED IS NOT WHAT JAMES IS SAYING.**
  2. **THE POINT... GOD CAN AND DOES HEAL PEOPLE FROM BEING SICK.**
    - a. **AND PRAYER IS HOW WE ACCESS GOD’S ABILITY TO HEAL THE SICK.**
- C. **IMPORTANT: SOMETIMES GOD USES MEDICINE, DOCTORS, AND THERAPY TO HEAL THE SICK.**
1. **AND, SOMETIMES HE HEALS MIRACULOUSLY.**
  2. **AND, SOMETIMES HE CHOOSES TO HEAL PEOPLE THROUGH NATURAL PROCESSES.**
  3. **AND, SOMETIMES HE DOESN’T HEAL AT ALL.**
    - a. **REMEMBER: THERE ARE THREE ANSWERS TO PRAYER:**
      - 1) **YES.**

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2) **NO.**

3) **LATER.**

### 5. **PRAY WHEN YOU SIN:**

A. James 5:15b “(Pray in faith) And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.”

B. THAT IS CALLED “**CONFESSION**”.

1. Matthew 6:12 (NLT2) “and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.”

2. 1 John 1:9 (NASB) “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

3. **NOTE: THE CAVEAT... “IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS”... “HE IS FAITHFUL TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS”**

4. **WAIT!... I THOUGHT GOD FORGAVE ALL OF OUR SINS AT SALVATION?**

a. **DISCUSS: THEN WHY DO WE NEED TO CONFESS OUR SINS AND ASK GOD FOR FORGIVENESS AFTER SALVATION?**

b. **ANSWER: TO RESTORE OUR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD... BECAUSE WHILE SALVATION MAKES US A CHILD OF GOD... SIN DISRUPTS OUR DAILY INTIMACY WITH HIM AS OUR FATHER.**

1) **CONFESSION AND ASKING GOD FOR FORGIVENESS IS LIKE CORRECTING A RIFT IN A MARRIAGE... IT RESTORES THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP.**

2) **TRUTH: CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE ARE A KEY PART OF GROWTH IN THE SANCTIFICATION PROCESS.**

3) **CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE ARE SIGNS OF HUMILITY WHICH PREVENT PRIDE... WHICH IS A STUMBLING BLOCK IN THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH.**

c. **SUMMARY: WE DO NOT REPENT AND CONFESS OUR SINS TO BE RE-SAVED... BUT TO KEEP OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ACTIVE, HONEST, LOVING, AND GROWING.**

C. **CONSIDER: THIS COROLLARY: Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT) “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.**

1. **DISCUSS: THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR FAILURE TO FORGIVE OTHERS WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST US.**

2. **REMEMBER: SOMETIMES FORGIVENESS IS A PROCESS... NOT AN EVENT.**

### 6. **PRAY FOR THE SAINTS (OTHERS):**

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- A. **James 5:16 (NLT)** “Confess your sins to each other and **pray** for **each other** so that you may be healed. The **earnest prayer** of a **righteous person** has **great power** and produces wonderful results.
- B. **CONSIDER: INTERCESSION FOR OTHERS CAN BE MUCH HARDER THAN PRAYING FOR OURSELVES WHEN WE ARE SUFFERING, SMILING, SICK, AND WHEN WE SIN... BECAUSE WE ARE NOT FOCUSED ON OURSELVES!**
1. **NOW I'M FOCUSED ON YOU AND I'M NOT AS INVESTED IN YOUR SITUATION AS I AM IN MY SITUATION.**
  2. **SO... WE MUST BE INTENTIONAL IN OUR PRAYER FOR OTHERS.**
    - a. **A PRAYER LIST AND A DEDICATED TIME TO PRAY HELP US TO BE INTENTIONAL IN OUR PRAYER FOR OTHERS.**
- C. **SAMUEL CHATTUCK SAID, “THE ONE CONCERN OF THE DEVIL IS TO KEEP CHRISTIANS FROM PRAYING... ESPECIALLY FOR EACH OTHER. HE FEARS NOTHING FROM PRAYERLESS STUDIES, PRAYERLESS WORK, AND PRAYERLESS RELIGION. HE LAUGHS AT OUR TOIL AND MOCKS OUR WISDOM... BUT HE TREMBLES WHEN WE PRAY... ESPECIALLY FOR EACH OTHER.”**
1. **ANOTHER WRITER WROTE, “WHEN YOU PRAY... ESPECIALLY FOR EACH OTHER, YOU JUST BROUGHT A GUN TO A KNIFE FIGHT!”**
7. **TRUE STORY... HERBERT JACKSON WAS A MISSIONARY TO INDIA. HE WAS GIVEN A CAR WHILE HE WAS THERE. THE ONLY PROBLEM WITH THE CAR WAS THAT THE IGNITION WOULDN'T START THE CAR, SO IT HAD TO BE PUSHED. HE WOULD PUT IT IN GEAR, RELEASE THE CLUTCH, AND IT STARTED. HE DID THAT FOR TWO YEARS. HE'D ALWAYS PARK ON A HILL SO HE COULD ROLL THE CAR DOWNWARD, OR KEEP THE ENGINE RUNNING. HE GOT SICK AND HAD TO GO BACK HOME AND A NEW MISSIONARY CAME TO REPLACE HIM. HERBERT GAVE HIM THE KEYS TO THE CAR AND TOLD HIM HOW TO START THE CAR. THE YOUNG MISSIONARY OPENED THE HOOD OF THE CAR AND SAID, “I THINK I SEE THE PROBLEM... IT'S JUST A LOOSE CABLE.” HE CONNECTED IT, AND SURE ENOUGH, IT TURNED OVER. NOW THINK OF THAT. HERBERT JACKSON LIVED FOR TWO YEARS WITH A FIXABLE PROBLEM. **POWER WAS THERE** THE WHOLE TIME BUT THE **PROBLEM WAS A LOOSE CONNECTION** THAT **KEPT HIM** FROM **EMPLOYING** THE **POWER**.**
- A. **QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE A LOOSE SPIRITUAL CONNECTION THAT'S KEEPING YOU OUT OF TOUCH WITH GOD'S POWER?**
  - B. **THEN BE INTENTIONAL AND SET ASIDE A TIME TO PRAY AND USE A PRAYER LIST UNTIL PRAYER BECOMES THE NATURAL INSTINCTIVE RESPONSE TO EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIFE!**
  - C. **THEN REMEMBER TO:**
    1. **PRAY WHEN YOU ARE SUFFERING.**

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