

# JAMES – PRACTICAL LESSONS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY

## PRAYER: OUR MOST POWERFUL WEAPON - JAMES 5:16-18

### 1. REVIEW

- A. **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.
- B. **THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY ON PRAYER 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;**
- C. **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).**
- D. **PRAY WHEN YOU ARE SUFFERING:**
1. **James 5:13a (NKJV) "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray.**
  2. **SO... IS ANYONE OF "YOU" HERE THIS MORNING SUFFERING?**
  3. **THE ANSWER FOR MANY OF US IS YES!... BECAUSE:**
    - a. **PHYSICAL SUFFERING,**
    - b. **EMOTIONAL SUFFERING,**
    - c. **SPIRITUAL SUFFERING,**
    - d. **MENTAL SUFFERING,**
    - e. **FINANCIAL SUFFERING,**
    - f. **AND RELATIONAL SUFFERING, ARE FACTS OF LIFE.**
- E. **NOTE: GOD DOESN'T PROMISE 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!**
1. **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**

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let **endurance** have its perfect result, so that you may be **perfect and complete**, lacking in nothing.”

### F. **PRAY WHEN YOU ARE SMILING (“HAPPY”):**

1. James 5:13b (NLT) “Are any of you **happy**? You should **sing praises**.”
2. **JAMES SAYS WHEN WE ARE “HAPPY” WE SHOULD PRAISE GOD... AND PRAISE IS A FORM OF PRAYER.**
3. **QUESTION: DO WE SPEND AS MUCH TIME PRAISING GOD WHEN THINGS ARE GOOD AND WE’RE “HAPPY” AS WE DO WHEN WE ARE “SUFFERING”?**

### G. **PRAY WHEN YOU ARE SICK:**

1. 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**.”
2. **IMPORTANT: SOMETIMES GOD USES MEDICINE, DOCTORS, AND THERAPY TO HEAL THE SICK.**
  - a. **AND, SOMETIMES HE HEALS MIRACULOUSLY.**
  - b. **AND, SOMETIMES HE CHOOSES TO HEAL PEOPLE THROUGH NATURAL PROCESSES.**
  - c. **AND, SOMETIMES HE DOESN'T HEAL AT ALL.**
3. **REMEMBER: THERE ARE THREE ANSWERS TO PRAYER:**
  - a. **YES.**
  - b. **NO.**
  - c. **LATER**

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

1. James 5:15b “(Pray in faith) And if you have **committed any sins**, you **will be forgiven**.”
2. **REMEMBER: WE DO NOT REPENT, CONFESS OUR SINS, AND ASK GOD FOR FORGIVENESS TO BE RE-SAVED... BUT TO RESTORE OUR RELATIONSHIP AND KEEP IT ACTIVE, HONEST, LOVING, AND GROWING.**
  - a. **REPENTANCE, CONFESSION AND ASKING GOD FOR FORGIVENESS IS LIKE CORRECTING A RIFT IN A MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP... IT RESTORES THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP.**
  - b. **TRUTH: CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, AND ASKING GOD FOR FORGIVENESS ARE A KEY PART OF GROWTH IN THE SANCTIFICATION PROCESS.**
2. **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 BECAUSE WHEN WE ARE PRAYING FOR OTHERS 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. **THEREFORE... WE MUST BE INTENTIONAL IN OUR PRAYER FOR OTHERS.**
    - a. **FACT: (1) A PRAYER LIST AND (2) A DEDICATED TIME TO PRAY WILL 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 WHEN WE PRAY FOR EACH OTHER.”**
1. **ANOTHER AUTHOR WROTE, “WHEN YOU PRAY... ESPECIALLY FOR EACH OTHER, YOU JUST BROUGHT A GUN TO A KNIFE FIGHT!”**
- D. **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.**
- E. **QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE A LOOSE SPIRITUAL CONNECTION THAT'S KEEPING YOU OUT OF TOUCH WITH GOD'S POWER?**
1. **THEN BE INTENTIONAL AND (1) SET ASIDE A TIME TO PRAY AND (2) USE A PRAYER LIST... UNTIL PRAYER BECOMES THE NATURAL INSTINCTIVE RESPONSE TO EVERYTHING IN YOUR LIFE!**
  3. **PRAYER: OUR MOST POWERFUL WEAPON!**

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A. **James 5:16-18 (NLT)** “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The **effective prayer** of a righteous person **has great power** and **produces wonderful results**. Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops.”

#### B. **INTRODUCTION:**

##### 1. WE ARE LIVING IN VERY **TROUBLED TIMES:**

a. **WARS, SHOOTINGS, POLITICAL DIVISION, SEXUAL LOOSENESS AND PERVERSION, DRUGS, LAWLESSNESS, CONFUSION, AND AN INCREASING HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHRISTIANS AND THE GOSPEL.**

b. **IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE MANY OF US SAY THAT THERE'S NO HOPE.**

2. **“BUT GOD” ... REMINDS US OF THE FACT THAT PRAYER IS POWERFUL... IT CAN AND DOES DRAMATICALLY CHANGE SITUATIONS AND PEOPLE.**

#### C. **JAMES 5:16-18: “THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON IN OUR LIFE” ANSWERS THREE QUESTIONS:**

1. **WHAT IS OUR MOST POWERFUL WEAPON?**

2. **WHO CAN USE THAT WEAPON?**

3. **WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF USING THAT WEAPON?**

#### 4. **FIRST QUESTION: WHAT IS OUR MOST POWERFUL WEAPON?**

A. **ANSWER: OUR MOST POWERFUL WEAPON IS THE EFFECTIVE PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS PERSON!**

B. **James 5:16-18 (NLT)** “and **pray for one another**, that you may be healed. The **effective prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.**”

C. **TODAY'S STUDY OF JAMES 5:16-18 WILL FOCUS ON HELPS AND HINDERENCES TO “EFFECTIVE” PRAYER:**

D. **HELP FOR “EFFECTIVE” PRAYER IS FOR THE PERSON DOING THE PRAYING TO TAKE THE TIME TO LISTEN TO GOD.**

1. **NOTE: PRAYER IS A TWO-WAY CONVERSATION.**

a. **IF WE DO ALL THE TALKING THEN WE CAN'T HEAR FROM GOD.**

2. **THEREFORE... ONE REASON WE DON'T HEAR GOD'S VOICE IS SIMPLY BECAUSE WE ARE NOT LISTENING... WE ARE ONLY TALKING.**

3. **CONSIDER: WE WANT GOD TO TALK TO US IN A LOUD VOICE AND WRITE IT IN THE SKY IN NEON... HOWEVER GOD OFTEN SPEAKS TO US IN A “GENTLE WHISPER” (NLTV)... A “STILL SMALL VOICE” (NKJV).**

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4. **1 Kings 19:11-13, 15a (NLT)** “Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the LORD told him. And as **Elijah** stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, **but the LORD was not in the wind**. After the wind there was an earthquake, **but the LORD was not in the earthquake**. And after the earthquake there was a fire, **but the LORD was not in the fire**. And after the fire there was the **sound of a gentle whisper (still small voice NKJV)**. When Elijah **heard** it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And a voice said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” ...**Then the LORD told him,**
- E. **HINDERANCE TO “EFFECTIVE” PRAYER IS THAT WE CAN’T HEAR GOD’S VOICE BECAUSE THERE’S TOO MUCH NOISE IN OUR CULTURE, AND THOSE NOISES DISTRACT US FROM HEARING GOD’S “SMALL QUIET VOICE”.**
- a. **CELL PHONES:**
    - 1) CONVERSATIONS
    - 2) SOCIAL MEDIA APPS
    - 3) SEARCH APPS
    - 4) MESSAGES
    - 5) NEWS
    - 6) SPORTS
    - 7) SHOPPING
  - b. **TELEVISION**
  - c. **CAR RADIO (TRAVELING BY CAR IS A GREAT TIME FOR PRAYER)**
- F. **HELP FOR “EFFECTIVE” PRAYER IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT GOD SPEAKS TO US WHEN WE SPEND TIME STUDYING HIS WORD... SO STUDY THE BIBLE!**
1. **PROBLEM: INSTEAD OF SPENDING TIME IN HIS WORD, WE TOO OFTEN SPEND OUR LEISURE TIME ANYWHERE OTHER THAN IN BIBLE STUDY!**
- G. **HINDERANCE TO “EFFECTIVE” PRAYER AND ANOTHER REASON WE DO NOT HEAR FROM GOD IS THAT OUR PRAYERS ARE OFTEN PRAYERS OF PETITION RATHER THAN PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, INTERCESSION, OR SEEKING FORGIVENESS.**
1. **MANY OF US VIEW GOD AS A DIVINE SANTA CLAUS.**
- a. **TRUTH: WE ARE SO BUSY INSTRUCTING GOD WE CAN’T HEAR HIM INSTRUCTING US!**
- H. **HELP FOR “EFFECTIVE” PRAYER...WHEN WE DON’T KNOW WHAT TO PRAY... PRAY SCRIPTURE = REPEATING TO GOD WHAT HE HAS SAID TO US.**
1. **WHEN WE PRAY SCRIPTURE WE ARE NOT PRAYING ANYTHING THAT IS NOT IN HIS WILL.**

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- a. WHEN WE PRAY GOD'S WORD IT DOESN'T CHANGE HIM... IT CHANGES US... BY CHANGING THE WAY WE LOOK AT AND UNDERSTAND THINGS.
  - 1) REMEMBER: "WHEN WE CHANGE THE WAY WE LOOK AT THINGS, THE THINGS WE LOOK AT CHANGE".
    - i. INTERPRETATION: WHEN/IF WE CHOOSE TO LOOK AT OUR CIRCUMSTANCES (AND OTHERS WE ARE PRAYING FOR) FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE WE GAIN HIS INSIGHT... AND HIS INSIGHT CHANGES OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OUR CIRCUMSTANCES.
    - ii. SO... HAVING GOD'S INSIGHT CHANGES THE WAY WE PRAY!
- I. HELP FOR "EFFECTIVE" PRAYER IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT ONE OF THE SECRETS OF PRAYER IS IN OUR POSITION... NOT IN OUR PETITION
  1. IN OTHER WORDS... "EFFECTIVE" PRAYER IS WHERE WE'RE STAYING ... NOT WHAT WE'RE SAYING !
    - a. WE CAN PRAY THE RIGHT THINGS OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN... BUT IF WE AREN'T SPENDING TIME IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, OUR PRAYERS WILL NOT BE "EFFECTIVE".
  2. John 15:1-7 (NASB) "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."
  3. TO "ABIDE" MEANS THAT WE ARE MAINTAINING A CONTINUAL AND A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.
    - a. THE FUNDAMENTAL WAYS WE "ABIDE" ARE:
      - 1) THROUGH CONSISTENT "EFFECTIVE" PRAYER,
      - 2) THE STUDY OF GOD'S WORD,
      - 3) AND CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.
    - b. "ABIDING" TAKES TIME AND TIME IS OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS.
    - c. NOTE: WHEN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS GROWS, OUR TRUST IN HIM GROWS... AND WE BEGIN TO REALIZE THAT THE THINGS

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**GOD WANTS FOR ME ARE BETTER THAN THE THINGS I WANT FOR MYSELF.**

- J. **HINDERANCE TO “EFFECTIVE” PRAYER IS UNCONFESSED SIN** BECAUSE IT CAUSES A **BREACH IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**
- IF OUR PRAYERS HAVEN'T BEEN COMING TO PASS IT MIGHT NOT BE WHAT WE'RE SAYING... BUT WHERE WE'RE STAYING!**
    - OUR PRAYERS CANNOT BE DIVORCED FROM OUR LIFESTYLE... THEY SHOULD FLOW OUT OF A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**
  - IS THERE UNCONFESSED SIN IN OUR LIFE THAT SEPARATES US FROM OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND HINDERS “EFFECTIVE” PRAYER?**
  - Matthew 6:5-13 (NASB)** "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. "But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you. "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. "So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. "**Pray, then, in this way:** (a) 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. (b) 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. (c) 'Give us this day our daily bread. (d) 'And forgive us our debts (sins), as we also have forgiven our debtors (those who sin against us). (e) 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'
  - REMEMBER: THE “LORD’S PRAYER” IS A MODEL FOR PRAYER... “Pray, then, in this way:” ... NOT “Pray then, these exact words:”**
    - ADORATION (PRAISE/WORSHIP)**
    - CONSECRATION (SET APART)**
    - SUPPLICATION (NEEDS)**
    - INTERCESSION (FORGIVENESS OF SIN)**
    - PROTECTION (SATAN)**
  - INTERCESSION INCLUDES:**
    - CONFESSION (NAME OUR SIN)**
    - REPENTANCE (OF OUR SINS)**
    - ASKING GOD FOR FORGIVENESS (OF OUR SINS)**
  - FOR OUR PRAYERS TO BE “EFFECTIVE” IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE:**
    - CONFESS OUR SINS,**
    - REPENT OF OUR SINS,**

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- c. AND **ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US FOR OUR SIN...** WHICH WILL **RESTORE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.**
5. **NEXT WEEK: "THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON IN OUR LIFE"**
- A. SECOND QUESTION: **WHO CAN USE THAT WEAPON?**
  - B. THIRD QUESTION: **WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF USING THAT WEAPON?**