



# The Power of Prayer

James 5:7-16

<sup>7</sup> Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. <sup>8</sup> You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup> Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. <sup>10</sup> As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the <sup>[e]</sup>endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

<sup>12</sup> But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. <sup>14</sup> 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; <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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.



**Here is the BIG IDEA in this lesson:**

*Praying for ourselves and for one another is the lifeblood of the church.*

## Introduction:

The context of chapter five in the book of James reads like the front page of USA Today, The New York Times, or The Arizona Republic. The rich were fleecing the poor and the middle class, which included Christians. Therefore, the Apostle launched out in a bold attack against the spirit of covetousness condemned in Scripture, but especially concerning those who were taking advantage of the economic crisis of that day (vv.1-6).

Along with economic pressure came spiritual persecution. When the storm of persecution hit Jerusalem in A.D. 50, many of the Jewish believers were scattered throughout the Mediterranean world. Now living in hostile communities, these early believers were confronted with questions of two stark realities:

1. Was their faith real?
2. Was their faith sufficient to help them live for Christ, even in the midst of unfavorable circumstances?

The Apostle James says, there is a way that you can know. How? *Your faith must be tested*. In other words, *a faith that is not tested cannot be trusted*. With that, the Apostle sets forth a series of six tests throughout the book that help us examine the reality of our faith:

- Test #1: True faith is demonstrated by *its response to the Word of God*. (1:19-27)
- Test #2: True faith is revealed by *its reaction to social distinctions*. (2:1-13)
- Test #3: True faith is manifested by *its production of biblical works*. (2:14-26)
- Test #4: True faith is displayed by *its development of self-control*. (3:1-18)
- Test #5: True faith is discerned by *its reaction to worldliness*. (4:1-5:12)
- Test #6: True faith is proved by *its response to prayer under all circumstances of life*. (5:13-18)

A true Christian has been defined as a man or woman who *prays*. When Ananias of Damascus was told to go and speak to Saul of Tarsus, he basically said, "Do you know who this man is, Lord? He is the main fellow who persecutes Your people." But when God wanted to reassure Ananias of Paul's conversion, He only used one argument. He said, "...*behold, he prayeth*" (Acts 9:11 KJV).

If encouragement is the "oxygen of the soul" as George Adam put it, then **prayer** is "*the soul's blood*." It brings health to every other part of the human being. Prayer is the breath of the new creation of God (Acts 22:10). When a person is born again, he begins to pray. What does your prayer life tell you about your spiritual health? Write a response here:

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**The foundational question for our study is this:** *What should a child of God do in times of hardship, adversity, suffering, and affliction?*

What is the first thing we do or say when trouble comes? How do we act when some hardship strikes? James tells us that we should *pray for ourselves* and we should *pray for one another*. Let's discover what it means for us.



## Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

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- A. Whenever we are going through times of difficulty—whether it be physically, spiritually, or financially—what virtue do we need most, according to James 5:7?

The Greek word translated “**patient**” (“makrothumeo”) is made up of “makro,” meaning *long*, and “thumeo,” meaning *anger* or *temper*. It literally means *to suffer long* or *to be long-tempered*. It is not a passive trait, but an active self-restraint that enables one to refrain from hasty retaliation in the face of provocation, even when it would be easy to react. It speaks of a steadfast spirit that will never give in. It is the attitude that does not admit defeat; it is perseverance under trying circumstances. (Cf. Rom.2:4; 1 Pet.3:20)

- B. According to Galatians 5:22, what is patience a reflection of? (Cf. Heb.10:36-39)

- C. What are the three vivid illustrations James uses as examples of patience?

- Verse 7: \_\_\_\_\_

What does this example teach us about patience? *We are helpless without divine intervention.*

- Verses 10-11a: \_\_\_\_\_

What does this example teach us about patience? *Our excuses are poor when we compare our lives to these men of old.*

- Verse 11: \_\_\_\_\_

What does this example teach us about patience? *Because the Lord is full of compassion and mercy, the end will be brighter and better than the beginning for those who trust God.*

- D. James teaches us about the TIME, the EQUIPMENT, and the TRIUMPH of prayer. When (the TIME) are we to pray, according to:

- Verse 13a
- Verse 13b
- Verses 14-15a
- Verses 15b-16a

These verses teach us that the time when we are to pray is in every condition and providence that we find ourselves in life. Prayer is to be woven into the very fabric of life.

- E. What two requirements (the EQUIPMENT) are needed in order for our prayers to make a difference?

1. Verse 15 (Cf. 1:5-8; Heb.11:1-6): \_\_\_\_\_

What does it mean to pray in faith?

- Faith is confidence in the existence of God. (Cf. Heb.11:6)
- Faith is confident that God is personal. (Cf. Gen.1:26ff)
- Faith is confident that God is accessible to us in Jesus Christ. (Cf. Eph.2:18; Heb.7:25, 10:19-22)
- Faith is confident that God is supreme and at work at this moment in the world in which we live. (Cf. John 5:17)

2. Verse 16 (Cf. 4:3): \_\_\_\_\_

F. According to verses 17-18, who is set before us as the example of the victory (the TRIUMPH) of prayer?

1. What are we called to remember about him?
2. Nevertheless, what did he do? (Cf. 1 Kin.17-18)
3. What happened for three and a half years?
4. What happened in one moment?

**What is the point?** The tremendous power of prayer of a righteous man is *effective* and can be used of God to *stop the mouths of the pagan* and to *provide for the spiritual and material needs of His people*.



## Application: Making Truth Stick

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There is so much to be said about praying and praying for one another. Each day this week, take a few of these verses and write down what they reveal to you about prayer. Meditate on them and put them into practice by the strength which God supplies: *1 Samuel 12:23; Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4; 12:5; Romans 12:12; 15:30-32; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2-4; Hebrews 13:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2; 1 Peter 4:7.*

### Being a doer of the Word (2 Tim.3:16)

1. What did I learn ("teaching")?
2. Where do I fall short ("reproof")?
3. What do I need to do about it ("correction")?
4. How can I make this a consistent part of my life ("training")?

## Answer Key

### Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

- A. patience
- B. a true believer
- C.
  - the farmer
  - the prophets
  - Job
- D.
  - during suffering, afflictions, troubles, pressures
  - when we are cheerful, happy, joyful
  - when we are sick
  - when sin has come
- E.
  1. faith
  2. righteousness
- F. Elijah
  1. he had a nature like ours
  2. he prayed earnestly
  3. it stopped raining
  4. it rained

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