



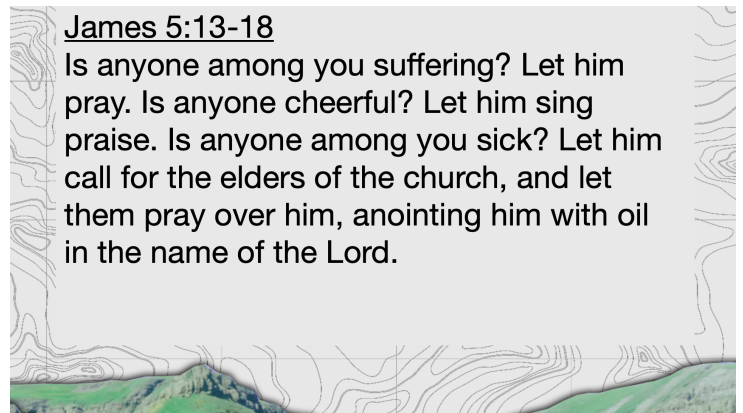
James, the “kneeling Christian.”

Ancient Historian Eusebius: James’ knees grew hard like a camel’s because of his constant worship of God, kneeling and asking forgiveness for the people.

What’s been the burden in your heart?

What’s been the brokenness in your heart?

And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.



James 5:13-18

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

Prayer

1. A call to a life of prayer
2. Prayer and healing
3. Prayer and God's power

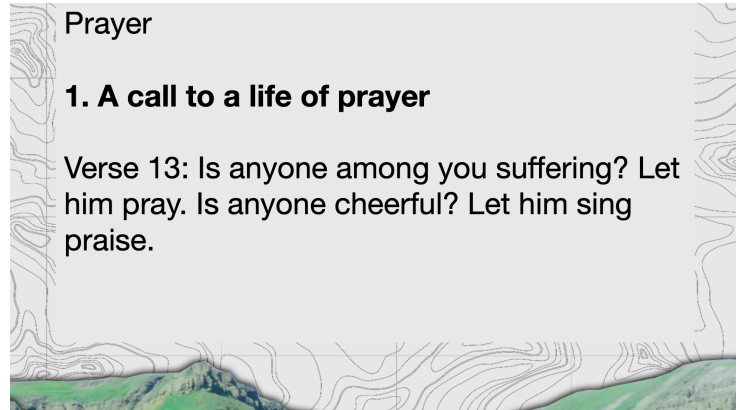
Suffering: not just physical sickness but any ill circumstance that comes upon us, any trial.

Cheerful: doesn't mean things are trouble free, but a buoyancy of heart, whatever the circumstances.

Why do we struggle with prayer?

1. Our sense of self sufficiency

Paul Miller (A Praying Life): If you are not praying, it may well be because *"you are quietly confident that time, money, and talent are all you need in life to overcome."*



Prayer

1. A call to a life of prayer

Verse 13: Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

Thoughts

- 1) A life of prayer: God is present and involved in every aspect of life.
- 2) Prayer is connected to every part of the Christian life.
- 3) 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing."

Paul Miller (A Praying Life): The gospel of John is all about people going to Jesus out of helplessness:

- John 2: no wine (Wedding at Cana)
- John 4: no water (Samaritan woman)
- John 5: no help (Pool at Bethsaida)
- John 6: no bread (Feeding the 5K)
- John 9: no sight (Blind man)
- John 11: no life (Lazarus)

Paul Miller: *“The gospel, God’s free gift of grace in Jesus, only works when we realize we don’t have it all together. The same is true for prayer. The very thing we are allergic to - our helplessness - is what makes prayer work. It works because we are helpless. We can’t do life on our own.”...*

“We tell ourselves, ‘Strong Christians pray alot. If I were a stronger Christian, I’d pray more.’”...

“Strong Christians do pray more, but they pray more because they realize how weak they are. They don’t try to hide it from themselves. Weakness is the channel that allows them to access grace.”

- Paul Miller

Why do we struggle with prayer?

1. Our sense of self sufficiency
2. Our misapplication of the sovereignty of God:

“God is sovereign so what will happen will happen. God’s will will be done no matter what anyways.”

From John Piper:

Prayerless: *“Well, if God ordains and controls everything, then what He plans of old will come to pass, right?”*

Prayerful: *“Yes.”*

Prayerless: *“So it will happen whether you pray or not, right?”*

Prayerful: *“That depends...whether God ordained for it to come to pass in answer to prayer. If God predestined and ordained that something happens in answer to prayer, it won't happen without prayer.”*

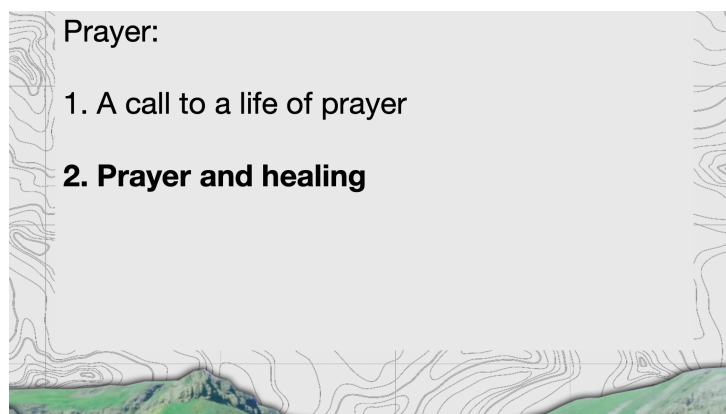
James 4:2: You do not have because you do not ask.

Ask is the **means**, do not have is the **effect**!

Verse 14: Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

The takeaway: **“Cause and effect”**

If God has ordained certain things to come to pass, He doesn't just ordain the **effect** but also the **cause**. So without the **cause**, the **effect** won't come to pass. So if prayer is the God ordained cause in which God accomplishes the effect (ie healing, renewal, etc), then this ought to motivate us to pray!



“God, you can heal using natural means or apart from it. We know that you don't need any means and you can directly heal! But, we also realize that medicine is a gift from you and you use that to heal! So we bring our requests to you to heal, trusting in your power and in your ways. Amen.”

Verses 15a: And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up...

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God answers prayers! He heals people through our prayers!

We must not take James' words to think this is some magic formula, that if we do certain things or believe strongly enough, God must heal.

No, God is God.

a) The prayer of faith is not a perfect faith.

b) Mark 9:21: "I believe, help my unbelief!"

c) *"Oh Lord, we come to you. We confess our uncertainties but we come to you with them!"*

Remember: it is important to understand the book of James as "proverbs, not a promise."

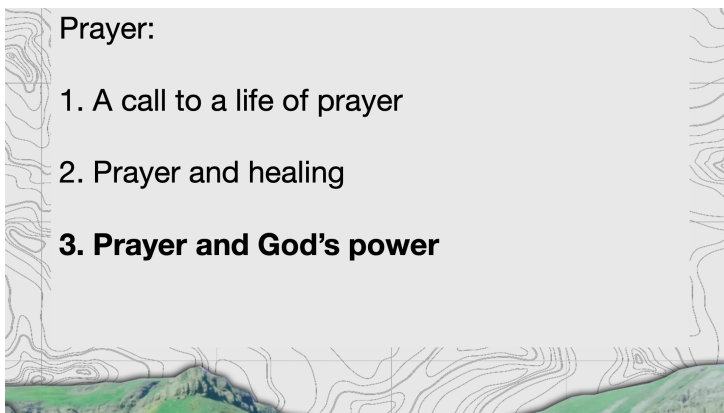
Example: The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12. Paul worked many miracles, but he did not heal his ministry partners such as Timothy (1 Ti 5:23), Trophimus (2 Tim 4:20), and Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25).

CS Lewis: *"Even if all the things that people prayed for happened – which they do not – this would not prove what Christians mean by the efficacy of prayer. For prayer is request. The essence of request, as distinct from compulsion, is that it may or may not be granted."*

And if an infinitely wise Being listens to the requests of finite and foolish creatures, of course He will sometimes grant and sometimes refuse them. Invariable "success" in prayer would not prove the Christian doctrine at all. It would prove something more like magic – a power in certain human beings to control, or compel, the course of nature."

Verses 15b: (context of sickness) And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

Verse 16: Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.



Verse 16b: The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Verses 17-18: Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

The takeaway: There is prayer and a divine response. It's not about our power in prayer, but God's power coming forth through prayer (which again, is helplessness).

Prayer and the Source of God's power

God answers prayer! God heals through prayer!

How can we pray like this? How do we even begin to respond and obey what James is saying about prayer?

Thomas Watson: *"Prayer as it comes from the saint is weak and languid; but when the arrow of a saint's prayer is put into the bow of Christ's intercession, it pierces the throne of grace."*

Oswald Chambers: *"Our prayers are heard, not because we are in earnest, not because we suffer, but because Jesus suffered."*

Application of the gospel:

In our prayers, what if God says no? What if God is silent? Did we not have enough faith?

James 5:16: The prayers of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

The prayers of a *perfectly* righteous man is *perfectly* powerful and *perfectly* effective.

John Newton: *“Thou art coming to a King,
large petitions with thee bring, for his grace
and power are such, none can ever ask too
much.”*