

The One Another Life – A Gospel Community

Week 8 – Pray for One Another
(James 5:13-16)

OPENING QUESTION

Do I really believe that bringing another person before God in prayer is **one of the most important things I can do for them?**

KEY VERSE

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.” -James 5:16

THE INSTRUCTION

1. When you suffer, **pray**; when you rejoice, **praise God**.

“Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises.” – James 5:13

When James speaks of suffering here, he means more than physical sickness. The word can include the broader hardships, pressures, afflictions, and troubles believers face in a fallen world. Sickness becomes a more specific focus in verse 14, but verse 13 begins with suffering in the wider sense.

What is true: **God is worthy** of our trust in suffering and our praise in joy.

What to do: When you suffer, **turn to God in prayer**; when He gives joy, **turn that joy back to Him in praise**.

2. When you are sick, call the elder(s) of the church **to pray for you**.

Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up...” – James 5:14-15

The oil here is best understood as a symbolic act of consecration to the Lord, not as something with healing power in itself. We pray for healing because God truly can heal, but James does not give us a mechanical guarantee that every sick person will be healed immediately; the outcome remains in the hands of the sovereign Lord and according to His will.

James does not say, “If you pray hard enough, the sick person will recover.” He says, “the prayer of faith.” But the “prayer of faith” is not a technique that guarantees healing whenever we use the right words or generate enough confidence. Faith trusts the God who is able to heal while remaining submitted to the God who knows what is best. So, we pray boldly for healing, and we leave the outcome in the Lord’s hands.

What is true: God is the healer, and His people should confidently ask Him to restore those who are suffering, **while trusting His wisdom and will**.

What to do: When suffering becomes serious, prolonged, or debilitating, do not suffer in isolation. Call the elder(s), ask the church to pray, and trust the Lord with the outcome, for **the Lord is who heals**.

3. When sin is involved, **confess it rather than hide it.**

“...and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another...” – James 5:15-16

God’s forgiveness is complete: He removes our sin, cleanses us, and no longer holds it against us. Confession brings sin into the light so we can walk in the grace Christ has secured.

What is true: James does not teach that every sickness is caused by a particular sin, but when sin is involved, it should be brought into the light **through honest confession rather than hidden in secrecy.**

What to do: Confess sin honestly, seek forgiveness where needed, and **invite trusted believers to help you walk faithfully.**

4. Pray for one another, because God really works **through the prayers of His people.**

“...pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.” – James 5:16

Prayer is not limited to elders; James broadens the responsibility to the whole church. Prayer is powerful not because of the person praying, but because **the God who hears prayer is powerful.**

What is true: God hears the prayers of His people and powerfully works **according to His wisdom and will.**

What to do: Bring the needs, sins, suffering, and struggles of fellow believers before God **in specific, persistent, believing prayer.**

THE MAIN IDEA

Main Idea: Whatever God’s people face—*suffering, joy, sickness, or sin*—they are to turn to God together in believing prayer, confident that He hears and powerfully acts according to His will.

LOOK TO CHRIST

We can pray with confidence because Jesus has opened the way to the Father. He is our great High Priest. Scripture tells us that He continues to intercede for His people. Our confidence is not in oil, elders, emotional intensity, or our ability to pray the right words. **Our confidence is in Christ.** And because Jesus rose from the dead, even when physical healing does not come now, every believer has the certain hope of final and complete restoration in the resurrection.

APPLICATION

- What have I complained about that I have barely prayed about?
- What blessing have I enjoyed without thanking God for it?
- Am I willing to ask others to pray for me when I am weak or sick?
- Is there a sin I am working harder to conceal than to kill?
- Have I quietly stopped believing that prayer really matters?
- Who am I specifically and persistently carrying before God right now?