

LAST DAYS INSTRUCTIONS (Part 2)

James 5:10-20

There are “eight” *last day’s instructions* in James chapter 5. In part one of *this message*, we covered three of them in (v.1-9). Today we will consider the next “five” last days instructions, in (v.10-20).

The next point of instruction is found in verses 10 and 11 – we must Persevere (v.10, 11)

10 “My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord — that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”

It’s tempting today to grow “weary” in the face of abounding wickedness. But Paul reminded us in **1 Corinthians 15:58b** - **“Your labor is not in vain in the Lord!”**

James offers an example of “suffering” and “patience,” by pointing out the prophets of old. Another example we find in scripture is that “great hall of faith,” in (Hebrews 11). We also count those listed there “blessed,” because we know the end of their story!

But what about our story? Will people look at your life and call you “blessed?” They will if we “persevere,” placing our hope, and confidence, in God’s “passion” and “mercy” toward us!

James points to Job as another example of perseverance. The end intended by God was to “bless” Job! God’s *intended end* for you is “blessing,” as well!

This is the “motivation” behind our perseverance! Job knowing this declared, *despite the great material, personal, and physical loss, he suffered.*

(Job 19:25-27) For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

The fifth point of instruction regards Integrity (v.12)

12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

Many of the Jews within the church at that time, were still engaged in the habit of “swearing” by heaven, etc., to add *greater* “validity” to their “yes” or “no.” In the [Book of Leviticus 19:12; 23:23](#) – addresses oaths; and warns against swearing falsely.

“Above all things,” – Why would James use this phrase? Because he understood the importance of our “talk” matching our “walk,” in these last days! The integrity of our “witness” is *essential* to its “effectiveness.” Your life is the best sermon people will ever see! Let your “yes” be yes, and your “no” be no!

(Psalm 15:1-4) Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, And works righteousness, And speaks the truth in his heart; He who does not backbite with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change.

There was a time when a man’s word was his “bond!” Those days are long gone! But it ought not to be so among the people of God! Character (honesty) matters, within the House of God!

(Colossians 3:9-10) Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Integrity (character/honesty) will sustain us in these “last days,” because integrity brightens the light of one’s witness, and enables us to draw near to God! A lack of “integrity” equals a lack of “intimacy” with God!

The sixth point of instruction, *for the last days*, involves [Caring \(v.13-16a\)](#) - James addresses two types of “care” here; self-care, (v.13) and corporate care (v.14-16a).

Self-Care: *If you are suffering, “pray.”* Throwing a “pity-party” is not a solution, *drawing near to God*, is!

(Psalm 40:1-3) I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth — Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the Lord.

Self-care *also* means not suppressing our “cheerfulness.” This sounds strange, but I have met believers who are afraid to “rejoice” for fear the devil might hear! Do not allow the devil to steal your “voice” through “doubt,” and “unbelief!” If you are “cheerful” express, it!

Why? Because “cheerfulness,” in Christ, is “contagious,” and glorifies God! (Psalm 40:3b). “Many will see it and will trust in the Lord.” *Cheerful – euthymeo: to put in good spirits; good courage, joyful.*

(Psalm 107:1-3) Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, And gathered out of the lands, From the east and from the west, From the north and from the south. My expression of “cheerfulness” is not based upon how I feel, but how “good God is!”

Corporate Care - (v.14-16a) 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. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

God is a “healer.” But notice James says the “prayer of faith,” *because prayer is an expression of faith, “will save,” not heal* the sick!” Because God is not only interested in our “physical health,” but our “spiritual health”, as well!

Thus, what James is presenting here is not a “magical formula” for healing, rather, *as one biblical scholar states; James is exhorting the sick among them to have an, “...unwavering confidence in God, a belief that he will do what is best, and a cheerful committing of the cause into his hands.” (Barnes' Notes)*

The “prayer of faith” will “save (sustain) the sick.” Save -sozo: to restore to health; to keep safe and sound. Some teach God “always” heals physically. But it has been my experience that God can heal instantaneously, and *also* over a period of time; and I have *also* seen God, *after praying for someone’s healing*, take home home! In either case, *for the believer*, it’s a “win,” “win!”

(Philippians 1:21) For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Yes, we “mourn, but not as those who have “no hope,” because Christ has conquered death and the grave!

The truth is we all, *inevitably*, die from something! Should God continue healing us that we might never physically die! (cult teaching) Lazarus was “healed,” but he also later, “died!” James is

conveying here, despite the “sickness” God will save us, “sustain us” or “heal” us, according to His will!

Note – “*The Lord will raise him up,*” not the elders! God will save us, according to His “power” and “His will” alone! Any “wise” doctor knows, he or she is “practicing”, but God knows what He’s doing!

(Isaiah 55:9) "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."

NOTE: Where there is “care” there will be “prayer,” which promotes an “atmosphere” for “healing” - *emotionally, mentally, and spiritually*. An “atmosphere” of openness and authenticity, a “safe place!”

“(v.16) Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed.”

Confession provides “correction” and warns against the “pitfalls” of sin! I have found “great comfort and hope” in the “confessions” of the apostle Paul.

He called himself, “Chief of sinners!” (1 Timothy 1:15); and “I have not arrived, yet I press on!” (Philp. 3:12). If Paul struggled, then there must be hope for me! Caring provides an atmosphere for healing in the “Body of Christ!”

The seventh point of instruction for the “last days” regards Prayer (v.16b -18)

(v.16b - 18) The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

James further stresses the importance of “prayer” here. We all know we should pray, but often times prayer is nothing more than “checking the box!” A dear friend sent this to me the other day, a word regarding “prayer.”

“We tend to pray enough to ease our conscience but not enough to make a difference.”

Prayer should change us! And it will when we seek the Lord with “all” of our heart! **(Jeremiah 29:13) And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.**

Prayer is the “life blood” of the believer, and the church. It is also an “effective” weapon from the spiritual arsenal of God; it moves mountains and overcomes those “spiritual powers” of dark places, which “rages” against the believer’s life!

(2 Corinthians 10:4-6) For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

James, regarding the fervent and effective “prayer, places the “cookies” on the bottom shelf; lest his readers (the average believer) think that “effective” prayer is only for the “spiritual elite!”
“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours!”

Thus, *spiritually speaking*, as Elijah called down rain, which produced “fruit” upon the earth, so you can *also* call down “rain” from heaven, in these “last days” in “prayer!” That there might be “everlasting fruit” on earth, to the glory of God!

The last point of instruction James commands here, has to do with, Restoration (v.19, 20)

(v.19, 20) 19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-4) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition.

The “great falling away” refers to believers, who will abandon faith in Christ, in the “last days,” in search of teachers who will “scratch” their “itching ears.” **2 Timothy 4:3, 4.** I believe we are living in such a time!

James mentions here those who “wander,” from the faith and those who are “lost” without Christ. Both are in “err.”

Our job, *in these last days*, is join God’s ministry of reconciliation, *not “condemnation,”* by proclaiming the “gospel of Christ!”

(2 Corinthians 5:18-19) Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Thus, let us not be quick to write off this generation, or believers who may “vote” differently than you! (Galatians 5:15) But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! (Wayne Hutchinson)

In this age of “great offense” let us not “panic,” but call to memory the “promises” of God! He is still working mightily today, and His “best work” is yet to come! The return of Christ!

(Romans 5:20b) But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

(Luke 17:3-4) Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

In last day's be a part of “ministry of reconciliation!”

CONCLUSION: “Eight” last days instructions. (1) Place your trust in God and not your gold (riches); (2) Be patient; (3) Do not grumble against one another (4) Persevere; (5) Have integrity; (6) Care for one another; (7) Pray; (8) Exercise the ministry of reconciliation.

Let us thrive and not merely survive in the Last Days.