



Week Eleven: James 5:13-20

“The Prayer of Faith”

Reading and Study Guide for the week
of Nov. 19-26, 2023

Memory Verse for the Book of James: *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” (James 1:22)*

This week, read James 5:13-20. Some questions to answer and think about this week with your family or Community Group:

1. What are some situations in life when most people pray?
2. What should a person do when he or she is in trouble? Why? What should a person do when he or she is happy? Why? What should a person do when he or she is sick? Why? ([5:14-15](#))
3. Why is prayer important? ([5:15](#))
4. What is the effect of a righteous person’s prayers? ([5:16](#))
5. Who is a good example of how God answers prayer? How? ([5:17-18](#))
6. What is a Christian’s responsibility toward a fellow believer who has wandered away from the truth? ([5:19](#))
7. What hinders Christians from praying with confidence?
8. What circumstances beyond our control can we affect through prayer?
9. What situation or person will you pray for in faith this week?

Life Application Bible Notes

[5:14, 15](#) James is referring to someone who is physically ill. In Scripture, oil was both a medicine (see the parable of the Good Samaritan in [Luke 10:30-37](#)) and a symbol of the Spirit of God (as used in anointing kings, see [1 Samuel 16:1-13](#)). Thus, oil can represent both the medical and the spiritual spheres of life. Christians should not separate the physical and the spiritual. Jesus Christ is Lord over both the body and the spirit.

[5:14, 15](#) People in the church are not alone. Members of Christ's body should be able to count on others for support and prayer, especially when they are sick or suffering. The elders should be on call to respond to the illness of any member, and the church should be sensitive to the needs of all its members.

[5:15](#) The "prayer offered in faith" does not refer to the faith of the sick person but to the faith of the people praying. God heals, faith doesn't, and all prayers are subject to God's will. But prayer is part of God's healing process.

5:16 Christ has made it possible for us to go directly to God for forgiveness. But confessing our sins to each other still has an important place in the life of the church. (1) If we have sinned against an individual, we must ask him or her to forgive us.

(2) If our sin has affected the church, we must confess it publicly.

(3) If we need loving support as we struggle with a sin, we should confess that sin to those who are able to provide that support.

(4) If we doubt God's forgiveness, after confessing a sin to him, we may wish to confess that sin to a fellow believer for assurance of God's pardon. In Christ's Kingdom, every believer is a priest to other believers ([1 Peter 2:9](#)).

5:16-18 The Christian's most powerful resource is communion with God through prayer. The results are often greater than we thought were possible. Some people see prayer as a last resort to be tried when all else fails. This approach is backward. Prayer should come first. Because God's power is infinitely greater than ours, it only makes sense to rely on it—especially because God encourages us to do so.

5:19, 20 Clearly this person who has wandered from the truth is a believer who has fallen into sin—one who is no longer living a life consistent with his or her beliefs. Christians disagree over whether or not it is possible for people to lose their salvation, but all agree that those who fall away from their faith are in serious trouble and need to repent. James urges Christians to help backsliders return to God. By taking the initiative, praying for the person, and acting in love, we can meet the person where he or she is and bring him or her back to God and his forgiveness.

5:20 The book of James emphasizes faith in action. Right living is the evidence and result of faith. The church must serve with compassion, speak lovingly and truthfully, live in obedience to God's commands, and love one another. The body of believers ought to be an example of heaven on earth, drawing people to Christ through love for God and each other. If we truly believe God's Word, we will *live* it day by day. God's Word is not merely something we read or think about, but something we do. Belief, faith, and trust must have hands and feet—ours!

James Study Guide questions and notes are from

