

— WEEKLY —
**BIBLE
STUDY**
NOTES

Insights and Life Lessons
From Jacob:
Study on the Book of James
Pt. 9 (James 5:12-19)

Scripture Memorization: Ephesians 5:15-17 “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Introduction: James begins this chapter with a strong rebuke of the ungodly rich, whose dependence on the materialism has led them to corruption and opposition from the Lord. Their sins of holding onto rotting food, moth-eaten garments and corroded precious metals have shown that they have put their trust in the temporary and it will bear witness against them. They have used fraud to gain wealth and power, and in the process cheated and damaged many of those working for them. The cries of those who have been harmed have reached the ears of the ones Lord of Sabaoth, the commander-in-chief of all heavenly armies, and He will be our defender. Because we know that the Lord of Sabaoth will fight for us, James encourages the righteous to hold on with a patience endurance. He likens us to that of a farmer, who knows how to wait for a long time, works while they’re waiting, depending on the Lord in spite of changing circumstances and trusting in the value of the harvest to come. This kind of patience endurance will establish our hearts in Christ, who is our eternal rock. This kind of patience will also affect our interactions with our brothers and sisters, causing us to walk through our hardships without complaints or judgment. Finally, James gives us some incredible examples like Elijah and Job, who through many difficulties kept their faith and showed us the mercy and compassion of the Lord.

— WEEKLY —
**BIBLE
STUDY**
NOTES

1. James 5:12 James' exhortation in speech

- a. Jewish people in this time made distinctions between “binding oaths” and “non-binding oaths”; the first one involves invoking God’s name and the other was like a way of “crossing your fingers behind your back” when telling a lie.
- b. James is condemning the second kind of oath that many were guilty of participating in.
- c. He is echoing Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:34-37. By not allowing your character to be confirmed by your words, you fall into judgment.

2. James 5:13-14 James' exhortation in behavior

- a. James addresses how believers should meet the needs that will arise within their spiritual community.
 - i. Those who are suffering need to pray. This is what we should be doing instead of the complaining that James spoke of in verse 9.
 - ii. Those who are cheerful need to sing psalms to the Lord. James is encouraging both to take it all to the Father.
 - iii. It is clear that the initiative lies with the person who is in need. They are the ones who are to call and seek out prayer and support from the leadership of the church.
 - iv. The elders are to pray and to use anointing oil in the name of the Lord.
 1. This is both as an emblem of the Holy Spirit’s presence and power, AND as ones who understand the best medical attention possible for the afflicted.

— WEEKLY —
**BIBLE
STUDY**
NOTES

2. “*Oil* was and is frequently used in the east as a means of cure in very dangerous diseases; and in Egypt it is often used in the cure of the *plague*. Even in Europe it has been tried with great success in the cure of *dropsy*. And *pure olive oil* is excellent for recent wounds and bruises; and I have seen it tried in this way with the best effects... St. James desires them to use *natural means* while looking to God for an especial blessing. And no wise man would direct otherwise.” (Clarke)

3. James 5:15-16 God’s answer to the prayers of His people.

- a. James is assuring believers that God’s plan of the spiritual work and healing, includes physical healing, emotional healing and spiritual healing. When we offer prayers of faith, we leave the results to God and He will do what is within His will to do.
- b. Our responsibility is to pray the prayers of faith, and not to grapple with how it will manifest in people’s lives.
- c. Confess: The root word literally means, “to say the same thing”, meaning that we agree to identify sin by its true name and admit that it is actually against God’s design and his mark for our lives.
- d. Mutual confession and prayer bring healing, both physically and spiritually. As we confess to one another, we break the power of secret sin which can cause us to be isolated from each other.
 - i. Confession should be made to the one sinned against. “Most Christians display a preference for confession in secret before God, even concerning matters which involve other people. To confess to God seems to them to be the easiest way out. If offenders were really conscious of the presence of God, even secret confession of private sin would have a good effect. Alas, most offenders merely commune with themselves instead of

— WEEKLY —
**BIBLE
STUDY**
NOTES

making contact with God, who refuses their prayers under certain conditions. In the words of our Lord, it is clear that sin involving another person should be confessed to that person.” (Orr)

- ii. Public confession must be discrete. Often the confession needs to be no more than what is necessary to enlist prayer. It can be enough to say publicly, “Pray for me, I need victory over my besetting sin.” It would be wrong to go into more detail, but saying this much is important. It keeps us from being “let’s pretend Christians” who act as if everything is fine when it isn’t. “Almost all sexual transgressions are either secret or private and should be so confessed. A burden too great to bear may be shared with a pastor or doctor or a friend of the same sex. Scripture discourages even the naming of immorality among believers, and declares that it is a shame even to speak of things done in secret by the immoral.” (Orr)
- iii. Distinguish between secret sins and those which directly affect others. Orr gives a good principle: “If you sin secretly, confess secretly, admitting publicly that you need the victory but keeping details to yourself. If you sin openly confess openly to remove stumbling blocks from those whom you have hindered. If you have sinned spiritually (prayerlessness, lovelessness, and unbelief as well as their offspring, criticism, etc.) then confess to the church that you have been a hindrance.” (J. Edwin Orr)
- iv. Confession is often made to people but it is actually before God. As you are confessing your sins to the Father in the presence of people, your spiritual community prays that you receive the forgiveness God has granted you through grace.

— WEEKLY —
**BIBLE
STUDY**
NOTES

- v. Confession should be appropriately specific. “When open confession of sin is appropriate – more than the public stating of spiritual need, but confessing open sin or sin against the church – it must be *specific*. ‘If I made any mistakes I’m sorry’ is no confession of sin at all. You sinned specifically, so confess specifically. It costs nothing for a church member to admit in a prayer meeting: ‘I am not what I ought to be.’ It costs no more to say: ‘I ought to be a better Christian.’ It costs something to say: ‘I have been a trouble-maker in this church.’ It costs something to say: ‘I have had bitterness of heart towards certain leaders, to whom I shall definitely apologise.’” (Orr, *Full Surrender*)
- vi. Confession must have honesty and integrity. “If we confess with no real intention of battling the sin, our confession isn’t thorough and it mocks God. The story is told of an Irishman who confessed to his priest that he had stolen two bags of potatoes. The priest had heard the gossip around town and said to the man, ‘Mike, I heard it was only one bag of potatoes stolen from the market.’ The Irishman replied, ‘That’s true Father, but it was so easy that I plan on taking another tomorrow night.’ *By all means, avoid phony confession – confession without true brokenness or sorrow. If it isn’t deeply real, it isn’t any good.*” (Guzik)
- vii. There is a great responsibility for those who have heard the confession. When we participate in the confession process, we must respond from a Kingdom perspective of love, prayers and support. There should be no room for gossip or sharing someone’s confidential business with others.
- viii. Every real and authentic revival will include deep and genuine confession of sin. Acts 19:17-20.

— WEEKLY —
**BIBLE
STUDY**
NOTES

- e. The result of confessing and praying for one another is a healing that we cannot experience apart from it.
 - f. When fervent prayers, ones that involve suffering, ones that involve those who are sick and for those who are sinning, are offered to God, they will be effective.
 - i. Fervent: it is the word that means strong; literally it can read, “very strong is the supplication of a righteous man, energizing.” (Meyer)
 - ii. Many times, prayers aren’t effective because they are weakly offered, we must gain God’s heart on a matter, and then fervently petition Him for things He has made fervent for.
 - iii. A righteous person is one who stands in the sacrifice of what Jesus accomplished. Our righteousness is only valid because of the gift of grace we have received on the cross.
 - iv. Avails- This means that our prayers will be useful or advantageous. Our fervent prayers will produce a benefit when we take advantage of the opportunity to remind God of His promises.
- 4. James 5:17-18** Elijah as our example.
- a. Elijah is an example for us of someone who’s fervent prayers was answered by God.
 - b. Prayed earnestly- this literally means that he prayed with prayer.
 - c. Elijah was a man, just like us. We have the same opportunity to partner with God and to see His kingdom on Earth.

— WEEKLY —
**BIBLE
STUDY**
NOTES

5. James 5:19-20 Helping a sinning brother or sister.

- a. James calls those who need to be confronted concerning their sins, “wanderers from the truth”, because this is the place where most of us find ourselves.
- b. When James says, “if anyone among you”, it is obvious that he is speaking to those who has been walking with Jesus, who may need to deal with the sins that have veered them off track and need to confess.
- c. We are our brother’s keepers and that there are times that God will use the spiritual community to bring fellow believers back into alignment with Him.
 - i. As His earthen vessels, who contain the glory of God, it brings His glory to earth when He uses broken and imperfect people to bring healing to broken and imperfect people.
 - ii. When we refuse to allow God to use us to bring healing and reconciliation to the earth, we steal the glory He wanted revealed in people and in situations.
 - iii. “Most persons have been convinced by the pious conversation of sisters, by the holy example of mothers, by the minister, by the Sabbath-school, or by the reading of tracts or perusing Scripture. Let us not therefore believe that God will often work without instruments; let us not sit down silently and say, ‘God will do his own work.’ It is quite true he will; but then he does his work by using his children as instruments.” (Spurgeon)
- d. There is a blessing for those of us who are bold enough to speak the truth in love to someone who has been led astray.

— WEEKLY —
**BIBLE
STUDY**
NOTES

- i. “So the homily ends – abruptly, even more abruptly than the First Epistle of John, without any closing word of farewell to the readers, abruptly but not ineffectively. The Wisdom writings on which it is modeled end as suddenly.” (Moffatt)
- ii. James concludes with this because this is exactly what he has endeavored to do through this challenging letter – to confront those who have wandered from a living faith, endeavoring to save their souls from death, by demanding that they not only hear the word, but do it, because a living faith will have its proof. (Guzik)