



Pointers and questions on the book of
James

Session 10

5:13-20

The Prayer of Faith

Summary

- 5:13** Our response to trouble should be prayer; our response to happiness should be praise.
- 5:14-16a** Our response to sickness should be to request the elders to pray and anoint us with oil for our healing. We should also look beyond the physical symptoms and see if there is any sin that needs dealing with and which may be a contributory factor to our sickness.
- 5:16b-18** We must not underestimate the power of prayer. Elijah's experience is related for our encouragement in this—and we should not put him in a super-category of godliness; he was just like us.
- 5:19-20** Out of concern for one another as Christians we should help one another stay in the path of God's will. We should actively steer each other away from the sin that can so often bring sickness in its wake.

Questions to get you thinking

1. It's normal to pray when we're in trouble (v13). Do you think God sometimes allows trouble to come our way when we are growing careless about prayer?
2. What is the significance of the elders anointing the sick with oil as well as praying for them? (v14)
3. Why do you think James twice mentions healing from sickness and the forgiveness of sins in the same sentence? (v15-16a)
4. Is *all* sickness sin-related? See Matthew 9:1-7; John 9:1-3.
5. Is prayer for the sick limited to the elders? (v14, 16)
6. Is v15 a guarantee that healing will automatically take place every time?
7. What cautions would be sensible to observe in confessing our sins to one another? (v16)
8. Does v16 justify the Roman Catholic practice of the 'confessional' where a person confesses to a priest, who then dispenses a penance and pronounces absolution? Give reasons for your answer.
9. What has righteousness got to do with prayer? (v16b)
10. Refresh your understanding of the incident in the life of Elijah that James refers to (v17). See 1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-46.
11. How is it that Christians sometimes end up a long way from 'the truth' of the gospel and Christian living? (v19)
12. How do you think we should go about helping someone in this condition? (v19-20)

