

FAITH + WORKS

JAMES



# James 5:13–15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

- We can and should pray in every circumstance at every moment.
- In the Jewish faith, the three primary spiritual disciplines were prayer, almsgiving and fasting
- This is why Jesus addressed those three practices in the Sermon on the Mount when He talked about doing all spiritual practices with the right motivation in our hearts.



# James 5:13–15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

- Jesus said that hypocrites love to pray standing on the street corners, so they look righteous to other people, but they don't really live out their faith.
- Those who really live in fellowship with Jesus see prayer in a completely different way.
- Prayer is a constant part of our lives, as essential as food, as regular as breathing.



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# James 5:13–15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

- James's example of two opposite situations in which we should pray – when we are suffering and when we are cheerful – says essentially the same thing.
- We should pray in every circumstance of our lives because staying in constant communication and communion with God is how we can make it through every circumstance with the peace and joy of the Spirit.



# James 5:13–15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

- Prayer connects us to God in a supernatural way that can't fully be explained by human natural logic; prayer strengthens our communion with God.
- It's like the way we connect with other people by spending quality time with them, but it's even deeper than that because God knows our every thought and His Spirit lives inside us.



# James 5:13–15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

- We can't put on a façade with God; He knows us even better than we know ourselves. God already knows us fully, but spending time with Him in prayer and other spiritual disciplines helps us know Him more and more over time.
- Not just know about Him but know Him in personal relationship. It's not just talking to God and listening to Him; it's connecting with Him.



# James 5:13–15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

- Jesus is the head, and we are His body (1 Corinthians 12). Jesus is the vine; we are the branches (John 15).
- Jesus is the cornerstone; we are the living stones built upon Him.
- Scripture also uses the term “fellowship” with Christ – the spiritual and communal bond between believers and the triune God, and with one another through Christ.



# James 5:13–15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

- Jesus called the Holy Spirit “the Advocate” or “Helper,” the Greek word *parakletos*, which means “one who comes alongside.”
- The role of the Advocate is to teach, lead, guide, help, comfort, and intercede for us. But the literal meaning of the word, “to come alongside,” gives us excellent imagery for imagining our relationship with Him in prayer.



# James 5:13–15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

- The Spirit dwells within us, but we can also imagine Him coming alongside us and walking with us through our day, like an ideal best friend, a perfect life coach, and a loving father, all rolled into one.
- Imagining Jesus walking right next to us all day long can help us understand what it is like to pray without ceasing.



# James 5:13–15, 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

- God knows what we need even more than we do, so we should come to Him no matter what the circumstance is.
- Our loving heavenly Father is ready and able to help us with whatever we need in the moment. If we need wisdom, He will give it generously (James 1:5). If we are suffering, He will comfort us, teach us, grow us through it, and use our suffering for our good (Psalm 147:3; Romans 5:3–5).



# James 5:14–18, John 15:1–7

- Prayer is powerful because it connects us to God's power.
- James started by telling the people to pray in all circumstances, both suffering and joy.
- But then he zeroed in on one particular time it is important to pray – when we are sick.



# James 5:14–18, John 15:1–7

- Some people have misunderstood or misused this passage of Scripture to teach that physical healing is always just a prayer away, if only we do it right, with enough faith and the right kind of anointing oil.
- But we know from experience that God doesn't always physically heal people when we ask.



# James 5:14–18, John 15:1–7

- The word used here in James for “sick” doesn’t necessarily mean physical sickness or disease.
- It literally means “weakness,” which can refer to physical illness, but typically in the epistles, it refers to a weak faith or weak conscience (Romans 6:19; 14:1).
- In verse 15, “sick person” also means more generally “weak” or “weary.”



# James 5:14–18, John 15:1–7

- Remembering the historical context, James wasn't referring here to physical illness, but those who had grown weary in the midst of suffering.
- Those who were feeling morally or spiritually weak. They were to call for the elders to pray for them; church leaders were instructed to encourage the timid and help the weak (1 Thessalonians 5:14).



# James 5:14–18, John 15:1–7

- The elders were to pray and anoint the weak person with oil. In Greek culture, oil was used for medicine, perfume, religious rituals, and even to enhance performance in sports.
- But in the Bible, a special ceremonial anointing oil was used to symbolize the presence of the Holy Spirit upon someone when they were set apart for a sacred task.



# James 5:14–18, John 15:1–7

- But oil could also be used in a common everyday way for grooming, refreshment or a way of bestowing honor.
- The term for anoint here refers more to the everyday usage.
- The elders weren't using this oil for supernatural physical healing, but for spiritual strengthening and refreshment.



# James 5:14–18, John 15:1–7

- The fact that it was spiritual, not physical, healing is also supported by James saying the weak person's sins would be forgiven.
- This is not a statement that physical illness is always the result of sin in someone's life – Jesus denounced that false belief (John 9:3).



# James 5:14–18, John 15:1–7

- James asked the elders to pray for the weak because the elders were set apart for the Lord's service and called to strengthening the weak of their flock.
- But this doesn't mean their prayers were more powerful than the average believer. James said the prayers of every "righteous person" have great power (verse 16).



# James 5:14–18, John 15:1–7

- James told the people to confess their sins to one another and pray for one another.
- Healthy Christian community is characterized by love, concern and transparency.
- The kind of involvement James describes here will certainly help believers not to give in to discouragement and fall into the traps of the Enemy.



# James 5:19–20

- Followers of Jesus have a heart to bring back those who wander away.
- In these last two verses, James closes with an encouragement to his readers to do for each other what he has been doing for them in this letter – correct them in the ways they have wandered astray and lead the back to the narrow path.



# James 5:19–20

- The word here for wandering isn't just an accidental wandering away, as if the sheep just took a wrong turn. The word more literally means being “caused to wander,” “led astray,” or “deceived” (Luke 15:1-7).
- Scripture even describes Satan's work as “the snare of the devil,” a trap he sets for us; to capture us so we will do his will instead of God's will (2 Timothy 2:26).



# James 5:19–20

- This imagery should give us compassion for those who have gone astray rather than judging them for their choices in a holier-than-thou kind of way. Jude told us to have mercy on those who doubt.
- James tells us to seek after those who have been led astray, not just write them off. Jesus told us to show mercy to others as we have been shown mercy by God (Matthew 18:21–35).



# James 5:19–20

- Earlier in the letter, James said to “judge” others by the law of freedom, showing mercy not condemnation (James 2:12-13).
- Those who have wandered aren’t the Enemy; they are victims of the Enemy.
- Our battle isn’t against people, but the spiritual forces of wickedness (Ephesians 6:10–12).



# James 5:19–20

- When we see Christians who have wandered astray as victims of Satan's traps, snares and deceptions, our heart toward them is changed. It helps us to see them as Jesus sees them – as His beloved child who has been led astray.
- Instead of coldly judging them for their choices, we are concerned for them because they are going in the way that leads to death, not life.



# James 5:19–20

- Because the way of sin leads to destruction – not only eternally but in this life.
- But the way of Christ is the way to life – not only eternally, but true flourishing in this life (John 10:10).
- James said bringing them back will save their souls from death.



# James 5:19–20

- When Jesus talked about “removing the speck” from our brother’s eye in the Sermon on the Mount, He was very clear that we had to first remove the “log” from our own eye (Matthew 7:3–5).
- Both Jesus and James condemned this hypocritical kind of critique of other people’s sin without addressing your own (James 4:11–12).



# James 5:19–20

- Before we try to correct someone else who has wandered away, we need to be sure we are qualified to do so – that we have taken the log from our own eyes, so we can see clearly to guide them back to the right path.
- And we need to check our motivations – that we are doing it with a heart of love and restoration rather than out of judgment, condemnation and superiority.



# James 5:19–20

- Those who are doing it from this motivation with the heart of Jesus for His people should be rebuking or correcting sin in someone's life (Ephesians 4:1-3; Galatians 6:1-2)
- But if you are doing it from this motivation, with this heart, the call from James is clear – don't just let people wander off – go after them and bring them back.




# James 5:19–20

- It is our responsibility to sharpen each other as iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17) and provoke each other to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24) and rebuke and correct each other with the Word (2 Timothy 3:16).
- Not out of judgment, but out of love.
- Love them enough to bring them back.



# Ask Kerby



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Before Jesus turned water into wine, he said it wasn't His time. How do we reconcile that?



# My Hour Has Not Yet Come

- Jesus timed elements of His ministry carefully, though people often seemed to challenge His timing.
- Very early in His ministry, Mary requested that Jesus perform a miracle at a wedding at Cana.
- Jesus responded by saying, “My hour has not yet come” (John 2:4).



# My Hour Has Not Yet Come

- But immediately after that, He performs a miracle, which John calls “the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory” (John 2:11).
- Jesus’ words was working on a divine schedule.
- He was managing the pace at which people would be confronted with the reality of who He was.



# My Hour Has Not Yet Come

- When Mary suggested that Jesus do something at the wedding, she likely wanted a more public miracle that everyone could see and glory in.
- Jesus knew it was not time for that yet.
- He did perform a miracle, but discreetly, and only a select group of people saw it.



# My Hour Has Not Yet Come

- Jesus knew His message that the kingdom of God was near (Matthew 4:17) would ultimately be rejected.
- He knew that He would die (Matthew 12:40–41) to pay for sin and to provide all who believe in Him with eternal life (John 5:24; 6:47) and entrance into His coming kingdom (Matthew 5:20, 48; 6:33).



# My Hour Has Not Yet Come

- On other occasions when Jesus performed miracles, He instructed those who were blessed by them not to broadcast what He had done (Matthew 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 17:9).
- When Jesus said to Mary, “My hour has not yet come,” but then performed the miracle anyway, He demonstrated respect and compassion for Mary, but He also prioritized the scheduling in which the work of God was to be done.