

05.22.11 / James 5:1-6 and 13-20

***Please Note: The Curriculum Guide for James 5:1-6 can be found at the following site, as it was originally going to be preached on Sunday, 5/8/11:

www.vintage21.com/community-groups/curriculum-guides/

The following guide covers James 5:13-20, which is primarily about prayer. As such, I would suggest a focus on prayer as you gather. This guide offers some very practical suggestions for how to do this.***

Prayer and Praise**PRAYER**

In verse 13, “suffering” refers to those who are experiencing difficulties that are not the result of being in personal sin. During these times, we should pray for the wisdom of God (James 1:2-5) that leads to steadfastness.

- Ask the members of the group to share where they are suffering in this way – go deep, dare to be personal
- PRAY for one another (it might be good to stop and pray for each person after he/she shares with the group)

Sometimes we suffer as a direct result of our being in sin. This suffering may be mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual. In this passage, while James is not promising physical healing through prayer, He is calling us to righteousness, to a spiritual healing that results from the forgiveness of sin. Furthermore, when we are exhibiting the righteousness of God, we will pray in accordance with the Lord’s will, which is good and perfect. 1 John 5:14-15 says this: “And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.” As we are made more and more like Christ, our prayers should more and more reflect the will of God Himself. We are made righteous by Christ alone, not by any work of our own, and so if our prayers are in line with the Lord’s will, all credit belongs to Jesus for bringing our will and prayers into alignment with the Father’s. Because the elders of the church are called to be Godly men who are constantly seeking the will of the Lord, calling upon them to pray is a healthy thing to do, for in so doing, you should hear prayers that are in line with the Lord’s will, whether it be physical healing, spiritual healing, or both. These prayers are powerful, and one of the ways that they have power is by being instructive and revealing to those who hear them. It should be noted that in this day and age, our well-being is not wrapped up in our physical state, but rather our spiritual reality in Christ. This is how we can be made well and still remain physically ill. Where sickness is caused by sin, the confession and forgiveness of our sin may in fact bring physical healing, but we can be sure that the forgiveness of our sin, regardless of the physical outcome, is the greater gift, as it ushers us into union with God for all of eternity. These bodies of ours will die in time no matter the physical healing that takes place (or doesn’t) in the short term, and it is only in Christ that we will see full restoration. James here is speaking of a spiritual healing that results from God’s forgiving work.

- Ask the members of the group where they are experiencing sickness of some sort (mental, emotional, physical, or spiritual)
- Encourage them to seek the prayer of the elders of the church (it’s best to do so on a campus level; i.e. if someone goes to Raleigh West, have them seek out the pastors at Raleigh West, for example)
- Our righteousness comes from Christ alone – pray as a group for the righteousness of God to be manifested in your lives, that as a group you may see and pray in accordance with the will of God

Verse 16 calls us to confess our sins to one another and to pray for one another, that we might be healed. Sin causes sickness, disease, and upset at all levels: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. As we confess our sins to one another and pray in accordance with the Lord's will, we taste Christ's freedom from these sins.

- If appropriate, break up into groups of men and women, and encourage your group to confess sin to one another, not as an act of penance, but as a step toward FREEDOM and healing from these sins
- Have a time of confession and prayer

SINGING PRAISE

In verse 13 we see that the cheerful are to sing praises to God! Consider taking some time to share with one another where you are experiencing the Lord's joy and to then sing a song or two that praises Him – perhaps someone in your group could lead everyone in singing.

- Ask the members of the group to share where they are experiencing deep joy in Christ
- SING PRAISES to God as a group

Sources

- Prayer
- The Bible Exposition Commentary
- The Bible Knowledge Commentary
- The Bible Reader's Companion