

James 5:10-20

Day 1

Perseverance and Integrity. Read James 5:10-12

1. What example of patience did James give in 5:10? What does the phrase “*who spoke in the name of the Lord*” say about their suffering?

- What happened to many prophets? Hebrews 11:32-36

2. How did James view this suffering? 5:11a (Cross-ref. 1:2)

- What did Jesus say about suffering? Matthew 5:10-12

Digging Deeper

How did Paul view suffering? Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17

FYI: “ ‘To be blessed’ is not, of course, the same as being happy...: ‘happiness’ normally suggests a subjective, emotional reaction; ‘blessing’ is the objective, unalterable approval and reward of God.” - Douglas Moo (171)

3. Which amazing perseverance did Job display? See Job 6:10

- What did the Lord do for Job? 5:11b Why? (Cross-ref. 1:12)

FYI: “ ‘The great fact about [Job] is that in spite of all the agonizing questionings which tore at his heart, he never lost his faith in God. “*Though He slay me; yet I will hope in Him*” (Job 13:15). “*My witness is in heaven, and He that vouches for me is on high*” (Job 16:19). “*I know that my redeemer lives*” (Job 19:25). The very greatness of Job lies in the fact that in spite of everything which tore at his heart, he never lost his grip on faith and his grip on God. Job’s faith is no groveling, passive, unquestioning submission; Job struggled and questioned, and sometimes even defied, but the flame of his faith was never extinguished in his heart.’ (Barclay)

[Job’s] primary blessings were spiritual, for Job attained a profound humility (42:1-6)...Along with humility, Job received spiritual insight (42:5)...Job saw God as he had never seen Him before...Job’s secondary blessings were material. In fact, God blessed him with outward prosperity even more than previously, so that all the East could see God’s pleasure in Job [42:12-16]...We must not allow ourselves to be persuaded by men or devils to think ill of God – that God is cold. He has a father’s heart, even when He allows darkness to come. God cannot be unkind to His children...If we persevere we will be ‘blessed,’ for we will draw near to Him and we will see Him as never before, and our end is sure to be good. *The Lord is good!*” - R. Kent Hughes (239-241)

Integrity

4. What final aspect concerning the tongue did James address? 5:12

FYI: Swear NT:3660 *omnuo*; to swear, i.e. take (or declare on) oath

“Faith that perseveres is trustworthy in speech. The words from our mouths should be so consistent and dependable that they guarantee reliability.” - David Platt

5. In the light of James's command in 5:12, what would you say about some of the pressures believers may have been under?

FYI: "We don't know enough about the historical situation to determine exactly why they are taking oaths. We do know, however, that his Jewish Christian readers are caught between Jewish and Gentile persecutors. They live under extreme religious, cultural, and economic pressures to deny Christ in their words or deeds."

- Charles Swindoll (114)

"James is not forbidding a believer from taking an oath in court or invoking God as witness to some significant statement (see 1 Thess. 2:5). Instead he is prohibiting the ancient practice of appealing to a variety of different objects to confirm the veracity of one's statement. This practice was extremely close to idolatry, for it implied that such objects contained spirits."

- The Nelson Study Bible (2111)

"What is referred to in Matthew [5:34-37] and James is the light, casual use of oaths in informal conversation--not formal oaths in such places as courts of law. God himself is said to have taken an oath (Ps 110:4), and Paul sometimes called God to witness (2Cor 1:21; Gal 1:20)."

- The Expositor's Bible Commentary

6. Underline what is said about lying.

- Proverbs 6:16-19 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community. NIV
- John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. NIV
- Proverbs 15:4 The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.
- Proverbs 12:22 The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy. NIV

Digging Deeper

What is said about Jesus and the truth?
John 1:14,17; 14:6;
18:7

7. How destructive do you think it can be, to others and to us, when we tell "little white lies", "stretch the truth" or deceive by *not* saying something, etc.? Explain.

Applying the Word: How has a belief in the Lord's "compassion and mercy" helped you persevere through a difficult situation? How were you blessed by that experience?

Day 2

Prayer. Read James 5:13-18

8. What instruction did James give (5:13-15) for the ups and downs in our life?

- In trouble/afflictions/suffering -
 - What do prayers look like when we are in trouble? What makes it difficult to pray when you are hurting? Why do you think God wants us to pray when we are suffering?
- In happiness -
 - How many of us sing when we are happy (and why does James even care)? (See also Colossians 3:16)
 - What does singing praise do for us? For those people near us? In what sense can singing praise be a prayer?
- In sickness -
 - What were the steps James laid out when praying for the sick? 5:14 (See Mark 6:13)
 - What outcomes did James describe? 5:15 Who heals, who forgives?

FYI: In the name of the Lord "Praying in the name of the Lord means praying according to His will. This in turn means accepting His plan and purpose."
- Charles Swindoll (119)

"A true prayer of faith always includes within it a tacit acknowledgment of God's sovereignty in all matters... Paul's own prayer for his healing, offered three times, was not answered; God had a purpose in allowing the 'thorn in the flesh'...to remain (2 Cor. 12:7-9)."
- Douglas Moo (182,186)

"Oil was one of the common medicines of biblical times. See Isaiah 1:6 and Luke 10:34."
- Expositor's Bible Commentary

"There is no indication that calling the elders excludes the use of a physician or medicine."
- The Nelson Study Bible (2111)

5:15 "**Sick** in this verse is different from both 'afflicted' in James 5:13 and 'sick' in James 5:14. Used elsewhere only in Hebrews 12:3 and Revelation 2:3, it means 'wearied.' In context, it must refer to the depression induced by the guilt of his sin. This can only be relieved...by repentant confession of his specific sin to God (I John 1:9), then to the church and its elders. The latter can then pray for him in faith...Notice that nothing in the context mentions the need for someone with the gift of healing, though one or more of the elders (at least in apostolic times, before the completion of the New Testament) may well have had such a gift (to be used, however, in evangelizing, rather than in a case such as the one described here).

if. If here means 'since.' The reason for the illness in such a case is unconfessed sin that has injured the church and its ministry."
- Henry Morris

9. What should we do for each other when we sin? 5:16 (To whom are we to confess our sins?)

- What health benefits does confession bring to the person committing the offense? What health benefits do you think the compassion, understanding, and prayers of another person can have?

FYI: 5:16 Faults/sins "is a different word than '*sins*' in James 5:15, which primarily refers to 'offenses' or 'trespasses.' It is used either for offenses against God or against fellow men. The latter are evidently meant here, for the admonition here is to confess such offenses to the individual person or persons we have offended. Once the offenses are confessed, then it is fitting to pray for whatever healing is needed." - Henry Morris

Healed Strong's NT:2390; *iaomai* to cure, heal, to make whole, to free from errors and sins, to bring about (one's) salvation

"Confession of sin, says James, can lead to healing (v. 16). On the other hand, James also makes it clear that not all sickness is caused by sin. The idea that there must be a one-to-one correspondence between sin and sickness is clearly rejected in Scripture (cf. Job; John 9:2-3)." - Douglas Moo (186)

"The emphasis is on praying... the elders play a special role in the case of someone who is bedridden and cannot gather together with the church, but the emphasis in verse 16 is on praying with one another and for one another. No special power is reserved for the elders: the power is in God, and it is available to the praying church. Care and prayer for one another are not just intended to happen within the context of leadership in the church but in the context of the church as a whole..."

Interestingly, this is the only verse in the New Testament that commands believers to confess their sins to one another (Moo, James, 246), and this command is given in the context of praying for the healing of one another. ...The implication is that if a person has sinned against a brother, he should confess the sin to him." - David Platt

10. Who is the righteous person (5:16) James is referring to? See 2 Corinthians 5:21

- What power does prayer have? 5:16b

FYI: Powerful/fervent Strong's NT:1754 *energeo*; to be active, efficient

effective/accomplish much Strong's NT:2480 *ischuo*; to have (or exercise) force (literally or figuratively)

"The **righteous man** simply designates one who is whole-heartedly committed to God and sincerely seeking to do His will." - Douglas Moo (187)

Food for Thought: "Are there dangers to mutual confession? Yes, and they are substantial. Here are some guidelines.

First, confession should generally be made to an individual. There are exceptions, of course – as, for example when a sin has been against the whole group...

Second, if the sin has been against a fellow Christian, it is to that person that we must make confession...

Third, if the sin is not against a person, and if it is such that we need to confess it and gain spiritual counsel and support, we must go to a mature Christian. This cannot be stressed enough! An immature Christian should not be expected to carry such burdens...

Fourth, the confession must be concrete, not amorphous. This is not to suggest, however, that all the lurid details be shared...

Fifth, confessing sins to one another is not a law, but a divinely given help and is to be practiced only as God directs." - R. Kent Hughes (266,267)

11. What example of prayer did James give? 5:17,18 Why do you think James pointed out that Elijah's character is "*just like*" ours?

- Why do you think James put a strong emphasis on prayer at the end of his letter?

Digging Deeper

For teaching about persistent prayer, see: Luke 11:5-9

Luke 18:1-7

Applying the Word: *How has your Insights group's prayers impacted your life? What is one of the most significant prayers someone has prayed for you?*

What emotion response and memories does the word "confession" bring? Could confession ever become a joy to you? What would it take for that to happen?

Day 3

Read James 5:19,20

12. What problem did James address in 5:19?

FYI: wander/err Strong's NT:4105 *planao*; to (properly, cause to) roam (from safety, truth, or virtue): KJV - go astray, deceive, err, seduce, wander, be out of the way.

"People can stray from the truth in a couple of ways. They can wander doctrinally; that is, they can err in their beliefs. But they can also stray from the truth practically, failing to align their practice with their profession...Jewish believers viewed life as heading in one of two trajectories, the path of life or the path of death."
- Charles Swindoll (127)

"This truth is something that is to be 'done' as well as believed...And for James, of course, correct doctrine cannot be separated from correct behavior. What the mind thinks, and the mouth confesses, the body must do - anything less is worldly, sinful 'double-mindedness'...Not only should the readers of James 'do' the words he has written; they should be deeply concerned to see that others 'do' them also."
- Douglas Moo (189,190)

13. Why is turning someone from error so important? 5:20 (See 1 Peter 4:8)

- What advice did Paul give Timothy? 1 Timothy 4:16
- Do you think James was speaking literally or figuratively about death? (Cross-ref James 1:15)

FYI: Path/way Strong's NT:3598 *hodos*; a road; by implication a progress (the route, act or distance); a mode or means

14. How is correction to be done?

☐ Galatians 6:1

- 2 Thessalonians 3:14,15
- Matthew 18:15,16

15. How could straying just a little from the truth lead to a *multitude* of sins?

- What do you think the prayers for a person who has strayed should look like?

FYI: "James repeatedly addresses his hearers as 'brothers,' which indicates that... he is referring to the family of faith gathered together. Faith is lived out together, not in isolation. Whether it is walking through trials, seeking after wisdom, using our tongues, or caring for the poor, it all happens in the context of the body of Christ...Faith that works is ultimately aimed toward great glory to Christ."
- David Platt

"I think it's fitting that James ends his letter with this exhortation to look for wayward saints. His entire book has been a plea to make sure outward actions accompany inward convictions, that our words match our deeds, that real faith produces genuine works...James's entire letter exemplified his own call to restore wayward saints to the path of life."
- Charles Swindoll (129)

16. What issues did James connect with prayer?

- 1:5,6
- 4:2-3
- 5:13
- 5:14
- 5:16

Applying the Word: When have you received gentle and constructive correction from another believer? How did they make it feel loving/encouraging? From what did that correction save you?

Questions for small group discussion:

- *If you were to recommend the letter of James to another person, what would you give as some of the highlights?*
- *What did you learn about struggles that believers faced right from the start?*
- *What did you take away about faith?*
- *About works?*
- *About prayer?*
- *How has God convicted or encouraged you through this study?*
- *Is there a prayer of commitment you would like to pray?*

Kensington Church Statement on Healings

When it comes to the powerful ways that the Holy Spirit moves in the hearts and lives of people, there is a wide and diverse understanding. The Christian faith is divided into camps and tribes that have varying interpretations of Scripture, Experience, and Tradition that create their local boundaries and expression.

At Kensington, we believe that God's Spirit is powerful and boundless. The Spirit can do what it chooses in the life of any of us (*John 3:6-8, Romans 8:11*). We depend on the Spirit for comfort in time of need, conviction of sin, affirmation of the truth of Scripture, daily guidance and much more (*Luke 24:45, John 14:16-17, John 16:18*).

At the same time, we are cautious about what many would call the Sign Gifts of the Holy Spirit - miracles, healing, utterances in other tongues, and words of knowledge or prophecy (*1 Corinthians 12:7-11*). These manifestations tend to be, in our church context and tradition, more confusing than helpful. Scripture indicates that public worship should be in order, peaceful, and profitable to encourage people (*1 Corinthians 14:26-33*).

We will remain in a posture of learning and seeking God - Father, Son and Spirit (*1 John 2:19-27, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6*). We will also, as Jesus instructed, primarily celebrate the power of the gospel (*Luke 10:19-20*). We are open to being powerfully moved because God is capable of anything (*Matthew 19:26*). As well, we will attempt to maintain a healthy balance of experience that is governed by Scripture and the discernment of our elders and teaching pastors, particularly in the context of our public services (*2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 Peter 5:1-5*).

For further study refer to the booklet: Ministry and the Miraculous: A Case Study at Fuller Theological Seminary Paperback – October, 1992 by Lewis B. Smedes

This case study sums up Kensington's views regarding these matters.

Digging Even Deeper on Prayer and Healing

The Healing Ministry of Jesus.

1. How many people did Jesus heal in:
 - John 5:1-14
 - Matthew 8:16
2. What happened in His hometown? Matthew 13:58
3. Underline what Jesus' works showed:
 - John 5:36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. KJV
 - John 10:38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. KJV
4. Why do you think Jesus didn't heal everyone in the world during His time on earth?
5. Why is there suffering, disease and death? Romans 5:12
6. What will happen to these some day? 1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 21:4,5

The Healing Ministry of the Apostles.

7. What kind of "signs and wonders" were the apostles able to perform?
 - Acts 5:12
 - Acts 9:37-42
 - Acts 19:11,12

8. Why were they given these healing abilities? Hebrews 2:3,4; 2 Corinthians 12:12

Food for Thought: "In the New Testament period, this special sign gift was given to confirm God's new work of revelation in the church, and it was specifically connected with the foundational work during the time of the apostles and prophets."
– Charles Swindoll (122)

9. What happened later in Paul's ministry? What do you learn from his experiences and advice?

- 1 Timothy 5:23
- 2 Timothy 4:20
- Philippians 2:25-27