

James 5:13-18

The Power of Prayer

As James approaches the end of his book, he has a fitting emphasis on the importance of prayer. This is a passage that has often been misinterpreted. To prevent that, remember that James is writing specifically to people who were facing the strain of persecution (context is always important!).

> In times of victory we are told to sing and rejoice (v. 13b). What are those who are hurting or spiritually weak told to do ("sick" = Greek word meaning "weak"; same as in Heb. 12:3)? Pray and have leaders of the church pray for them as well.

> Oil was used for medical purposes at that time, but also for the purpose of encouraging, strengthening and refreshing (Luke 7:38), as is the case for those hurting here. The prayer of the elders is said to restore the "weak one" (v. 15). This act of humility will bring forgiveness if need be (v. 15b).

> In a world of struggles, what are we told to do for each other (v. 16)? Confess sins and pray for each other.

> What does verses 16b-18 imply about the impact our prayers can have on each other? Prayer can have a miraculous impact on encouraging and strengthening those who are hurting.

Application

Considering all the challenges that come with living as a Christian, James highlights two truths we must remember:

- Other believers desperately need our prayers.
- We desperately need the prayers of others.

When you are spiritually hurting or weak, the remedy is prayer. This applies to everyone, as moments of weakness affect us all. How should this impact your prayer life? Are you praying for others? Are you seeking prayer for yourself?