



## STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, August 17, 2025

**Teaching Title:** The Power of Prayer

**Key Scripture:** James 5:13–18

# CEDAR VALLEY

### 5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

**Monday:** James 5:13–20

**Tuesday:** Philippians 4

**Wednesday:** Psalm 18

**Thursday:** 1 Kings 17

**Friday:** Matthew 6:15–15

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

### MEMORY TOPIC:

Prayer

**MEMORY VERSE:** James 5:16b NLT

The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

### LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

#### Introduction:

When something amazing happens to you, what is your natural reflex? Do you run and tell a friend or spouse? What about when you receive bad news, what's your first response? Do you complain, call someone, or post about it on social media? In the final section of James, he encourages every believer in Jesus to make prayer their first response. He urges them to pray in every circumstance (5:13–15) and highlights the effectiveness of prayer (5:16–18). In fact, James mentions prayer in every verse of this conclusion, emphasizing how vital it is in the life of every Christ follower. Yet for many of us, prayer is often a last resort. Prayer should be our first response not our last resort.

#### Questions:

Icebreaker: When something goes wrong, is your first instinct to fix it, Google it, text someone, or something else?

Read James 5:13–18 together as a group.

1. How do you typically respond when you are facing hardships or difficulties? How does James suggest we respond and why? (see Digging Deeper)
2. What does it look like to pray when you are joyful or cheerful? Why is this important?
3. Read Psalm 17:6–7 and Psalm 69:16. What is it about the nature of God that gives us confidence to pray to Him? (see also James 5:11)
4. We know from life experience that God doesn't always heal. Even Paul's prayers for healing went unanswered at times (1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20; 1 Cor. 12:7–9). What are the detailed instructions Paul gives to

someone who is sick? How then should we understand the "prayer of faith" that James speaks of here? (see Digging Deeper)

5. What are the benefits of confessing our sins to others, and how is it connected to healing? What are some potential problems or misunderstandings when it comes to confessing sins to others?
6. Why does James highlight the example of Elijah's prayer in relation to the sick (1 Kings 17)?
7. What would it look like for you to pray as a first response this week? How can we create a culture of prayer and confession within our church or small group?

## DIGGING DEEPER

### Question 1—

"One circumstance that calls for prayer is the experience of being 'in trouble.' Here James has used the verb form (*kakopathei*) of the noun *kakopatheias*, which he employed in v. 10 to describe the trouble experienced by the prophets. When such an experience comes, the Christian needs patience. He is not to grumble in bitter disgust (v. 9), nor is he to express himself in oaths (v. 12). Instead, 'he should pray.' Patience comes from God, and prayer is an effective way to obtain it. James also urges anyone who is in good spirits to 'sing songs of praise.' This too is prayer."

—Donald Burdick. *James. The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1981.

### Question 4—

There are two different words used for "anoint" in the Greek bible: *aleiphō* and *chriō*.

*Aleiphō* is most commonly used to mean "to daub" or "to smear." It is typically used for rubbing oil on the skin for medicinal or beautifying purposes (oil was the most common medicine in the ancient world), though there are two occasions that it is used in a ceremonial sense for priests. *Chriō* is the most common word meaning "to anoint" and is used for the consecration of priests and has a metaphorical or symbolic meaning. Here, James uses the word *aleiphō*. Scholars are divided on what James means here with the "anointing of oil." Does he mean the anointing as a symbol of the Holy Spirit? Or is the anointing of oil have to do with medicine (i. e. James is prescribing prayer and medicine). What do you think James means?