

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.

Dec 2017

FAITH IN ACTION: #11: THE PRAYER OF FAITH

INTRODUCTION

How did you learn to pray? Who were prayer role models?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read James 5:13-20

Note: The anointing with oil²⁸ is not merely a kind of home remedy. As it is applied, the name of the Lord Jesus is invoked. Olive oil, according to Old Testament and Jewish understanding, was prized for its nurturing of human well-being and for its healing properties. In Jesus' and his disciples' ministry, olive oil was utilized in their healings of the sick¹. Sickness was often regarded as punishment for sins. 1 Cor 11:29-30; Dt 28:15; Jn 9:1-3; Mk 2:8-10. The person was sometimes isolated (outcast) as a means of discipline and correction. Their repentance could lead to fellowship with God, healing and then fellowship with the community (church). Vs 19; Psalm 51:12-13

1. According to James, who should initiate prayer? Vs 13
2. Why involve the elders of the church in praying for healing? Why would they touch a sick person? **1 Ki 17:21-22**

Note: The term "sick" refers to a condition so dire that one cannot work.

3. How do you understand the phrase, "the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well"? Vs 15 Whose faith is referred to here? **Ja 4:3**

Note: In Vs. 15 James says that the Lord would "raise" the person up. This choice of verb (egeirō) is remarkable because it does not repeat the word meaning "save/heal," which had just been used, but rather brings in another word with the same kind of dual meaning. "Raise up" refers to an act of God in the present, as in healing one who is bedridden, or an act of God in the eschaton, as in resurrection. Jesus' healing of the synagogue ruler Jairus's daughter is an example of this raising: "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" (Mark 5:41)—a restoration of life. The connection between being raised up miraculously from the bed of sickness and the resurrection is also poignantly presented in Martha's confession at the tomb of her brother Lazarus (John 11:27).²

4. How can unconfessed sin hinder our physical, emotional, and spiritual health? **Psalm 32:3-5; 51:8**
5. How should we respond to someone who says "Prayer doesn't work. I prayed for my loved one to get better, but they didn't"?
6. Why should we confess our sins to one another instead of just to God? Vs 16 **Acts 19:18**

Note: The evangelical doctrine of priesthood of believers is summarized in 1 Pet 2:4-5. Some say that confession should be as wide as the sin... if we sin secretly, confess to God; public sin requires public confession. 1 Jn 1:8-10

7. What should be the attitude of the person making a confession? How about the attitude of the person receiving the confession? Why is this important? **Gal 6:1-2**
8. How does God view a righteous person's prayer? How does that compare to your view?
Note: Righteous does not mean sinless (Jesus). Perhaps it could be defined as a life in fellowship with God?
9. According to verse 17, why is Elijah a good example for us in the area of prayer?

APPLICATION

- What need is God putting on your heart to pray for in faith this week?

²⁸ ἐλάϊον: "olive oil," as used in cooking, in lamps, and in treating wounds; cf. Isa 1:6; Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34; Josephus *Ant.* 17.172; *T. Sol.* 18.34; 2 *Enoch* 22.8-9; *T. Adam* 1.7.

¹ ² Richardson, K. A. (1997). *Vol. 36: James*. The New American Commentary (232-233; 234). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.