

**Grace Community Church**  
**The Ones Among You**  
**James 5:13-20**  
**October 26, 2025**

**HOME GROUP QUESTIONS**

1. **Read** James 5:13-30.
  - a. **Discuss** what the Lord reveals about himself in this passage.
  - b. **Discuss** what the Lord reveals about humanity in this passage.
2. **Read** James 5:13.
  - a. **Share** how life is hard currently. Why can it be difficult to pray when suffering?
  - b. **Share** how life is easy currently. Why can it be difficult to sing praise when cheerful?
  - *Here, then, in two words, are all life's experiences, and each of them in turn can so easily be the occasion of spiritual upset. Trouble can give rise to an attitude of surly rebellion against God and the abandonment of spiritual practices. Equally, times of ease and affluence beget complacency, laziness and the assumption that we are able of ourselves to cope with life, and God is forgotten.*<sup>1</sup>
3. **Read** James 5:14-15.
  - a. **Share**, if any, experiences you might have had with elders praying over the sick and anointing them with oil. How did the experience affect you?
  - b. **Discuss** how you might respond to someone using these verses to justify Catholicism's practice of extreme unction, or last rites.
  - c. **Explain** the prayer of faith.
  - *There are two streams of healing: prayer and medicine. But it's the same God who works through both streams. Medicine does not heal. Prayer does not heal. God heals.*<sup>2</sup>
  - *Anointing is neither magical nor sacramental, but it is quasi-sacramental. Like other*

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<sup>1</sup> J. A. Motyer, [\*The Message of James: The Tests of Faith\*](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), 187.

<sup>2</sup> Jon Courson, [\*Jon Courson's Application Commentary\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 1531.

*solemn ceremonies such as weddings or ordinations, the ceremony makes us pause so that we take the action seriously. The ceremony can arouse faith.*<sup>3</sup>

- *James' recommendation that regular church leaders carry out the practice would seem to imply its permanent validity in the church. On the other hand, the fact that anointing a sick person is mentioned only here in the New Testament epistles, and that many healings were accomplished without anointing, shows that the practice is not a necessary accompaniment to the prayer for healing. Elders who pray for the sick may do it, and James clearly recommends the practice; but they do not have to do so.*<sup>4</sup>
- *Is it to accommodate this precious thought—even, perhaps, to lead us to it—that there is a hint of ambiguity in the words James uses? In verse 15 he uses, in connection with the earthly benefit of healing, words whose fullest meaning is concerned with our eternal salvation: save ... raise up. Similarly, in verse 16 he uses in connection with restoration of spiritual well-being a word whose first bearing is on bodily health: be healed. The perfect will of God may be done in the lesser benefit of a return to bodily health, or in the supreme benefit of fullness of life in the immediate presence of Jesus. For this reason we must always say—in all our prayers, not just those concerned with healing—'Thy will be done'.*<sup>5</sup>

**4. Read James 5:16.**

- Share**, if any, experiences you might have had with “confessing your sins to one another and praying for one another, that you may be healed.”
  - Discuss** appropriate situations and ways to confess sins.
- *It cannot be supposed that God has subjected Himself in the government of the world, or in the dispensation of his gifts, to the shortsighted wisdom of men, by promising, without*

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel M. Doriani, [James](#), ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 194.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas J. Moo, [James: An Introduction and Commentary](#), ed. Eckhard J. Schnabel, Second edition, vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2015), 226.

<sup>5</sup> J. A. Motyer, [The Message of James: The Tests of Faith](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), 200.

*condition, to do whatever they ask. No rational man could wish this to be the case.*<sup>6</sup>

- *This verse also demonstrates that the power to heal is invested in prayer, not the elder. And while it is appropriate that those charged with the spiritual oversight of the community should be called to intercede for those seriously ill, James makes clear that all believers have the privilege and responsibility to pray for healing.*<sup>7</sup>
- *The other main benefit of confession is that it brings healthy humiliation. Bonhoeffer goes on:*

*Confession in the presence of a brother is the profoundest kind of humiliation. It hurts, it cuts a man down, it is a dreadful blow to pride. To stand there before a brother as a sinner is an ignominy that is almost unbearable. In the confession of concrete sins the old man does a painful, shameful death before the eyes of a brother.*

*Thus confession helps to promote a poverty of spirit which is acceptable to God: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).*<sup>8</sup>

- *Although believers bear one another’s burdens, nothing in confession should spawn temptation and sinful acts.*<sup>9</sup>
- 5. Read James 5:17-18.**
- Share** if/when you have participated in fervent prayer where God worked in the way asked.
  - Discuss** how thinking of Elijah’s prayer should impact your own prayers.
- *But it is not Elijah’s special prophetic endowment or unique place in history that interests James, but the fact that he was a human being, even as we are (Gk. *homoiothēs*; cf.*

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<sup>6</sup> Kurt A. Richardson, *James*, vol. 36, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 238.

<sup>7</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *James: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. Eckhard J. Schnabel, Second edition, vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2015), 230.

<sup>8</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *James: Faith That Works*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 265.

<sup>9</sup> Kurt A. Richardson, *James*, vol. 36, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 237.

Acts 14:15). As in v. 16b, James emphasizes that every believer has access to the kind of prayer effectiveness that he is illustrating here.<sup>10</sup>

- *This should ring a bell—because it is exactly the same issue James had identified in his readers. The people of Israel were wavering between two opinions—they were double-minded, trying to have a foot in each camp, hoping to get what God could give them and to take what Baal could give them. It is the same problem that has been behind so much of what James has written in his letter. And it was because of this that Elijah prayed for God to discipline them—for rain to be withheld—and then, after there was repentance and a wholehearted worship of the LORD, he prayed for that discipline to be lifted and for the people to be restored—for rain to return.*

*So yes, Elijah reminds us of the power of prayer; but he reminds us of the power of prayer in a particular context—bringing double-minded sinners back to God. In other words, our prayers are powerful when they are prayed in line with God’s purposes and promises. That is why it is the prayers of a “righteous” person that are “powerful and effective” (James 5:16)—because the more we are shaped by God’s grace to us in Christ, the more we will become like Christ, longing for the honour of God’s name and the increase of his kingdom, praying the first lines of the Lord’s Prayer because we desire to rather than because we are told to. It is a wonderful privilege to pray according to God’s purposes as they become our own desires; and then watch our prayers change things as God responds to our prayers.<sup>11</sup>*

**6. Read** James 5:19-20.

- Share** if anyone has ever sought you in your wandering.
  - Share** if there is a “wanderer” the Lord is leading you to you pursue.
- *Because at the heart of every problem lies a problem of the heart, I believe a person stops traveling with the body of Christ when a problem in his heart causes him to be*

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<sup>10</sup> Douglas J. Moo, [The Letter of James](#), ed. D. A. Carson, Second Edition, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 315.

<sup>11</sup> Sam Allberry, [James for You](#), ed. Carl Laferton, God’s Word for You (The Good Book Company, 2015), 160–161.

*uncomfortable in the presence of God's people<sup>12</sup>*

- *We cannot but be struck by the fact that James speaks of the concerned believer as 'bringing back', 'saving' and 'covering the sins' of the one in error. Surely these are things which only God can do? Only God can forgive sins, save us from them and give us the gift of repentance by which we return from our personal far country (e.g. Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25). How can we do these things? The answer is that we cannot, but we must act as if we could. The words express the measure of the concern and effort we are called to expend in our spiritual concern for those in spiritual need. Though we cannot convert them, we must labour to do so. Though we cannot save them from death, we must strive for their spiritual welfare as if their eternal destiny rested with us. Though we cannot cover their sins, we must follow the example of the Son of God who can do so, and hold nothing dear to ourselves and no sacrifice too great if only they are saved. For the local church of which James speaks is a fellowship of concern.<sup>13</sup>*

Helpful articles about small groups:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/do-not-despise-the-day-of-small-groups>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-daring-idea-of-small-groups#fnref9>

Quotes from the sermon:

*He alone can heal. There is no such thing as (so to speak) 'non-spiritual' healing. When the aspirin works, it is the Lord who has made it work; when the surgeon sets the broken limb and the bone knits, it is the Lord who has made it knit. Every good gift is from above...There is always a spiritual dimension in healing, and here it is in all its glory. On no occasion should a Christian approach the doctor without also approaching God, but there are those times when a notable and special approach to God will seem right and it*

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<sup>12</sup> Jon Courson, [\*Jon Courson's Application Commentary\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 1532.

<sup>13</sup> J. A. Motyer, [\*The Message of James: The Tests of Faith\*](#), *The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), 213–214.

*is for this that James here makes a lovely provision.<sup>14</sup>*

- *Sin brings isolation. Bonhoeffer writes in his book *Life Together*, “Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him.”<sup>15</sup>*
- *“Talk to the Lord about people. Then talk to people...about the Lord.”<sup>16</sup>*
- *Grace Community Church’s mission for a home group is to create an environment in which people can participate in heartfelt prayer, applicable bible study, honest confession and repentance, missional service, and intentional multiplication.*
- *James wants Christians to experience the power of prayer in having a ministry of prayer with one another through all conditions of physical and spiritual life—Do not neglect the ministry of prayer.*
- *The prayer of faith is one that is wholeheartedly prayed to God while understanding and submitting to his will being done as the inevitable, and best, movement of care under his sovereign knowledge and reign. The prayer of faith always has the underlying understanding of Jesus’ prayer—“Not my will, but yours, be done.”*

### *The Ones Among You*

#### *1. The Suffering Ones and Cheerful Ones (13)*

*Let the suffering pray (13a)*

*Let the cheerful sing praise (13b)*

#### *2. The Sick Ones (14-18)*

*Let the sick call for the elders of the church (14a)*

*Let the elders pray over and anoint the sick who calls(14b)*

*Have faith the Lord will act according to his will (15a)*

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<sup>14</sup> J. A. Motyer, [\*The Message of James: The Tests of Faith\*](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), 193.

<sup>15</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [\*James: Faith That Works\*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 265.

<sup>16</sup> Jon Courson, [\*Jon Courson’s Application Commentary\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 1533.

*Let sickness cause self-examination (15b)*

*Confess and pray to experience healing power (16)*

*3. The Wandering Ones (17-20)*

*Fervently pray for the sick (physical and spiritual) and wandering (17-18)*

*Pursue and bring back the wandering (19-20)*