

Sermon Based Small Groups Study Questions

The Wisdom of Prayer

James 5:13-20

Start It: Connecting with each other

1. Have you or someone you know asked the elders of the church for anointing and prayer for healing? What was your experience?
2. Have you ever helped a fellow Christian “turn back” from a moral lapse? Can you describe the situation without betraying a confidence?

Study It: Connecting with God’s Word

1. [vv. 13-14] What three circumstances does James describe for when to pray? Why and how (what types of prayers) should they pray in each of these situations?
2. [vv. 13-14] What does “trouble” or “suffering” mean? What does “happiness” or “cheerfulness” mean?
3. [vv. 14-16] What kind of healing does James mention here (physical, spiritual, or emotional)? What are the steps to take for healing?
4. [v. 15a] What does it mean for prayer to be effective? What does it mean to pray “in the name of the Lord?” Whose faith is identified here?
5. [v. 15b] How is sin and sickness related?
6. [v. 16] Who should confess their sins and to whom should they confess them?
7. [vv. 17-18] How is Elijah a good example for us in this context?
8. [v. 19-20] What does “wandering” mean and what does “turns him back” mean?
9. [v. 20] How is God’s grace evident in this verse?

Live It: Apply the Truth of Scripture

1. When you experience trouble of any sort is your first reaction to pray or do you wait until all (or most) human options are exhausted? Do you ask others to pray for you?
2. When things are going well and you feel happiness and joy, is your first reaction to thank God? Do you tell others what God has done for you?
3. After studying this passage, would you call our elders to pray and anoint you with oil so that you will be healed? Why or why not?
4. Do you or have you confessed sins publicly? Do you think it is important? If so, how do you think it should be done?
5. Do you view your prayers for others as “effective?” Is your prayer-life a struggle? How have you tried to make it better?
6. Do you see yourself responsible for the spiritual welfare of others? If so, how have you encouraged their obedience to Christ?
7. In what ways do you view this passage as an encouragement and as a challenge?