

**WHEN THE RIGHTEOUS PRAY
JAMES 5:12-20**

Have you ever looked at passage, believed God would do something, & become discouraged because God didn't do what you thought He would?

We're considering passage where confusion often occurs

James writes during hard times

-writes to church suffering discouragement

They're doubting God—ready to throw in towel.

How do WE respond to rising pressure of life?

When we endure suffering; discouragement.

3 Exhortations for Facing Hard Times

1. Wait patiently on the Lord 7-11

as farmer waits through storms for final rains—*with hope*

2. Affirm the truth 12

Don't swear by anything; just speak straight!

Establish reputation for honesty

Pagans in dishonest society use oath as guarantee

We should give simple yes/no answer, then do it.

People will learn we mean what we say.

3. Support one another in prayer 13-20

13-14 *"Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him & anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord."*

Root "in trouble"="suffering"<="passion"—how we **FEEL!**

When we feel bad—times hard; things rough.
When we feel bad, we should pray.
When we feel good, we should praise
God.

When we feel weak,
we should call elders & have them
pray

Root for “**Sick**” means “**weak**”

Usual **weakness** is physical weakness;

In time of suffering, illness isn't likely physical
weakness

rather **weakening of spirit =>**
discouragement

When heat's on, we can't take anymore—we're
 too weak to go on—it's time to stand together,
 encourage one another, pray for each other

When times are rough, people retreat.

We don't feel like going to church!

—that's when we need each other most.

James says, “Call in elders! Have them pray for
 us!

*In that context, when we feel too weak to go
 on, prayer of faith brings healing!*

sin of doubting God in dark will be forgiven!

Prayer with **anointing with**
oil=>restoration

15-16 *“The prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other & pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful & effective.”*

When we're discouraged, leaders rally around & encourage us by prayer; identifying with us. That's what **anointing with oil** is about.

Olive oil isn't **magic potion** with curative power.

Nor is use of olive oil a way to manipulate God.

Anointing with oil is Jewish custom

–OT symbol used in ordination of priest

Equivalent to NT laying hands on people committed to ministry—to **identify** with them.

When someone's weak in spirit, elders identify with them in their suffering.

Discouraged due to lost perspective & lack of faith

Can't deny *possibility* applies to **physical** weakness

Their problem's *spiritual* weakness—discouragement.

Heb 12:3 *“Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you’ll not grow weary & lose heart*

=>We grow **weak** in struggle with **sin**

That's why sin's mentioned; we give up; doubt God

Spiritual leaders come... –identify with weak ones.

Together they seek God's will.

God speaks through them to show His will.

They claim by faith what God shows them

If we apply this to sick people, call elders; pray; anoint with oil to identify with sick; determine God's will; trust God to do what He shows us He wants to do.

Spiritually mature leaders agree about what God wants to

do, & trust Him, as an act of faith

God honors faith of those godly leaders.

Elijah => *how God deals with discouraged people*

He suffers from similar feelings.“

We don't know about him being physically sick.

We DO know about when he's discouraged! **17-**

18 *“Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly*

that it wouldn't rain, & it did not rain on the land for 3 ½ yrs. ¹⁸Again he prayed, & the heavens gave rain & the earth produced its crops."

Repeated play on words:

10 prophets' "example of suffering & patience
< "suffering evil" or "**feeling bad**"

13 "Is anyone among you suffering?"

"Someone among you **suffers evil**"—"feels bad"

17 Elijah "suffered SIMILARLY!"

"Are we feeling down due to suffering?"

ELIJAH KNOWS WHAT IT'S LIKE!

Elijah suffered in same ways we suffer!

Elijah won the battle!

He suffered evil; prayed fervently, God worked!

In spite of affliction & discouragement,
=> he prayed, God answered!

Prayer of righteous is powerful & effective!

Just people + fervent prayer => no rain

God's people headed down tubes:
idolatry/injustice

Elijah prayed God would withhold rain; He did!
Elijah was guy, like US! Felt same kind of pain!

HE PRAYED–GOD WORKED! – people repented

=> Part II He prayed again. God poured rain

Just people + fervent prayer

=> rain + harvest

A guy just like us! **He prayed! God worked!**

Because of his prayer, nation repents; turns to God!

Just people + fervent prayer

=> national conversion

Our national situation–condition of church.

When we feel weak–like Elijah

–people pray –God still works!

Prayer of righteous is powerful & effective!

When someone gives up because of discouragement, God can use us to bring them back.

19-20 *“My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth & someone should bring him back, ²⁰remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death & cover over a multitude of sins.”*

If God can use Elijah, He can use other discouraged people–*like US*–if we trust Him.

**When righteous people pray
for one another, God uses us
to turn people back to him**

God's people sometimes give up & throw in towel.

WE can be means God uses to deliver them

Sin of unbelief => death (1:15)=>physical death

We've seen people away from God

=> die bitter old men—because of unbelief!

We could be instruments to turn them back.

Sin may be forgiven—multitude of sins covered!

By encouraging one who turns away,

we may save him from consequences of unbelief.

Like Elijah--God uses ordinary people like us--

People who feel same pain ***WE*** feel

Prayer of righteous is still powerful & effective

Prayer of faith's still able to turn back people who doubt; still prevents death; still covers multitude of sins

When we feel like...	We should...
Complaining	Pray
Bragging	<u>Praise God</u>
Getting discouraged	<u>Pray <i>with</i> others</u>
Criticizing the weak	<u>Pray <i>for</i> others</u>

When things go wrong, times are hard...

...do we complain or pray?

*Prayer of righteous is still powerful
& effective!*

Maybe God wants to use US to encourage another

Maybe God will use US to bring them back.

Pray asking for strength to endure until He comes.

God still works through people like us,
who feel like we do!

As He did in Elijah's day!