

Exhortations To Christians

JAM 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering [persecuted, oppressed, sick, bereaved, pain, burdens, etc]? **Let him pray** [keep on praying]. **Is anyone cheerful** [happy, glad at heart, in good spirit]? **Let him sing** [keep on singing] **praises** [to God].

1. Prayer is a God directed response to suffering of all kinds. “kakopathe’o” - suffer, suffer misfortune;
 - a. Prayer is powerful because it is directed to the all-powerful God of heaven.
 - b. It is calling on the Supreme Being of the universe.
 - c. Our prayers must be persistent (continuous) - not hit and miss or when the mood strikes us.
2. Singing praises is a God directed response to being cheerful. “euthume’o” [u thu me’ o] - “to be cheerful

a. Singing praises pleases God.

b. It is of great value to us. (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19).
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c. It is a natural response of those happy in Jesus.
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Note:

- The word sing comes from the Greek “p sal’ lo.”
- In the N.T. it always means to sing. (Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

Directions To The Sick

JAM 5:14 Is anyone among you [physically] **sick**? **Let him call for the elders** [bishops, shepherds] **of the church, and let them pray over** [in behalf of] **him, anointing him with oil in** [by] **the name** [authority] **of the Lord;**

1. Those who are sick are directed to call for “the elders of the church.”

a. Each local church had a plurality of elders. (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28).	d. It appears to be talking about physical illness rather than spiritual illness.
b. This verse, whatever it means, is a directive to call for the elders of the church.	e. It would not be wrong to call for the elders to pray with for us and those we love for other reasons, but physical illness is what is being discussed here.
c. “Sick” is a term often used for illness in the New Testament. (Matt. 10:8; Jn 5:7; Acts 9:37; Phil. 2:27).	

2. The elders are instructed to anoint the sick one “with oil” probably referring to “olive oil.”

- “elaion” - oil, olive oil
- “in the name of the Lord”

a. Olive oil was most often used for medicinal purposes .	d. Some were anointed with oil prior to being appointed to be a king, etc.
b. The bodies of the sick were rubbed with olive oil. (Lk. 10:34).	e. It was a part of the appointment ritual.
c. Olive oil was sometimes used in a ceremonial sense.	f. It was symbolic of the fact the person was being appointed or anointed by God to a position.

1SA 10:1 Then Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his head, kissed him and said, "Has not the Lord anointed you a ruler over His inheritance?"

3. Olive oil could also be used as symbolical of miraculous power about to be bestowed. (Mk. 6:13).

MAR 6:13 And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them.

4. The context seems to favor that the oil was symbolical of miraculous power since the healing appears to be certain.

- a. The gift of healing was one of the spiritual gifts given to some early Christians. (1 Cor. 12:7-10).

7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.

- b. It is probable that at least some, perhaps many, elders received this power to heal, but James is the only writer to discuss this subject.

- c. The Bible does not teach that all elders had the gift of healing.

5. These gifts do not exist today.

a. They were imparted by the laying on of the apostles' hands. (Acts 8:17; 19:6).	c. They would have ended sometime after the deaths of the apostles since those who had received them could not pass them on.
b. No one else could impart these gifts.	d. The Bible indicates miracles would cease. (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

6. Elders today do not have the power to heal.

a. I have seen elders pray over people who have recovered and over people who have died.	c. This injunction to call for the elders for miraculous healing would have been limited to the 1st century.
b. Elders today do not have miraculous power nor does any other human.	d. Elders today can pray over people, but they can not bring about miraculous healing. This does not mean that healing cannot and will not occur. No limitation is placed on God.

JAM 5:15 and the prayer offered in faith [by the elders] will restore [to health] the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

- “kam’no” - “sick”
- Lit. “the prayer of the faith”
- “and if sins he may be having done”

1. The Greek “so’ zo” means “save,” but here has the idea of saving (healing) a person who is ill. NASB “Restore.”

2. **Some try to use this passage as a modern proof text for faith healing.**

a. It is used as evidence by men and women who are not elders that they and others like them can heal.	c. Some who use these verses blame the sick person for not having enough faith when they claim to be healed.
b. This is certainly taking this verse out of context.	d. An examination of the context shows the faith was on the part of the elders not the person being healed.

3. Healing was to follow the “prayer offered in faith” by the elders.

4. It is uncertain how “sins” relate to this illness.

a. In some cases sins had been committed that may or may not have had any thing to do with the illness.	c. It would appear some needed healing and God’s forgiveness, and other needed healing only. “If he has committed sins”
b. In other cases sins had not been committed, but the person was still ill. Little children who have no sin can become sick and even die.	d. It is understood that those forgiven must repent and confess their sins. (1 Jn. 1:9; 2:1, 2).

5. It is not certain how universal this injunction was practiced.

- a. Christians of the first century became sick and died. (Acts 9:32-42; Phil. 2:19-30; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:1-8).
- b. If it were the rule, Christians would not have died by illnesses

JAM 5:16 Therefore, confess [keep on confessing] your sins [not someone else’s] to one another, and pray [keep on praying] for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man [one endeavoring to please God] can accomplish much.

- “iaomai” [ee a’ o mi] - “to heal.”

1. Christians are exhorted to “confess your sins to one another.”

a. Christian are to confess sins to one another, not just to elders or ministers.

1) Elders and ministers would be included in the “one another.”

2) They also need to confess sins.

3) No Christian can live above sin. (1 Jn.1:8, 10).

b. **There is no discussion if this confession was to be private or public**, and it is therefore not possible to make a rule.

c. A good guideline would be to make the confession as public as the sin committed.

1) This may not be possible in the absolute since our sins can effect so many in so many different places.

2) We should do the best we can.

d. Confessing sins to one another helps us remain close to one another and God.

1) It is not healthy to hide sin.

2) When we hide sin, guilt remains in us.

3) We cannot hide our sins from God, and if others know our sins they can help us overcome them.

e. **This practice is not to be imposed on others, but it is voluntary.**

2. Christians are exhorted to “pray for one another.”

a. No specifics are given here.	c. Prayer has great power.
b. Christians should constantly pray for one another.	d. It would be good to make a prayer list. It is so easy to forget names and forget the needs of others.

3. Both of these actions [confessing and praying] are associated healing - “so that you may be healed.”

a. This likely refers to physical healing .	c God will not forgive until we forgive. (Matt. 6:14,15).
b. Unforgiven sin keeps prayer from being answered.	d. He may withhold healing from those who refuse to confess sin

- Though he is talking about physical healing, the words would be true of **spiritual healing**.
- There must be forgiveness for spiritual healing to occur.
- Without forgiveness the soul stands condemned.

4. **James reminds his readers that prayer is very powerful.**

- a. “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” NASB
- b. The NIV reads “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”
- c. The words “righteous man” refer to men and women who are submitting to God’s will.
- d. The words are not limited to the leaders of the church, but refer to all the righteous.

5. The Roman Catholics base the doctrine of **Extreme Unction** on verse 16.

a. This is a rite of anointing by a priest when death is very near.	d. The anointing and prayer of this verse is not for the dying.
b. The holy oil is applied by the priest to the organs of sense and accompanied by a recital of prayers.	e. But they are for those who are promised to be healed and forgiven of their sins.
c. It is supposed to absolve one from sin.	f. The passage says nothing about Roman Catholic priests.

6. The passage does not teach **auricular confession**.

- Pertaining to hear, told in ear privately.

a. Our sins are not confessed to a priest or to any person who has power to absolve us of sin.	c. All sin must be confessed to God.
b. We are to confess our sins to one another, and to God.	d. It is God who does the forgiving. (1 Jno. 1:9).

Example of Elijah

JAM 5:17 **Elijah was a man with a nature** [feelings and affections] **like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.** See 1 Kgs. 17:1.

- “homoioopathes” - with same nature, similar
1. Elijah was a great prophet of the Old Testament. Elijah (e-li_’ja) means "my God is Jehovah"
 - a. The prophet Elijah came from Tishbeh in Gilead, a district that shared deeply in the miseries of the kingdom of the ten tribes.
 - b. Nothing is known concerning his family or birth.
 2. His powerful prayer led to a 3 ½ year drought in the days of Ahab.
 - a. The prayer is not specifically mentioned in the Old Testament, but it may be inferred by 1 Kings 18:42.
 - b. James relied on inspiration and oral tradition for his information. (Lk. 4:25; Jas. 5:18).

LUK 4:25 "But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land;

JAM 5:18 And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

1. This may not have been a miracle.
2. It appears more to be a providential answer to Elijah's prayer.
 - a. Note the clouds that appeared.

1KI 18:42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth, and put his face between his knees.

1KI 18:43 And he said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go back" seven times.

1KI 18:44 And it came about at the seventh {time,} that he said, "Behold, a cloud as small as a man's hand is coming up from the sea." And he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare {your chariot} and go down, so that the {heavy} shower does not stop you.'"

1KI 18:45 So it came about in a little while, that the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.

- b. It appears that God answered the prayer of Elijah by natural law "the sky grew black with clouds and wind".
- c. The Almighty God can work through natural law or He can supersede natural law.

Restoring Erring Brothers

JAM 5:19 My brethren [brothers], if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back,

1. This passage shows the possibility of apostasy. See 1 Cor. 9:27; 10:12; Heb. 3:12.	3. The words "from the truth" show there is absolute truth. See Jno. 3:21; 4:23, 24; 8:32; Gal. 4:16; Eph. 4:15; Jas.1:18.
2. One could not err or stray "from the truth" in which he has never stood.	4. It is clear that the duty of restoring erring brothers does not belong only to elders and preachers.

JAM 5:20 let him [the one seeking to restore] know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from [spiritual] death, and will cover a multitude of sins.

- "kalupto" [ka loop' to] - "cover, hide, conceal"

1. The word "death" has reference to spiritual death.
 - a. Spiritual death is the second death, eternal death. (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8).
 - b. Those restored must still die physically. (Heb. 9:27).

ECC 3:2 A time to give birth, and a time to die; A time to plant, and a time to uproot what is planted.

HEB 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

2. The word “soul” has reference to man’s immortal spirit. (Matt. 10:28; Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:9).
3. The expression “will cover a multitude of sins” is difficult.

PRO 10:12 Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all transgressions.

1PE 4:8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

- The love here is our love for another.
- Love is ready to overlook, tolerate, forgive sins.
- Paul describes Christian love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

1CO 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

1CO 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1CO 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

1CO 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

a. It could refer to the sins of the person restored.	d. God will be merciful to those who show mercy. (Jas. 2:13).
b. Assuming he is willing to repent, God will be gracious to him and forgive all his sins. See 1 John 1:9.	e. This is not a matter of merit. It is not to accumulate “brownie points.”
c. The expression might refer to sins of the person who is doing the restoring.	f. It is a reaffirmation of the truth that God will be merciful to those who show mercy. (Matt. 5:7; 6:14,15).

* It is possible the expression teaches both ideas. Both are supported by scriptures

Brother’s Keeper

1. **This passage certainly encourages us to be busy restoring erring brothers.**

- a. We have brothers and sisters in the church who are on the membership list, but are not faithful to God.
- b. We have many who have left the church altogether.

2. Restoring a brother can be very difficult for a variety of reasons.

Brother May Be

Bitter Conflict Offended Hardship	Discouraged Personal problems Family Disappointment in others Suffering	Overcome by Sin Drugs Alcohol Sex Gambling Arrogance	Not Worthy to Serve God Personal Sin Deeds of others
Serving Two Masters See Matt. 6:24	Guilty of Wilful Wrongdoing	Not Want To Be Restored We have free will to accept or reject Christ Some stop loving Christ.	Enjoying Pleasures of Sin See Heb. 11:24
Slowing Drifting Away	Weak Lack of spiritual food Neglected prayer life Lack of activity and involvement Lack of fellowship	Persecution and opposition Parents Mate Friends Authorities Enemies	

3. How do we restore the weak or fallen brother?

a. We must **give it a diligent effort**.

1) Turning one back can be very hard, but not impossible.

2) James nor Paul exhort us to do the impossible. See Gal. 6:1

b. We must **pray for God's help and blessing**. (Matt.7:7).

c. We must seek to help the person **remove the obstacles in his way**.

d. We must **present the truth**. God's truth is powerful and can change a person. (Jn.8:32; Rom.1:16; Jas.1:21).

e. We must **present the truth in love**. (Eph. 4:15).

f. We must **deal gently with the brother**. (Gal. 6:1).

g. We must be **ready to bear burdens and encourage the person on a regular basis**. (Gal. 6:2; Heb. 3:13).

4. Some brothers **cannot be restored**. (Heb. 6:4-6).

a. As mortals it is difficult and nigh impossible to make this judgment about another. Time reveals the truth about the heart.	c. Even if the person will not change, we can still pray for the person.
b. It is our responsibility to keep trying and keep praying.	d. God is not on our time schedule, and He may answer the prayer after we have concluded there is little or no hope or even we are dead or have lost interest in the person.

Closing Comment

1. James ends the letter without any farewell.
2. The reason is not known, and it is vain to speculate.
3. He had begun the letter with a personal greeting (Jas. 1:1), and may have no particular need to end with a salutation.
4. Since this is the only epistle he wrote, we know nothing about his style of writing except from this epistle.
5. **“Amen.”**
 - a. A few cursive Greek MSS of James and one Syrian source add “Amen.”
 - b. This is not in the oldest and best manuscripts and is not likely genuine.
 - c. No truth is changed by the addition or omission of the word “amen.”

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