

The gift of speech is a wonderful blessing, if it is used for God's intended purpose.

James has already had a great deal to say about the tongue.

He mentioned:

- 1) Its power for good or evil (3:1-12)
- 2) Turn laughter into mourning & weeping for sin (4:9).
- 3) Speaking evil & judging by human standards (4:11)
- 4) Voicing plans that do not including God (4:13-17)
- 5) Complaining (5:9)
- 6) Swearing or unnecessary oath taking (5:12)
- 7) Preaching God's word (5:10)
- 8) Here – praying & praising God (5:13)

Prayer is one of the highest privileges of God's people (see Heb 4:15-16).

Seven times—in this section—James mentioned prayer in **four** situations:

- 1) For the suffering (5:13)
- 2) For the sick (5:14-16)
- 3) For the nations (5:17-18)
- 4) For the erring (5:19-20)

A mature Christian is prayerful throughout the troubles of his life.

Instead of complaining about his situation, he takes the matter before the throne & majesty of God through our Great Savior the High Priest.

The Scriptures teach that God hears & answers the prayers of His children; therefore it is a sign of spiritual maturity for us to take our cares, concerns & praise before God.

1. How will Christians express their joy (5:13)?

“Let him Sing psalms” – (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)

Paul & Silas sang at midnight – their feet were fastened in stocks (Acts 16:25).

Psalms of thanksgiving & joy (Psalm 100; 126)

What does a Christian have to be joyful & to sing about?

2. How will Christians relieve their burden of suffering (5:13)?

“Let him pray”

Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:11)

Peter (Acts 12:5-11)

Church (Acts 4:23-31)

3. Why summon the elders when a Christian becomes ill (5:14)?

“The elders of the church” (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet 5:1-4; Heb 13:17)

When you were a child, whom did you call when you became ill at school & needed to come home? (Someone with supervisory authority: parent, grandparent or guardian).

Elders not only have supervisory authority over the souls entrusted to them, but they should have a natural concern for the physical welfare of their flock.

- a. What were the elders to do, & whose name were they to invoke (5:14)?

They were to pray concerning the sick member & anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

- b. What were the results of their prayers (5:15)?

Healing & Forgiveness

- c. In what way were the sick “saved”? (Mk 5:34; Lk 8:48; Acts 14:9)

“Saved” – made completely well, made whole through & through like Naaman the Captain of the army of the Syrians (2 Kings 5:14).

- d. Did the oil play a role in the healing (5:14)?

- 1) James may be referring to doing everything that is within man’s power to be an instrument of God in the natural process of healing (oil had medicinal qualities: Luke 10:34).
- 2) James could also be referring to the miraculous gift of healing, which some possessed in the early church & which was sometimes used in conjunction with anointing oils (1 Cor 12:9; Mark 6:13).
 - a. “In the name of the Lord” simply means that the Lord’s name was invoked before the miracle was performed (Acts 3:6).
 - b. Faith healers need to consider (Acts 19:11-17), & the need for a man to have legitimate authority from heaven before expecting a miracle.

e. Explain the source of the healing?

(2 Tim 4:20) – “Erastus stayed in Corinth, but **Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.**”

Why didn't Paul anoint & pray for Trophimus?

(Phil 2:25-27) – “Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; 26 since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick almost unto death; **BUT GOD HAD MERCY ON HIM**, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.”

f. Does verse 15 suggest a connection between sickness & sin?

They can have a cause & effect relationship (Jn 5:14), but not always; & certainly we should always include a confession of guilt or sin when we pray.

But let's not overlook the little word “**IF**” – “**IF** he has committed sins....”

This passage does not condone the practice of a so-called priest absolving another person of his sin: the text does not indicate that the sick person was waiting for absolution or that he was unable to join in the prayers made on behalf of himself.

g. Does verse 15 suggest forgiveness apart from repentance?

No... “**Repentance**” is a change of heart resulting in a change of behavior, but it is the change of heart that God first sees & acknowledges when He forgives sins (Psa 51).

“**metanoeo**” (met-an-o-eh'-o); to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction or regret):

4. What good can come from confessing sins to a fellow Christian (5:16)?

- 1) **It is a reminder** that we are all subject to the same temptations due to our human nature (2 Pet 5:9).
- 2) **When a Christian** or a “righteous man” prays for someone, that prayer is effectual (it is active, efficient, it accomplishes much).

a. How do we know this, what example is given?

Elijah is the example (James 5:17-18; Luke 4:25 – 1 Kgs 17:1; 1 Kgs 18:41).

b. Where is this confession to take place?

Public assembly, **small** groups, **private** study

The presence of only 2 people will meet the requirement of this passage.

In what NT passage do we have an example of this?
(Acts 8:24)

Why couldn't Simon have prayed for himself?

He felt great remorse for his sinful request in the new light of circumstances that his request put his soul into.

b. What is the proper response after hearing a confession?

Make it a chief priority to pray about that matter, if the person seems intent on turning away from sin confessed.

5. What does prayer accomplish (5:16)?

The King James Version: ***“The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”***

“effectual, fervent” is **energeo** (en-erg-eh'-o); ***to be active, efficient:***

“availeth much” is **polu & ischuei**: ***has much force or strength*** (Robertson's Word Pictures).

In the Greek, the single word for ***“effectual, fervent”*** comes at the end of the thought.

The English Revised Version (1885): ***“The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.”*** (Vincent's Word Studies)

In our context: healing & forgiving

Was there anything miraculous regarding the outcome of Elijah's prayer?

Elijah prayed consistent with the will of God (Deut 28:12, 24; 30:15).