

Daily Thoughts for week beginning 4th March 2024

Week 9

Monday 4th March

We have learned much so far from James chapter 5. Today, take time to meditate on the word of God and reflect on what you have learned. Take time to reflect on the highlighted words and try to relate them to the different readings you have reflected on over the past week. Consider how the verses you have read from elsewhere in the Bible are related to James 5:12-13.

v. 12 **above all:** this doesn't mean this is the most important thing James is saying in his entire letter. He is trying to let his reader know that it is important; you may even think of it as a "finally."

¹² But **above all,** my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

¹³ Is anyone among you **suffering?** Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

v. 13 **suffering:** this is the unfair and evil treatment that James has been talking about. It can be the normal hardships of life, but also suffering for being a Christian, as well.

Tuesday 5th March

Diggin' Deeper

It can be really comforting to reflect on God's character in times of difficulty. What does Psalm 103 say about God? List as many observations as you can.



Put It into Practice!

Pursuing Christ while we wait for His return is important enough that God wants you to know His expectations for you. Choose between the two characteristics we talked about today and think of a way that you can start living this way today. How can you be more truthful or God-focused today?

Pray

You've heard from God through His Word. Now God wants to hear from you. Spend a few minutes talking to God!

- Ask God to forgive you for the ways you haven't been truthful.
- Thank Jesus for how He draws you near in times of difficulty, and ask for help to praise Him when things are good.
- Continue to pray for wisdom to understand God's Word and to be a doer of all that you're learning.

- Pray that God would give you the wisdom you need to believe in the gospel. If you already have, praise God for the way He is working in your life.
- Pray for a family member or a friend who needs salvation. Ask God to help you share your faith story with them.

Wednesday 6th March

Read: James 5:13-18

Thinking Time: What does James mean by **pray** or **prayer** in these verses? He mentions this word in verses 13-18. You hear it a lot, but do you know what it means?

Thoughts: Read verses 14-15 again. This is one of those sections of Scripture that brings a lot of confusion. Remember when we thought about the importance of reading a verse within its context—the verses before and after can help give you a clearer picture of what is being said.

The word used here for “sick” often describes physical illness, but it’s also used a lot to mean weakness...and especially spiritual weakness. And that’s what James 5 has been talking about!

James is aware that sometimes in life you can be on that side of suffering for a while. That suffering leads to spiritual weakness. You can no longer endure. You’re exhausted from the suffering you’ve endured.

Those who are spiritually weak refers to those who have lost their motivation to pursue Christ. Those who suffer are instructed to pray (v. 13). But now their suffering has made them spiritually too weak to pray. They have developed a sinful attitude towards God, and they need the spiritually strong to pray for them. They need help. They need the spiritual leadership of the church.

Pray for those who have lost their spiritual mojo (those who have lost their way). And if you feel that this passage is speaking directly to you, do something about it – speak with a Christian friend; and/or Minister or Elder. But seek help. Don't keep it to yourself.

Thursday 7th March

Read 2 Corinthians 1:3.

Thoughts: How can prayer make a real difference in the life of a struggling Christian?

You want to have a spiritually strong person in your life that you could call in an hour of weakness. You want to find someone to pray for you and encourage you. I hope you are curious about the oil. I have a dozen questions at least! But here’s what we need to know.

The elders did put oil on people back then. It could have been for medicinal purposes or to make these spiritually weak people feel better. The oil also represents the encouragement, refreshment, and strengthening that these weak people would receive from the words of their pastor or minister. Words reminding them of biblical truth and words that would strengthen them and

lead them back to where they needed to be with God.

The SPIRITUAL healing is the healing that James is emphasizing in these verses. Can God bring physical healing. Of course! Is that what this passage is about here? Nope. It's about suffering and the need for spiritual help.

The elders would come and pray. They would encourage the weak with biblical truth. They would pray for them and also encourage them to pray. If there was sin, they would encourage the spiritually weak to confess their sin to God and receive forgiveness from God.

Just because you know the right thing to do, doesn't mean you automatically do it. There may come a time when you need some help.

Pray: God of all, when we abuse your covenant with us and are complacent:

Forgive us and help us to make a fresh start. When we trash your creation

ruthlessly and selfishly: **Forgive us and help us to make a fresh start.** When we reject your call to live well and generously: **Forgive us and help us to make a fresh start.** When we take your love for granted: **Forgive us and help us to make a fresh start.**

Faithful God, you raise us up from the ashes of sin and repentance to the joy of forgiveness and acceptance; you flood our hearts with your love, your grace and your beauty; you give us the opportunity to make a fresh start and to seek out that which is lifegiving and creative and fulfilling; you journey with us through the storms and the failures and equip us to stand firm and to flourish. Thank you. **Amen.**

Friday 8th March

Read: Proverbs 28:13 (write it down in your own words if you can) and 1 John 1:8-10.

Thoughts: What observations can you make about the dangers of unconfessed sin? What do these passages teach you about confessing sin?

Note that it is possible that sin can lead to spiritual defeat and spiritual weakness.

God has given you a great gift in the church. He has filled it with teachers and pastors and elders and other spiritually gifted people to help you pursue Christ. Don't keep spiritual leaders at a distance. Imitate them, learn from them, and ask for help when you need it.

Prayer: Use Hebrews 13:7 in your prayers —Remember your leaders, those who have spoken to you about the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. What legacy are they trying to share with you?

Saturday 9th March

What have you learned?

God expects you to live a certain way. You should be truthful in everything you do and say. You should live with a perspective that continually points your thoughts and heart to God. When times are good, God gets the credit. When times are tough, you know you need God's help.