

## Fleshed Out: A Journey Through the New Testament Letter of James

### “The Power of Prayer”

### Discuss

The Bible lets us know that prayer is powerful. But praying can be a little “weird” for us. How do we know that God is really hearing and responding to what we are praying about? As we study through prayer, remember that effective prayer comes with a close relationship with God. He is not a “genie” who exists to do our bidding. God describes himself as a loving father that wants a relationship with us.

*“Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises.”* ([James 5:13 NLT](#))

- How is your prayer life set up? Do you pray at a certain time or randomly, do you have a list of things to pray for or just go with what comes to mind?
- What is James telling us in this verse? When should we pray?
- Would you find it beneficial to begin writing down what you pray about to see more clearly how God is responding?
- Why would God want us to have a continuous ongoing dialogue with Him?

**The more consistently we begin to pray, the bolder our prayers will become. While there have been those who have been disingenuous about helping people and other extreme situations, God still requests that we pray big prayers. As we pray through our normal everyday lives with God, there will eventually be things that come up that require a bold prayer. When these things come up, prayer should be so normalized for us that we naturally talk to God about them.**

*“Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.”* ([James 5:14-15, NLT](#))

- Do you ever pray “bold” prayers? Prayers that only God can handle?
- Has there ever been a prayer that God miraculously answered, or a situation that only God could have made happen? What happened?
- Should prayer be a replacement for normal medical care?
- What would you think if you prayed a bold prayer and God did not answer it in the way you hoped for?

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God wants us to have a normal relationship with Him. And just like in any relationship, there can be tension.

If you have wronged a good friend of yours, in a healthy relationship the relationship is restored when you apologize and assure your friend that you are sorry for what you did. This principle works the same with God. Unconfessed and unrepentant sin is a relational wrong that we have caused in our relationship with God. We repair that relationship by praying to God, talking openly with Him about it.

*“Look! Listen!*

*God’s arm is not amputated—he can still save.*

*God’s ears are not stopped up—he can still hear.*

*There’s nothing wrong with God; the wrong is in you.*

*Your wrongheaded lives caused the split between you and God.*

*Your sins got between you so that he doesn’t hear.”* ([Isaiah 59:1-2. MSG](#))

- Do you ever feel anxious about going to God in prayer? Why?
- Have you placed a daily time of confession in your prayer time? Do you think that could be beneficial?
- Describe that relationship that you and God have - is it a healthy and growing relationship?

**While we are very important to God, our prayers should not always be about ourselves. The closer we get to God, the more we will realize that He has such a heart for those who do not have a relationship with Him, and those who are drifting away from Him. James felt this principle was so important that he ended his letter by talking about it. How awesome is it that God asks us to play such an important part in His plans!**

*“My dear friends, if you know people who have wandered off from God’s truth, don’t write them off. Go after them. Get them back and you will have rescued precious lives from destruction and prevented an epidemic of wandering away from God.”* ([James 5:19-20. MSG](#))

- Why do you think James puts such an emphasis on going after people who have wandered away from God?
- Why do you think people wander away from God? What should our response be when this happens?
- When James says to “go after them,” is he simply talking about having a conversation with them? How can we go after those that have wandered from God?

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#### Next Steps

Do you have a set time when you pray every day? If not, find a good time that works with your schedule and make some time for you and God to have a conversation. Begin to remember or write down what you pray for to see how God responds. Keeping track of what God does will help you get to know Him even better!

September 29: [The Big Picture Bible Study](#)

September 29: [REALIFE](#) (High School Ministry)

September 29: [Exploring Homeschooling Online](#)

October 3: [After “I Believe”](#) (Class)

October 3: [MAXlife](#) (Middle School Ministry)

#### Continued Reading

Read: [Philippians 4:6-7](#)

#### Prayer

God,

I know prayer is powerful, and I know that it improves my relationship with you. I pray that our relationship continues to improve, and that it becomes normal for me to talk with you about every aspect of my life. Thank you for who you are and all that you do.

Amen