

PRAYER AS TAUGHT IN THE BOOK OF JAMES

BIBLE TEXT : James 1:5-7; 4:1-10; 5:13-18.

LESSON 468 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months" (James 5:17).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

James 1:5-7

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

James 4:1-10

1 From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts that war in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Bible References:

I God's Conditional Promises

1. Faith is a primary requisite to receiving anything from God, James 1:5-7

Hebrews 11:6

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Mark 11:20-24.

20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

2. Correct motives are necessary in order to receive an answer to prayer, James 4:1-5.
3. A humble approach to God is essential, James 4:6-10

Isaiah 57:15

15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Luke 1:51, 52.

51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

4. The prayer of faith shall save the sick, James 5:13-15

Isaiah 53:5

5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Mark 16:18.

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

5. Prayers can be hindered by lack of diligence, forgiveness, restitution, confession, and repentance.

Jeremiah 29:13

13 And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Mark 11:25, 26

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

James 5:13-18

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Ezekiel 33:14,15

14 Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

15 *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

I John 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Luke 13:3

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

James 5:16.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

6. Elijah's example of effectual fervent prayer is given, James 5:17,18

I Kings 17:17-24.

17 And it came to pass after these things, *that* the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.

18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

20 And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

24 And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou *art* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in thy mouth *is* truth.

Notes:

Faith

Many prayers go unanswered, and people often ask why? There is no simple answer to this, but as we study the Word of God some of the reasons can be ascertained. James tells us: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" (James 1:5-7).

Faith, then, is the principal key that unlocks Heaven's storehouse. Jesus emphasized the necessity for faith when He said: "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those

things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:22-24).

Diligence

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Prayers that are to be answered must be uttered in all diligence and sincerity. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Jesus said: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:7, 8). Prayers from the lips alone do not avail: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

Confession

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Confession is an admission of guilt. There are those who would place the blame for their deeds upon others, or would excuse themselves as not being so bad, or try to point to others who are worse than they are. David prayed, "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51:3).

Repentance

Repentance is an about-face turning your back upon sin. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). If one clings unto anything that is sinful, "let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (psalm 66:18).

Forgiveness

"When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:25, 26). Regardless of how right our cause, or how vile and wrong those may be who injure us, we are enjoined, "Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:13). How many times? "Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22).

Restitution

If a sinner wants forgiveness from God, not only does he have to forgive his brother, but he must also make it right if he has stolen from him or in any other way wronged him. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23, 24). "If he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die" (Ezekiel 33:14, 15).

Humility

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). Pride shows itself in many ways. Some people are too proud to be seen walking down an aisle to an altar of prayer. Others do not want to go to certain churches because the people there are too old-fashioned. Naaman at first was too proud to dip in Jordan; but when he humbled himself, and obeyed, he was healed. "Submit yourselves therefore to God."

Resisting the Devil

The devil is a liar, but some people believe him. They say, "The devil told me this or that." Instead of resisting, they are listening. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Keep your mind upon God. When praying, concentrate on what you are praying about. Words often repeated can become idle words without meaning, while your thoughts are drifting about like a cork on the waves. "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6:7).

Consistency in Prayer

"Ye have not, because ye ask not." There is a difference between a casual request and a deep longing. Jesus told of a widow who received an answer from an unjust judge because of her persistence. He then said, "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" (Luke 18:7).

Asking Amiss

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." If we desire the blessing without the sacrifice, we are asking amiss. If we want to reap without sowing, we are asking amiss. If we desire a crown without the cross, we are asking amiss. A disciple is not above His Lord, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross" (Hebrews 12:2). "Ye know not what ye ask," said Jesus to two of His disciples who desired to sit at His right and left hand in His Kingdom. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?" (Matthew 20:22).

"How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" God will give the Holy Spirit to them who ask, if we really mean it when we ask. The Holy Spirit is given for a Guide; are we willing to follow Him? He is given as a Teacher; are we willing to learn from Him? He will give us power if we are willing to use it in service for Him. Simon offered money, saying, "Give me also this power," but he asked amiss. His heart was not right. Let us not ask the things of God for our lusts, or pleasures, but for His glory.

Effectual Fervent Prayers

Elijah was a man who had a deep passion for the salvation of Israel. He wanted to see them turn from their idols to the living God. He prayed earnestly that it might not rain. He knew that if his petition was granted it would bring suffering and sorrow. He was willing to endure the hardness if it would avail toward turning Israel to God. His prayer was answered. He put God to a test to prove to Israel the power of God. God answered again. "He prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

QUESTIONS

1. To what is a man who wavers likened? What are the results of his prayers?
2. James said, "Ye have not." Why do you not have?
3. "Ye ask, and receive not." Why?
4. Name one of the principal things needed in order to receive an answer to prayer.
5. Name some of the things that might hinder a sinner from being saved.
6. What is a Christian instructed to do when he is sick?
7. Name some reasons why God answered Elijah's prayers.
8. Give some Scriptures concerning pride.
9. Give some Scriptures on how to be born again.

State some Scriptural promises concerning physical healing.