

Developing the Practice of Prayer (James 5:13-18)

1. For Small Groups: Begin by sharing one high and one low from this past week.
2. According to James 5:13a if we are in trouble or suffering hardships we ought to pray. What hardships or troubles are you facing right now? Write down your answers and then individually (or as a group) pray for these items
3. James 5:13b says we also ought to turn and praise God when things are good. Begin a list of blessings, perhaps things you've taken for granted, that you can Praise God for. Stop right now and praise him either individually or in a group setting.
4. James 5:16 calls for us to pray for those who are sick. Make a list, either individually or within your group, of people you know who are struggling with sickness. Pray for healing for these individuals
5. Why does scripture say it is so important for us to pray for the healing of others? (See also: Matthew 18:19-20; John 13:35; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26)
6. James 5:15 has a very important IF attached to it. It reads that the person who is sick "IF he has sinned he will be forgiven". What does this IF reveal to us about the connection between physical and spiritual health? (See also John 9:1-3)
7. Although sickness is not always a result of sin, sickness always offers an opportunity for self-examination to see if there is any unconfessed sin in our lives. Take some time for self-examination right now. Pray to God and ask him to reveal whether there is unconfessed sin in your life. Do you have any relationships that have been affected by your sin that you need to go and mend, if so make a plan to go and meet with that person.
8. According to James 5:16 the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. What makes a person righteous? (Read Romans 5:20-25)
9. What is the point of James illustration about Elijah in verses 17-18? If this is true, how should it affect your prayer life?
10. Read Mark 9:14-29. Most of us can associate with the struggle with belief that both the disciples and the boy's father had. May our prayer this week be that of the boy's father in Mark 9:24. "I do believe, help me overcome my unbelief!"