

The Relevance of Prayer

James 5:13-18

Today's passage asks a series of questions, and the answer to each is "prayer." Are you suffering? Pray. Are you happy? Pray. Are you sick? Call the elders to pray. Are you guilty? Confess your sins to one another and pray. Pray! Why is prayer the answer to each question? Another way to ask the question is why is prayer relevant in every circumstance? Prayer is relevant in every circumstance, because when we pray we invite God into the situation and God IS relevant in each and every circumstance of our lives.

Opening discussion: How strongly do you agree/disagree with the following: *"Prayer is my natural reflex to the various things I experience in life"*?

Read James 5:13-18

1. In verse 13, James encourages us to pray in our suffering and in our happiness. Are you more inclined to pray in one or the other of these experiences? Why?
2. Why do you think prayer is appropriate and important when we are happy?
3. What is James' encouragement regarding praying in our sickness (vv. 14-15)?
4. Why do you think the Scriptures encourage one who is sick to invite the elders to pray for them?
5. Is James teaching that if we do what he says that everyone will be healed every time? Why or why not?

6. What does James say about prayer and sin (v. 16)?

7. What is the point of James' illustration about Elijah?

Steve said:

Pay attention to your circumstances and to your emotions this week and try praying as a reflex. When you realize, "I'm in trouble" or "I am suffering," pray as a reflex because God wants to give you grace. When you realize, "I'm am deeply satisfied right now," praise God because He gave you a good gift. If you are ailing physically, you can pray, you can have your family and friends pray, and you can call the elders to pray because God is our healer and He's more generous than we can imagine. If you are feeling legitimate guilt over some sin, confess your sin not only to God but also to a trusted friend, asking them to pray - because God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

8. What do you think about this challenge to pay attention to your circumstances and emotions this week and to try to pray as a reflex? Are you ready to give it a shot?

9. If prayer is not your natural reflex at this point in your walk with God, what do you think might help you grow in this?

Practicing the Rhythms of Rooted



Daily Devotion: Read and meditate upon next week's passage (James 5:19-20). Consider also these passages on prayer: 1 Chron. 16:11; Psalm 51:1-4; 102:17; 103:1-5; Matt. 5:44, 7:11; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 John 1:9, 5:14; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Heb. 4:14-16