

Louder Than Words #11

The Most Talked-About, Least-Done Thing in the Christian Life

Word

Scripture Reference

James 5:13-20

Discussion Questions

1. What answered prayer has special significance to you? Share at least one of them.
2. Many people see prayer as a fall back or a last resort to be tried when all else fails. A lot of times prayer is done out of desperation. It seems that prayer is the most talked about but least done thing in the Christian life. There are Christians who don't initiate prayers, couples hardly pray together, and families don't pray daily. How can your testimony effect change, especially through your prayer life? Read James 5:13-20. James closes the book with three things believers need to know about prayer. First is that the attitude you should have towards prayer is this: any time, every time (v. 13). When you are suffering, you can pray. When you are cheerful, you can sing psalms, which is also form of prayer. Why is prayer important at all times? Describe how you apply Paul's admonition to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). How do you express your heart to God?
3. The second aspect of prayer we need to remember is that the object of your trust when praying should be the Lord God (v. 14-15a). The most important thing when praying is not the prayer itself, but the object of your prayer. In verse 14, James refers to someone who is physically incapacitated being prayed for and healed by the church elders. Does this mean that you don't need to go to the doctor to be healed? Or that the prayers of pastors and elders have more power than yours? What do you believe about miraculous healing today and God's involvement in it? Discuss God's ability to heal and perform miracles, what Scripture says about it, and what the Bible teaches us about "faith healers." How are the attitudes of humility and yielding to God's will important in acknowledging God's power to heal?

4. The third aspect of prayer we need to remember is that our inner life condition while praying should be righteousness through confession (v. 15b-16). The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. What holds Christians back from praying with confidence? What then are the prerequisite for an effective prayer? If we already acknowledged our sins to God, why should anyone else have to know about it? What is the effect of a righteous person's prayers (v. 16)?
5. James concludes with this statement, "*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins*" (v. 19-20). How you live your life is very important, because someone may know the Lord or turn back to Him by seeing your life. How could you help someone who has drifted away from the Lord Jesus Christ? How have other brothers or sisters in the Lord helped you when you were wandering in your faith?

Walk

The book of James put emphasis on faith in action. Right living is the evidence and result of faith. It is what speaks louder than words to the unbelieving world that will affect change in others. Prayer is our lifeline to God. The effects are often more than we thought possible. It is so wonderful that we can pray at anytime of the day regardless of circumstances. The object of our trust when praying should be the Lord God and no one else, and the condition of our inner life when praying should be one of righteousness. What needs, whether situation or people, will you be praying for this week? Is there any personal need that you would want others to pray for you? Is there anyone who has been wandering from his or her faith that needs to hear encouragement from you?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that my life in You can speak louder than words to the people around me who do not know You. May You help me to live in obedience to Your commands as an evidence of my faith in You, that Your Word as I live it day by day may speak lovingly and truthfully to others. Thank You that I can commune with You through prayer. What a privilege to be able to talk to You anytime! Help me to come into Your presence in every circumstance of my life instead of praying only as a last alternative when everything fails. Thank You that You alone should be the object of my trust when I pray. Thank You for encouraging me to rely only in You. I am also so grateful that through Jesus Christ, I can go directly to You for forgiveness of my sins. Give me a humble heart to own up to my transgressions before You and before others whom I may have offended. Help me to humbly yield to Your will and to live for Your glory. In Jesus Name, Amen.