

Epistle of Ya'akov ~ 5:13-20

The Prayer of Faith

¹³ Is someone among you in trouble? He should pray. Is someone feeling good? He should sing songs of praise.

Here, along with 1:5–8 and 4:3, is **Ya'akov's** teaching on prayer, while verses 14–20 deal specifically with healing prayer.

¹⁴ Is someone among you ill? He should call for the elders of the congregation. They will pray for him and rub olive oil on him in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ The prayer offered with trust will heal the one who is ill—the Lord will restore his health, and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

The **Lord** heals the sick among His people, according to this passage, in response to ***the prayer offered with trust***. Healing was one of **Yeshua's** three central ministries (Matt. 4:23–24), and He promised that His followers would do yet more outstanding works than He did (Yochanan 14:12). In addition, the **Ruach**, whom He has sent to his followers (Yochanan 15:26), grants to some gifts of healing (1C 12:9, 30).

Rub olive oil on him is not merely a ceremony; in biblical times, olive oil was medicine (Isaiah 1:6, Luke 10:34), and being anointed with oil was considered physically pleasant (Psalms 23:5, 133:2–3).

¹⁶ Therefore, openly acknowledge your sins to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Roman Catholics take this verse as a scriptural ground for their sacrament of confession to a priest.

Apart from such psychologists as Menninger and Mowrer, secular psychology obscures personal responsibility for **sins** by calling them “neuroses” or “problems.” Comparison of this verse with modern secular psychology reveals these three points:

1. ***Openly acknowledge***. Communication of one's inner life is fundamental to psychoanalysis and other forms of verbal psychotherapy.
2. ***Pray for each other***. Secular psychology offers group therapy and doctor-patient relationships, but nothing has healing power comparable to praying to **God**. But sinners must repent of sin to have their prayers heard (Isaiah 59:1–2).
3. ***So that you may be healed, healing of sin*** involves not only confessing and repenting, intending to stop sinning, and stopping.

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Compare Leviticus 26:8, Deuteronomy 32:30, Psalm 91:7. ¹

¹⁷ Eliyahu was only a human being like us, yet he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and no rain fell on the Land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the Land produced its crops.

See 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:42–45. These do not mention **Eliyahu's** prayer, but an **Aggadah** ² in the **Talmud** does:

¹ Stern, D. H. (1996). Jewish New Testament Commentary.

² A compendium of rabbinic texts covering various topics in the Talmud and Midrash.

"Eliyahu prayed and received the keys to the rain and stopped the heavens." (Sanhedrin 113a)³

19 My brothers, if one of you wanders from the truth, and someone causes him to return, 20 you should know that whoever turns a sinner from his wandering path will save him from death and cover many sins. ~ Ya'akov 5:13-20 (CJB)

Causing a brother to turn from **sin** is the most fantastic form of healing since it **saves him from spiritual death**. Compare Ezekiel 33:14–16, 1 Yochanan 5:16–17, and 1 Kefa 4:8.

Stay tuned in for the next topic we will be exploring beginning on October 20th.

³ Ibid.