

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.