

Pray

Lesson 06 of the series "247365"

1. If we want to be Christ followers 247365 we must pray.

- a. We should pray when times are hard.

"Are any among you suffering? They should keep on praying about it." James 5:13a (NLT)

"Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad--because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterward you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory when it is displayed to all the world. Be happy if you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God will come upon you. If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs. But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his wonderful name!" 1 Peter 4:12-16 (NLT)

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will, not mine." (Luke 22:42 NLT)

Note: If I keep praying God will either change my circumstances or he will change me.

- b. We should pray when times are good.

"Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise." James 5:13b (NIV)

"I will praise you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever. I will bless you every day, and I will praise you forever. Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise!" Psalm 145:1-3 (NLT)

- c. We should pray for each other when we're sick.

"Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. And their prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make them well." James 5:14-15 (NLT)

"...the disciples went out, telling all they met to turn from their sins. And they cast out many demons and healed many sick people, anointing them with olive oil." Mark 6:12-13 (NLT)

- God uses medicine as well as miracles to heal.
- We will all die of something someday.

- d. We should pray for each other when we sin.

"And anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." James 5:15-16 (NLT)

- Many physical ailments are brought on by sinful lifestyles and habits.
- Often our deepest wounds are not physical.
- Accountability helps keep us from returning to habitual sins.

"Let the godly strike me! It will be a kindness! If they reprove me, it is soothing medicine (oil on my head). Don't let me refuse it." Psalm 141:5 (NLT)

2. God answers fervent prayers 247365.

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5:16b (NKJV)

Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Luke 18:1-8 (NLT)

"...the reason you don't have what you want is that you don't ask God for it." James 4:2 (NLT)

3. God answers the prayers of ordinary people 247365.

"Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."
James 5:17-18 (NIV)

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes, or powerful, or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God deliberately chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose those who are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important, so that no one can ever boast in the presence of God... As the Scriptures say, "The person who wishes to boast should boast only of what the Lord has done."

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

Have someone in your group read James 5:13-18. Then answer the following questions:

1. You are channel-surfing one night and come across a televangelist who is praying over people who have waited in line for hours at a convention center to be healed. One man in a wheelchair still cannot walk even after the televangelist prays for him. The televangelist angrily shouts at the man, "You lack faith! If you believed you could walk. God wants all of his children to be happy all of the time and has the power to heal so you must have a faith problem." Is he right? Why / why not?
2. Read 1 Peter 4:12-16 & Luke 22:42. How do these passages challenge your views on suffering? Why is it so hard for us to think of anything positive resulting from suffering?
3. Read James 5:17-18 & 1 Kings 18:16-46. What stands out in your mind about the prophet Elijah? Why does James say that he was a man just like us? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
4. Read James 5:14-15 & Mark 6:12-13. How do you feel about people praying for healing? Does God really heal people as a result of prayer? Have you known anyone who received healing from God through prayer? If so, what happened? Why doesn't God just prevent us from getting sick in the first place?
5. Read James 5:15-16 & Psalm 141:5. A friend calls you and asks if he can meet you after work. He sounds upset so you agree to meet him at a local restaurant. Over dinner he confesses to you that he has been looking at porn for years and now realizes that he has become addicted to it. His wife has given him an ultimatum: either the porn goes or she goes. As a result he has enrolled in a 6-week treatment program but they require him to identify at least one trusted friend who is willing to meet with him weekly and hold him accountable for 6 months after he gets out. He asks you if you will be such a friend? How do you respond? (Women please substitute a friend who struggles with an eating disorder and self-esteem issues.)
6. Read James 4:2-3 & Philippians 4:6-7. Are you a prayer warrior or a worry wart? Who is the best praying Christian you know? Is it necessary for all Christians to learn to pray well or should prayer be left to ministers and a few others? Defend your answer.
7. Have everyone in your group share one prayer request. Write them down and commit to praying for each other at least twice this next week. Assign prayer partners if you feel comfortable doing so. Close your meeting by praying for each other.