

Lesson 8: Restorative Prayer¹

The Book of James

Scripture Passage: James 5:13-20

Growing Connected (10 min.)

Briefly go around sharing one area of your life that God has restored in the past. Then, as a group, spend time thanking the Lord in prayer for his restorative power.²

Introduction³

Every human being is broken and exists in a fractured world. This is due to the consequences of original sin-- when Adam and Eve were deceived and ate of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6). We have also contributed to this broken world through our willful disobedience against God and His good and perfect design (Romans 3:23). Therefore, sin-- whether original sin or personal sin-- has led to the consequences of worldwide pandemics, pain, emotional abuse, fatherlessness, failed dreams, and the list can go on.

Our only hope in a broken world is God's divine intervention. The good news is that Jesus Christ was sent from heaven to earth to redeem the world (John 3:16). Furthermore, God is at work restoring the universe and His people back into His perfect design through Jesus (Colossians 1:20)!

What may be astounding to many is that God loves to give a foretaste of His Kingdom on earth through the prayers of His children. In other words, God delights to bring wholeness, even in our present broken world, when His children ask Him to bring restoration. For this reason, James 5:13-20 calls to do the following in today's lesson:

Big Idea: Make PRAYER the overarching "go to" in every circumstance, and remember you need the church and the church needs you.

Video Notes- Play Video pt. 1

Think Tank (30 minutes)

Brainstorming in groups of 3 (15 minutes)⁴ | Use Zoom breakout groups

The type of prayer that the teacher explained from James 5:13-20 can be called “Restorative Prayer.” But in order to pray for restoration, we must comprehend the nature of “Restorative Prayer.” Get in groups of 3 in Zoom Breakouts and fill out chart below by following the steps:

1. Select a scribe to fill out the chart for each line (going horizontally- left to right).
2. Have someone read the Scripture reference.
3. As a group, name the kind of circumstance described in the Scripture reference.
4. As a group, name the proper response in the Scripture reference.
5. As a group, name the kind of restoration needed by implication.

Scripture Reference	Circumstance	Proper Response	Kind of Restoration Needed
1. James 5:13	Suffering	Pray	Relief from suffering
3. James 5:14			
4. James 5:16			
5. James 5:19			

Come back together as a large group and have one group share their findings (5 min.).

Discovering the Nature of God’s Healing | Group Discussion (10 minutes)

Prayers of Restoration should be applied to physical illnesses as noted in the chart. Therefore, let’s think about this together so that we can know how to pray with great faith.

1. The anointing oil in James 5:14 is meant to symbolize the healing power of the Holy Spirit. While God uses medicine to cure diseases, why is it important to still pray for healing?
2. In James 5:15 ESV James says, “the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick.” The word “**SAVE**” in this context means to restore to physical health. Yet, the teacher said that there are examples in the New Testament where faith-filled believers prayed for physical healing but God chose not to on this side of eternity (2 Corinthians 12:8). She also said that God does choose to heal in our present life at times, as seen in verse 15. What impact does praying for physical healing have, even if the one who is sick isn’t physically healed in this present life?
3. The teacher noted that NOT all sickness is a result of sin, but the conditional clause, “if he has committed sins (James 3:15b ESV),” implies that SOMETIMES the Lord disciplines a person with habitual sin by allowing sickness. What does the discipline of the Lord tell us about God? How does God’s discipline mature us?

Video Notes- Play Video pt. 2

Group Training

Discuss the following questions as a large group (10 min.)

1. Is it difficult to keep your sins a secret from brothers and sisters? Why or why not?
2. What kind of reminders about God can we tell others when they confess their sins to us? Why is it important that we tell them the truth about God in that moment?
3. What does Elijah's example in James 5:17-18 tell us about the kind of power that Christians possess when we confess our sins to one another?

Partner up in Zoom breakout groups; men with men and women with women (10 min.)⁵

Practice "prayers of restoration" with one another. One should confess sin and the other should pray for that person. Each person should alternate doing the following:

1. Using the chart above, name the circumstance you find yourself in. (i.e. God blessed you with something you really wanted.)

2. Confess any sinful ways you've responded to that circumstance (i.e. Instead of praising God, I've forgotten to thank God and that is prideful.)
3. Ask the person to pray for God to restore you- to forgive and/or heal you. Name what kind of restoration you need.

The person that prays should pray in the following way:

1. Using one of the Scripture references in the chart above, pray Scripture over your partner. Praying Scripture means that one personalizes Scripture and applies it to a particular situation.

Example: Heavenly Father, James 5:16 commands us to confess our sins to one another and promises us that you will heal us. Thank you for that promise and thank you for the forgiveness we have in Jesus. I pray that you heal my brother of his shame.

Training Session Wrap-up (2 min.)

Conclusion: In our lesson today, we learned that we are called to make PRAYER the overarching "go to" in every circumstance. Also, remember that you need the church and the church needs you. We live in a broken world because of sin's presence, yet our ultimate hope and healer is Jesus. For this reason, we can pray that God grants us a foretaste of the ultimate healing to come in his eternal kingdom. This is why we should pray for restoration!

*Closing Prayer:*⁶ *Ask someone to close this session in prayer- to pray for strength to be faithful to Christ in the midst of trials and for holistic healing (i.e. healing of the mind, body, emotions).*