

THE HIDDEN POWER OF PATIENCE & PRAYER

AUTHENTIC FAITH: GROWING WITH JAMES THE APOSTLE · JAMES 5:7-20 · MARCH 2, 2025 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

*"Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise."
(James 5:13)*

Persevering with Patience (James 5:7-11)

- Patience with long-term perspective (5:7)
- Patience with the end in sight (5:8-9)
- Patience with good examples (5:10-11a)
- Patience with God's character (5:11b)

Persevering with Prayer (James 5:12-20)

- Watch your words (5:12)
- Lift yourself up with your words (5:13)
- Be lifted up by others' words (5:14-15)
- Set free with your words: confession (5:16)
- The example of prayerful perseverance (5:17-18)
- Watch others with your words and actions (5:19-20)

James' Perspective on Authentic Faith

- Authentic faith is anchored in the unchanging God amidst a changing world.
- Authentic faith invites God to change us—how we live and how we relate to others.
- Authentic faith lives like Jesus did on earth until the day of Jesus' final appearing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does "patience" mean to you? When is a time that you struggled with patience? On the other side, when have you most been able to live patiently?
2. This week we conclude our preaching series, "Authentic Faith: Growing with James the Apostle," by looking at James 5:7-20. Whether on your own or with others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you through this study and then read that text aloud.
3. With verses 7-11, James takes up the theme of patience and perseverance. Take a moment to search out how many times you notice those two words or related words. What stands out to you?
4. Remember James is writing to Christians facing persecution for their faith. In verses 7-11, what reasons does James give for why they should be patient?

5. Which of these speak most to you about being patient and persevering in your faith today?
6. Verses 12-20 offer final words on various topics. With verse 12, James writes about oaths or swearing. Compare this to Jesus' words on the same theme (Matthew 5:33-37). Why do you think this might be significant in our faith life?
7. James speaks about community life, healing, and the power of prayer in verses 13-18. What guidance does James give in verse 13, and why might this be helpful?
8. In verses 14-15, James addresses the sick in need of prayer by visiting elders of the church. Elders are spiritual leaders entrusted with pastoral oversight (see Acts 20:13-38; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4). Oil was a physical substance linked to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Why might the physical visit of elders linked with oil and prayer be significant both spiritually and for the community life of the sick?
9. Confession is related to healing in verse 16. What do you make of this?
10. In verses 17-18, Elijah the prophet (1 Kings 17-2 Kings 2) is offered as an example of prevailing prayer. What stands out to you about how James talks about Elijah?
11. James concludes the letter with an exhortation about lovingly guiding brothers and sisters toward truth. Why might James end with these words given all he has discussed?
12. What is one thing God speaking to you personally through this study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and share this with someone this week.

DIG DEEPER

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Memorize James 5:7 or 5:8 or 5:13-14 or 5:19-20
- Take time this week to reflect on what has stood out to you most about the book of James and what you have sensed God is speaking to you. Write down a "top 5" and discuss it with someone.
- Read about James' prayer life in "Old Camel Knees: a brief reflection on the remarkable prayer life of James the Just": mwerickson.com/2019/08/29/old-camel-knees-a-brief-reflection-on-the-remarkable-prayer-life-of-james-the-just/
- Strengthen your life of prayer by reading a book about prayer from a list like this: mwerickson.com/2018/08/28/bibliography-on-prayer/.

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