

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16

How is it that we can get our prayers answered?

- James is teaching Jewish believers about how to have faith, testing of our faith, characteristics of our faith and triumph of faith.
- Prayerfulness is an attitude by which a constant relationship between God and believers is developed.
 - Prayerfulness is a way of life
 - Prayerfulness arises from a desire to be with God
 - Prayerfulness demonstrates a continuing trust in God.
 - Prayerfulness involves a heart that is right with God
 - Prayerfulness involves the need to be alert
 - Prayerfulness arises from an awareness of need that can only be met by God.
 - Prayerfulness needs to be maintained especially in difficult circumstances.
- Prayer involves having intimacy and conversation with God. Prayer challenges our character.
- Prayer happens when we realize that the only way out of a difficult situation is to talk to God in prayer. Perhaps you are going through a situation you never thought you would encounter. Through fervent prayer, God can do amazing and wonderful things.

Sermon in a sentence:

Fervent prayer requires attitudes and actions that when aligned with God's will produce powerful results. Fervent prayer requires us to do what God is calling us to do.

Blocks or Hindrances to Prayer

1. Sin – separation between you and God – Isaiah 59:2
2. Disobedience – choosing to do something other than what God asked you to do – Zechariah 7:13
3. Selfishness - James 4:3
4. Injustice – Isaiah 1:15-17
5. Lack of Faith – James 1:6

Qualities that lead to effective prayer:

1. Be humble – Luke 18:9-14
 2. Be obedient – I John 3:21-22
 3. Righteousness – Proverbs 15:29
 4. Single-mindedness – Jeremiah 29:13
 5. Faith – Matthew 21:21-22
- A. **Fervent Prayer begins with confession** – In the case of private sin, the confession is private, public sin, the confession should be public. Confess your sins to each other. You can't have powerful prayers and harbor sin.

- a. Approach confession with a heart of reconciliation. Confess to one another. Pray for each other. That you might be healed. We are to be concerned about one another and how we relate to each other.
- b. Part of healing is acknowledging that you hurt me. Confess, be honest. Can we talk? Can we pray? The Bible says pursue peace. James was dealing with Christians who were struggling with how to be Christians. Speak the truth—I am hurting. What I am hurting about has to do with you. I want us to be reconciled and be healed.
 - i. Talk to the person so that the relationship can be healed.
 - ii. The church would be a whole lot better if we could confess. When it can't be worked out, see Matthew 18.

B. Fervent Prayer is rendered powerless by the sin of idolatry

- a. There are consequences when we worship idols. James uses Elijah as the example. See James 5:17-18. Elijah was dealing with Baal worship. Elijah was trying to tell them it will stop raining. It did not rain for 3 ½ years. This is what happens when you are worshipping the wrong gods.
- b. Prayer works when you are praying to the right God. See who the real God is - Read I Kings 17-18. Showdown at Bethel. Nothing happened when the worshippers of Baal were activated. Then, Elijah calls on the Lord to burn up the sacrifice. The wood was drenched with water. The fire burned up everything.
- c. Idolatry is trusting, serving, or giving worship to something is not God. God is saying, "Check yourself." Ask God, is there anything that is hindering me or causing my prayer to lose power.

- C. **Fervent Prayer involves intercession** – Intercession is our ability to think about someone else over ourselves. Ask God for something you need. Who does God want you to pray for? Intentionally plan to pray for that person. You are the one God has designed to stand in the gap. That is your assignment. We don't want anything to go unaddressed. Carry one another's burden. Together, we are to intercede for one another.

D. Fervent Prayer of the righteous will end in a demonstration of God's power.

- a. Examples of people whose prayers were effective:
 - i. Hannah – Prayed for a son (Samuel)
 - ii. Elijah – Prayed that God would demonstrate his power
 - iii. Nehemiah – Discovered God's plan through prayer
 - iv. David - He prayed through difficult times. When David messed up, he confessed his sin. He is known as a man after God's own heart.
 - v. Daniel – Patience in prayer was rewarded. "Even if they take me out, I still trust you"
 - vi. Jesus Christ – trusted the will of the Father
 - vii. The early church – Founded on prayer
 - viii. Paul – Prayed for the churches he founded or visited
- b. Ask, seek, knock—God I need you. Nevertheless, let thy will be done.

Questions for study and discussion:

1. Choose 2 or more examples of the hindrances to prayer. Read the Scripture passages and discuss.
2. Choose 2 or more examples of the qualities that lead to an effective prayer life. Read the Scripture passages and discuss.
3. One of the qualities that leads to effective prayer is obedience, what was the last thing God asked you do?
4. According to the sermon, what is our most costly distraction (sin) to an effective prayer life? What are some examples of this distraction (sin)? What actions will you take to reduce or eliminate the high cost of this sin? Hint: The cost of this distraction (sin) is our relationship with God.
5. Fervent prayer involves intercession. Who is God calling you to pray for fervently?
6. What has stolen the effectiveness of your prayer life?
7. Which of the people listed as examples of effective prayer do you most identify with? Explain.