

## James 5:13-20 ENCORE

- 1) Different people respond to trials and suffering in different ways.
  - a) How do the unbelievers you know typically respond?
  - b) How do the most mature Christians you know respond?
  - c) How do you usually respond?
  - d) How does God want you to respond?
- 2) Why does James say that the cheerful should sing Psalms and how does it relate to suffering?
- 3) In times of sickness Christians are encouraged to contact the elders or pastors of their church and have them pray over the sick person, anointing him with oil (v.14).
  - a) Do you think the use of oil is a medicine, ritual, or something else?
  - b) The prayer of faith shall save the sick (v.15) who offers this prayer?
  - c) How could the prayers of a pastor cause another person's sins to be forgiven (v.15)?
- 4) When was the last time you went to a brother or sister and confessed your sin against them (v.16)?
- 5) Why is it so difficult to go to someone asking for their forgiveness?
- 6) If you are struggling, how can prayer help you?
- 7) What is meant by "the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (v.16)?
- 8) Do you think the phrase righteous man (v.16) refers to: 1. The pastors who have been used of God to help restore the sick; 2. The believer who has been restored to health after confessing his sins; 3. Both of the above; 4. Believers in general without reference to those mentioned above or; 5. The pastors, the restored believer, and all righteous believers in general?
- 9) How is Elijah as an example of faithfulness in prayer (v.17-18)?
- 10) Was Elijah a super-spiritual man or super-Christian (v. 17)?
- 11) Will God answer your prayers?
  - a) Do you pray regularly for other Christians?
  - b) Do you pray the prayer requests that are sent out by the office?
  - c) Do you pray regularly for your pastor?
  - d) Do you pray regularly for the ministries of Blair Ridge Baptist Church?
  - e) Do you pray regularly for the lost?
- 12) If you are spiritually defeated, discouraged, and/or depressed right now; make a list of believers (don't forget your church leaders!) from whom you could solicit prayer support. Before another day passes, contact these folks and share your situation and need with them.

## **James 1-5 Reviewing the book of James**

**Monday (James 1:1-3)** Don't ever doubt that trials will accomplish something positive. They are designed to produce "patience" or better translated "endurance" or "perseverance." With every trial, we build the tenacity of spirit that holds on under pressure while waiting patiently on God to remove the trial at the appointed time and then reward us. It strengthens us as we gain more endurance. God builds us up in the same way a runner gradually develops the ability to run long distance. He starts small and works up to his maximum capacity. God allows increasingly greater trials in our lives to increase our endurance for greater ministry and joy, for the more difficult the battle, the sweeter the victory. When you come out of a difficult trial, you can rejoice over God's delivering you. That proves Him to be trustworthy, and that strengthens your faith. From John MacArthur's "Truth for Today"

**Tuesday (James 1:12)** Eternal life is the crown that God has promised to those who love Him. It is the believer's ultimate reward. Although we presently experience some of the benefits of eternal life, we possess it on promise; some day we will receive it in its fullness. We are still waiting to enter into our future reward. At the Lord's coming, He will grant to us the fullness of eternal life. The apostle Paul expressed a similar thought: "Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (1 Timothy 4:8). When Christ returns for the church, Christians will be granted a life of eternal righteousness. We will all receive the same crown consisting of the rewards of eternal life, righteousness, and glory. Endurance does not earn eternal life. However endurance is the proof of true faith and love, and that is rewarded by the fullness of eternal life.

**Wednesday (James 1:14)** Temptation doesn't come from God but from within. The term drawn away was used in hunting contexts to describe animals being lured into traps, and enticed is a term used to describe catching fish with bait. Every person is tempted when the trap of sin is baited with that which appeals to his lust. A person's lust responding to enticing bait deceptively draws him away to the point where he is trapped. What pulls us so strongly to the bait? It's not God. And it's not Satan, his demons, or the world's evil system that entice us to sin, although they bait the hook. It is our lustful nature that pulls us to take hold of it. Our flesh, our fallen nature, has a desire for evil. From a spiritual perspective, the problem is that even though we've been redeemed and have received a new nature, we still have an enemy within. The resident passion of the flesh, not God, is responsible for our being tempted to sin. Taken from John MacArthur's "Truth for Today"

**Thursday (James 2:1-4)** Partiality is defined as "preference or bias in favor of" and "an inclination to favor one group over alternatives" The word partiality is synonymous with prejudice or favoritism. Why do you think the people James was writing to might have been struggling with showing partiality? Think about the circumstances surrounding the writing of this epistle (James 1:1-2). How could trials affect the way you relate to people? How might partiality show its self during hard times? The human tendency is to give preference to those who seem to be rich, why do you think that is? Could it be that we hope they might give us something or our friendship with them might benefit us? James says that to prefer the rich because they look good and to dishonor the poor (because they don't look good) is in effect setting yourself up as a judge (an evil judge).

**Friday (James 2:14)** I have had this verse (and others from James) thrown up in my face many times when trying to explain the gospel to a legalist (someone who thinks he can be made right with God by keeping a set of rules or laws). The argument goes something like this; "Well James says faith without works is dead!" or "James says that faith without works does not save anyone" then they cite James 2:14. First of all you have to disregard the rest of the Bible to understand this verse in that way. I usually take people who make that argument to John 3, explain the gospel and then explain who Nicodemus was (he was a very good, very religious man). If Nicodemus needed to be born again I can assure you that you need to be born again as well. Next you need to examine the context of this verse and the entire passage. For one James is not laying out doctrine of salvation at all, he is talking to the church and instructing them on practices within the body (look at the context). Also understand that this verse is one in a series of questions meant to pique the thinking of the reader. Next look at what the verse actually says! He doesn't say that faith alone in Christ alone cannot save: instead James is talking about a different kind of faith; "if someone says he has faith" James is talking about a person who has made an empty profession of faith in Jesus Christ, but it has made no impact on their life. James is asking the question in this way; If someone says he is saved but Jesus Christ has never made any difference in their life, do you think that person is really saved?

**Saturday James 3:5-8** The little tongue "boasts great things." A tiny fire (envision a match or cigarette) can light a huge pile of wood on fire. The people in south Florida or Southern California know something about this. Every year fires devastate huge plots of trees and homes. You know when those wild fires are lit they are very hard to extinguish and most of the time the damage is irreparable. In the same way, once the words are out of your mouth there is no way to reel them back in. You can only go forward and deal with the devastation. James gives us another illustration – the taming of animals. If you think about it that really is an awesome thought. God has placed mankind in a role of dominion on the earth. We have (by God's design) been able to tame or subdue any kind of animal. How is it then, that mankind has been unable to tame or subdue his own tongue? It would seem from our accomplishments that it is not for lack of ability – we have been able to tame some powerful animals (lions come to mind). It must then be that most people have a lack of desire.

**The book of James – patience causing growth; how to find joy in trials** "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials" (James 1:2). How easy is it for you to express pure joy in the midst of a hard circumstance? I think most of us would have to admit that it is not an easy thing to do. Throughout the book of James we have been seeing and hearing his call to us to look at life with new eyes. Some of the things we think are most important in life are not all the important and some of the things we spend little time on are of utmost importance to God. Join us this Sunday for the final message in our series through the book of James.