

Quotes Kent Hughes ...

- **To the sick** the explicit instruction is to “call the elders of the church.” **James clearly places the responsibility for initiating the procedure on the sick person**, not on the church leadership. This does not exclude pastors or elders from suggesting that the sick person consider calling for the healing ministry, but the request must come from the ill.
- **First**, the prayer of faith comes from a faith in Almighty God who sovereignly carries out his will. Nothing is beyond him. He can heal anyone anytime he wills, and he does heal today! He does as he wills in every circumstance, working all things to his glory.
- This is most important, for the explicit instruction to call for the elders makes two implicit personal demands on the ill. **The first** is that before one calls on the elders there must be personal confession of all known sins.
- **The second demand** implicit in the sick person’s calling for the elders is the subjective sense that this is what the Holy Spirit is directing him to do. We must realize it is not always God’s will for a sick person to call for the elders to pray the prayer of faith and to be healed, for ultimately we will all have a sickness or trauma which will result in death.⁴ Our calling for the elders must not be a whim—“Sure, I’ll try anything!”—but with a definite sense that it is God’s will.
- The understanding of verse 15 depends on the definition of “the prayer offered in faith,” or as it literally reads, “the prayer of faith.” What are we to understand about this healing prayer? First, the prayer of faith comes from a faith in Almighty God who sovereignly carries out his will. Nothing is beyond him. He can heal anyone anytime he wills, and he does heal today! He does as he wills in every circumstance, working all things to his glory. Secondly, the prayer of faith carries a Spirit-given conviction that the Lord will indeed heal the person who is being prayed for. We are truly able to pray the prayer of faith only when we are sure it is God’s will.
- James is saying that when the elders have **the Spirit-wrought conviction that the Lord will heal the one being prayed for**, they will pray the prayer of faith, and the sick will be healed.
- [Hughes, R. K. (1991). James: faith that works (p. 255). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.]

Outline for James 5:13-20 ...

- (1) Pray in every situation in life within the sovereign, providential will of God, 5:13-15.
- (2) Confess our sins and pray for one another, 5:16-18.
- (3) Bring back a sinner from wandering and save his soul from death, 5:19-20.

Miscellaneous quotes ...

- Sick men and women call the elders as a group. They do not call those with a gift for healing; rather they call all to pray for healing. James says the prayers of a righteous man are effective. Since the first qualification for an elder is holiness—not social standing or theological acumen—the prayers of elders are effective. **The elders pray for healing, not for miracles** (Dorani, Daniel).
- James does not mention consecration for any office—whether prophet, priest, king, or church leader—in our passage. Nor is there anything like the custom of last rites, in which priests anoint the sick to remove remnants of sin from the dying soul. James stresses the efficacy of the prayer, not the oil, and he hopes for the healing of the living, rather than the salvation of the dying (Dorani, Daniel).
- **Healing is a gift, not a reward.** God does not owe healing to someone simply because she has strong faith (Dorani, Daniel).
- Calvin puts it well when he comments that James “means that there is no time in which God does not invite us to himself.” It is not so much that our religion should cover all experience, as that we have a God for all seasons. Both in periods of suffering and trouble, and in times of joy, prayer and praise alike acknowledge that he is sufficient. To pray to him is to acknowledge his sovereign power to meet our needs, and to praise is to acknowledge his sovereign power in appointing our circumstances. Whether as the source of supply in need, or the source of the gladness of our joy, God is our sufficiency (Motyer, J. A.).
- Prayer may not remove the affliction but it most certainly can transform it (Motyer, J. A.).