

STUDY 8

FAITH PRAYS

JAMES 5:12-20

As we've seen, James is all about relationships. But from the very start James has been clear: the key to our relationship with other people is our relationship with God. God shows us his character in the good news about Jesus, and if we believe it we'll reflect God's character to others. The good news about Jesus offers us love and mercy, and if we believe it we'll offer love and mercy to others. It makes sense then that James ends by coming back to our relationship with God...



HONESTY & FORGIVENESS

Sermon on the Mount

Jesus addresses his disciples in Matthew 5:

³³ “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ [Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21]

³⁴ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.

³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷ All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Read James 5:12-20

1. James starts the final section of his letter in v12 with a quote from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. There, Jesus was urging complete honesty before God, not just when you’re swearing an oath. How has honesty before God been important in earlier parts of James? (e.g. 1:5-8; 1:13,16; 3:14)
2. Verse 13 then applies this principle of honesty before God to the poor and the rich James has been addressing throughout the letter. The poor should bring their troubles to God in prayer, honestly acknowledging that he is their only hope. The rich should praise God in song, honestly acknowledging that all the credit for their happiness goes to him. How could such honesty before God help the fractured relationship between rich and poor Christians?
3. Verses 14-16 concern prayer about sickness. What do they imply can be a potential cause of sickness? Does this apply to all sickness? Why or why not?

8. Recall **2:13-14**. How might the gospel implications in 2:13-14 help you turn back those who've sinned against you?

FAITH WORKS

James ends the letter as he has written throughout: faith in Jesus has implications which you must live out toward others if your faith is real.

9. In this series on James, where have the implications of faith in Jesus most challenged you?

10. What are the main things you'll be doing differently as a result? How will you do it?

Pray for each other, that you really would have faith in Jesus, even in the worst times, showing that in your prayers, showing that in the way you relate to the people in your life, even when they're sinning against you. Pray for those you know who need to trust in Jesus and live out that faith themselves, that through seeing God's love in your love, they might be saved just as you are. Pray that your faith would really work.