

James 5:7-20 ~ Patience and Prayer ~ Discussion Questions

1. In Verse 5:7, several Bible translations read, “Be patient, *therefore*, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.” Why does James start this section with the word “therefore” or “then?”
2. When a farmer patiently waits for his crops to grow, does he do nothing?
3. What is the parallel between the farmer waiting for the harvest and us waiting for the coming of the Lord? (Galatians 6:9)
4. When James says in Verse 5:8 “the coming of the Lord is near” (or at hand) does this mean that James thought that Jesus would return in his lifetime and was wrong? (Hebrews 10:25, 1 Peter 4:7, Romans 13:11)
5. In discussing patience, why does James insert a seeming incongruous thought about grumbling against one another in Verse 5:9?
6. “Grumbling” is not specifically prohibited in the ten commandments. What does James say will happen if you grumble against a brother? (Matthew 7:1-5).
7. Why does James connect suffering (Verse 5:10) with being patient until the coming of the Lord? (2 Chron 24:20-22, Jeremiah 26:20-23, Acts 7:51-58)
8. In Verse 5:12, why does James speak out against taking an oath?
9. What earlier verse does 5:13 connect with? (Hint: think “suffering” at the beginning of the book)
10. In Verse 5:15, James refers to a prayer “offered in faith.” Whose faith?
11. Verse 5:15 seems to promise guaranteed instantaneous answers to prayers offered in faith. Does that mean when there is no healing, we lack real faith?
12. Why does James talk about confessing your sins to each other in Verse 16?
13. Why does James emphasize bringing someone back to the faith in verses 19-20?
14. What’s the bottom line in the book of James?

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1. James says in 5:16 that the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective and uses the story of Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal to illustrate his point. Read the end of the story in 1 Kings 18:37-38. Do you truly believe that God hears and answers prayers? Does he hear and answer *your* prayers?
2. Does God hear and answer only the prayers of righteous people (James 5:16)?
3. Does God really answer prayer, or are the benefits of prayer just psychological? Because we have prayed, does God so intervene in the course of history so that events occur differently than they would have otherwise?
4. In Mark 11:22-26, what does Jesus say is necessary for prayers to be heard and answered?
B _____ F _____
5. What else does Jesus say about prayer in Matthew 18:19-20?
6. In John 15:7, what does Jesus say must remain in you in order for your prayers to be answered?
7. When should we pray? A) Mainly in church, B) At one or more set times each day, C) Before meals, D) Spontaneously as circumstances dictate?
8. Should we pray in public or in private?
9. Should we use a special posture for prayer? Kneel? Stand? Sit? Bowed head? Eyes closed? Hands together or folded? Hands raised? Speak loudly? Just think the prayer but don't say it?
10. We'll be talking more about prayer next week. Bring any questions or issues that you find troubling about prayer and talking to God.