LG Leader

11/8 - James 5:13-18

LOVE

A new commandment I give to you, that you love *one another*... (John 13:34)

- *Internal*: How was your week? Any new life updates? How was your walk with the Lord this week?
- *External*: Practically, is there any individual or family that needs encouragement from us as a group?

TRUTH

Let the word of God dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing *one another*... (Col. 3:16)

Understanding:

1. When you reflect on the message from Sunday, what most resonated with you?
   [Open Discussion]
2. Let's read our primary text. James names suffering, cheerfulness, and sickness (vv. 13–14). What is he teaching by giving each situation a Godward response?
   James is saying that every season of life should turn us toward God. “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise” (v. 13). Prayer keeps suffering from sliding into despair or grumbling (cf. 5:9), and praise keeps prosperity from becoming self-sufficiency (cf. 4:13–16). Coming right after the call to patient endurance (5:7–11), this shows that steadfast waiting is not passive. It is a praying, praising dependence on the Lord in the hard and the good alike.
3. Why does James tell the sick person to “call for the elders of the church” to pray and anoint with oil (v. 14)? What does this say about the church’s role in suffering?
   The sick person takes the initiative, showing humility and a willingness to be cared for. The elders come as shepherds who represent the whole congregation’s care. Oil was both a common remedy in the ancient world and a symbol of being set apart to God; “in the name of the Lord” makes clear that the power is His, not the oil’s or the elders’. The picture is of a church family that does not leave hurting members to suffer alone, but surrounds them with prayer and pastoral presence.
4. Verse 15 says “the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.” How should we understand this promise when faithful believers are not always healed?
   The prayer of faith is prayer that trusts God and submits to His will (cf. 1 John 5:14; 4:15 “If the Lord wills”). It is the Lord who raises up, not the strength of our faith working like a formula. God often heals in this life, and He sometimes chooses a deeper good, as Paul’s “thorn” shows (2 Cor. 12:7–10). Ultimately every believer will be raised up in resurrection. The verse calls us to pray boldly for healing while resting in God’s wisdom, never blaming the sick for “weak faith.”
5. Why does James link confession of sin with prayer and healing (vv. 15–16)? Why is confessing “to one another” so important for a church?

James notes that sin can sometimes be connected to sickness, though not always (cf. John 9:1–3), and that forgiveness comes with the prayer of faith. He then widens it: “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” Healing here includes spiritual and relational restoration. Hidden sin isolates and festers; brought into the light within a trusted community, it loses its grip (1 John 1:7–9). Confession is not to a priest as mediator but between brothers and sisters, so they can carry one another to the throne of grace.

6. James stresses that Elijah was “a man with a nature like ours” (v. 17). Why is that detail so encouraging?
   We tend to put biblical heroes on pedestals and excuse ourselves from their kind of faith. James refuses that excuse. Elijah was a real man with weakness. Right after his great victory on Mount Carmel he ran in fear and asked God to take his life (1 Kings 19:3–4). God did not answer Elijah because he was extraordinary but because Elijah prayed in line with God’s word to a God who keeps His promises. Our prayers matter for the same reason: their power rests on the God who hears, not on our spiritual résumé.
7. How is this passage a fitting end to this book? How does this book start and end?
   James opened by urging believers in trials to ask God for wisdom in faith without doubting (1:5–8). He closes the same way: in every circumstance, pray.

Application:

8. Which part of this passage is hardest for you to practice right now: praying in suffering, praising in joy, asking others to pray for you, or confessing sin to another believer? Why?
9. When you are suffering, is your first instinct to pray, to complain, to fix it yourself, or to withdraw? What would it look like to make prayer your first response this week?
10. Do you have at least one trusted believer you could confess sin to and ask for prayer? If not, what is holding you back, and what is one step toward that kind of friendship?
11. Any other thoughts you would like to share before we wrap up this text?

GREAT COMMISSION

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... (Matt. 28:19-20)

- *Internal:* Did you make time to disciple your family this week? Pray with them?
- *External:* Is your life marked by joy/contentment? Are you prepared to share the gospel if the Holy Spirit prompted? Is the name of Jesus on your lips in your day-to-day activity?

CONFESSION/PRAYER/REPENTANCE

But exhort *one another* every day, as long as it is called "today,"... (Heb. 3:12-14)

- Confession is agreeing with God about our sin according to the Scriptures. Is there anything you want to confess before the group (generally)? *[apathy, idolatry, selfishness, jealousy, anger, envy]*
- Let's pray, asking God to help us apply His word to our lives.

Sources: ESV Study Bible Commentary / GotQuestions.org / Multiple AI Resources