

According to the Oxford Diction the definition for hypocrisy is, “the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one’s own behavior does not conform.” We saw it used in Scripture as someone who was an actor or pretender. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites and white washed tombs. On the outside they played the role of the religious elite, yet with their lives they showed that their hearts were evil and they were dead inside.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if the members of the body of Christ would take off their masks and stop acting with each other - putting on that smiling face when we all get together. Why is it so hard to bare our souls to one another? Why can’t we be honest and forthcoming with the hardships and mistakes in our lives? Why can’t we openly confess our sins to one another and seek forgiveness and accountability?

Honesty would invite an openness for intercessory prayer for one another. Who doesn’t want that to happen? Satan of course! So he uses our pride and causes us to put on a mask and hide from one another. James is going to address this issue at the end of his letter.

Let’s see what James wants to teach us on this last week of study.

DAY ONE

1. Read James 5 all the way through. Now go back and read James 5:1-6 and see how it may be related to James 5:7-11. Record your thoughts.
2. Look at the statement that James makes in verse 3. He says, “It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!” Were they in the last days when James penned those words? If they were in the last days, what are we in now? Let’s take a look at several Scriptures and see what and when the last days are. Record your thoughts making sure you ask the 5 W’s and H questions. Also, make sure to read each passage in context.

- d. Job 1, 2, and 42 (look for the beginning and the end of Job's life)
4. In James 5:12, James broaches the subject of oaths. He also revisits the topic of the tongue and being careful as to what you say. Why is he bringing this up again? Could it be linked to his mention of Job? Read and record what you learn about Job from Job 6:10, the end of Job 2:10 and Job 31:1-12 (An oath is a promise or covenant. Note how serious Job was about the covenant he had made.)
5. It is hard to live in this day and age with integrity and steadfastness. It is difficult to follow after the things of God when you watch those who are evil prosper. As Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the sun." The Psalmist understood the frustration of watching the rich get away with their evil schemes and seemingly never judged. What profit is there then to be a child of God? Read Psalm 73 and record how this chapter addresses these concerns.
6. How does Psalm 73 relate to James 5:1-11?

DAY THREE

1. Today you are going to turn your attention to James 5:13-20. Prayerfully read through these verses and allow God to teach you through His Word.
2. How many times did James use the word “prayer” or one of its synonyms or pronouns through these verses?
3. From these verses under what conditions or at what times are we to pray?
4. Using your study tools, look up the Greek word for “pray” and “prayer” in James 5:13-20. Record the words that are used, the transliterations, and the definitions.
5. How does singing praises fit with the idea of prayer? If you need help, read Philippians 4:4-7 and Matthew 6:9-15. Just a note when reading the Matthew passage. If you read the King James Version, it is different than the NASB, so for clarity’s sake I am going to write out what verse 13 says in the KJV. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: [For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.]” There is a notation that says that the phrase in the brackets is not found in early manuscripts. If it was in the original writings, it will help you to answer the question that was asked.

6. James 5:13 tells you that if you are suffering, you must pray.
 - a. Look up the word suffering (afflicted, KJV) in your word study tools.

 - b. Have you ever been in a state of suffering? What did you do? Did you expose that to your brothers and sisters in the Lord or did you put on a mask and pretend that everything was fine?

 - c. As a doer of the Word, what are you supposed to do and why?

7. Why do you think James tells those who are cheerful that they are to sing praises?

8. Carefully read through James 5:14-15 and then answer the following questions.
 - a. Who is the one to initiate the prayer gathering?

 - b. Why is this prayer offered?

 - c. Who does the praying?

 - d. The elders are to anoint him with oil. This is everyday olive oil. Does this oil have any special powers to heal?

- e. What will restore the person, the oil or something else?

 - f. Look up the word “restore” (save - KJV) in your word study books and record its transliteration and definition.

 - g. What part does the oil have in this? If you can’t answer this right now, it is fine but think about it.

 - h. What kind of prayer restores the sick?

 - i. To the best of your ability, explain this kind of prayer.
9. Read through James 5:14-16. Do you think that these verses teach that any time someone is sick, calls for the elders, and is prayed for, that healing is guaranteed? Think through this before answering.

DAY FOUR

1. Today you will move on to James 5:16-18. Start by reading these verses several times. As you will see, this is a continuation of what we were studying yesterday.
2. Let's begin with some word studies that will aid in your understanding of this passage. Record the transliterations and definitions.

a. confess - James 5:16

b. sins (faults - KJV) - James 5:16

c. healed - James 5:16

d. effective (effectual fervent - KJV) - James 5:16

e. righteous - James 5:16

f. can accomplish (availeth - KJV) - James 5:16

g. nature like (like passions - KJV) - James 5:17

h. earnestly - James 5:17

3. In James 5:16 the two verbs “confess” and “pray” are present tense, imperative mood, and in the second person plural. Present tense indicates that this is something we do as a manner of life. Imperative mood makes this a command. The second person plural indicates that this is something that is done as a group rather than the action of a single person. Look up these verses and see how they may relate to James 5:16-17.

a. Matthew 15:21-28

b. Luke 11:5-8

c. Luke 18:1-8

4. Let’s look up a couple of cross references that use the same word for healing as was used in James 5:16. As you read these verses, note what kind of healing takes place.

a. Matthew 13:15

b. Luke 6:17-19

c. Luke 22:51

d. Hebrews 12:13

e. I Peter 2:24

5. One more question and you can call it a day. Why do you think James brings up the prayer of Elijah in James 5:17-18? Are you familiar with the life of Elijah? Go back to your word studies and note what you learn about Elijah's prayer. Tomorrow you are going to take a look at this prophet of God.

DAY FIVE

In James 5:17-18, Elijah is described as a person just like you, but he prayed earnestly and the rains were withheld for three and a half years. I don't know about you, but that doesn't sound like an ordinary man! Yet reading these verses, it seems that James is saying that we should be praying like Elijah.

1. Let's see what you can learn about this man by reading about his life.

a. The statement that he was a man with a nature like ours, means he was just an ordinary man. Just how ordinary was he? Record what you learn.

1) I Kings 17:5-7

2) I Kings 19:1-3

3) I Kings 19:4

4) I Kings 19:10, 14

b. I Kings 17:1 is the first mention of Elijah. What do you learn about him here?

c. How could Elijah be bold enough to stand before the evil King Ahab and pronounce a judgement of shutting up the sky? Let's take a look at the background of the times.

1) I Kings 16:29-34 - what was Israel like during Ahab's reign?

2) Joshua 6:26 - note how this relates to the I Kings 16:29-34 passage.

3) Read Deuteronomy 11:13-17; 28:15, 23-24 and record what you learn from these verses.

2. After looking at these passages, where do you think Elijah received the boldness to stand before Ahab and declare that the skies were going to be shut up?

3. We have looked at the power of prayer, but is there anything that can hinder our prayers? What effect does sin have on a person's prayer life?

a. Psalm 66:18

b. Proverbs 28:9

c. Proverbs 28:13

d. Isaiah 59:1-2 - what a powerful verse!

e. John 9:31

f. I John 1:9

g. Considering what you have learned from these verses, what effect does sin have on your prayer life? How can that sin be dealt with according to the last reference you read?

4. James has shown us the importance of meeting together with a group believers. We need each other to stay real and honest with our lives.

a. The writer of Hebrews tells us the same thing. Read Hebrews 10:24-25.

b. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 carefully and see how that relates.

c. What have you learned about physically being part of a group of believers? There is strength and healing in this gathering!

