

12. PRAYERS OF FAITH

REFLECTION

Begin your study by sharing thoughts on this question.

1. Think of a time when God answered a specific prayer for you. How did that answered prayer change your life?

BIBLE READING

Read James 5:12–20 from the NCV or the NKJV.

NCV

¹²My brothers and sisters, above all, do not use an oath when you make a promise. Don't use the name of heaven, earth, or anything else to prove what you say. When you mean yes, say only yes, and when you mean no, say only no so you will not be judged guilty.

¹³Anyone who is having troubles should pray. Anyone who is happy should sing praises. ¹⁴Anyone who is sick should call the church's elders. They should pray for and pour oil on the person in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer that is said with faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will heal that person. And if the person has sinned, the sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so God can heal you. When a believing person prays, great things happen.

¹⁷Elijah was a human being just like us. He prayed that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years!

¹⁸Then Elijah prayed again, and the rain came down from the sky, and the land produced crops again.

NKJV

¹²But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. ¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

¹⁹Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰let him know that he who turns

¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if one of you a sinner from the error of his way will save a wanders away from the truth, and someone's soul from death and cover a multitude of helps that person come back, ²⁰remember sins.
this: Anyone who brings a sinner back from the wrong way will save that sinner's soul from death and will cause many sins to be forgiven.

DISCOVERY

Explore the Bible reading by discussing these questions.

2. What advice did James give to the troubled, the cheerful, and the sick?
3. How does prayer make a difference in the lives of believers?
4. What steps should believers take to receive God's healing?
5. What kind of prayer makes great things happen?
6. What does Elijah's experience teach believers about prayer?
7. What keeps people from turning to God in prayer?
8. When has it been difficult for you to accept God's answer to your prayer?
9. How can you develop more discipline and patience in your prayer life?

PRAYER

Father, we cherish your promise to answer our prayers. And yet we often come to you with muddled ideas, unsure of what is best, uncertain of your will, and unwilling to wait patiently for your answers. We thank you, Father, for the assurance that our imperfect prayers cannot hinder your incredible power.

JOURNALING

Take a few moments to record your personal insights from this lesson.

Write a prayer to God about a situation that is troubling you.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

10. What great things would you like to see God do in your life or the lives of others?

11. What commitment are you willing to make to pray for those things?

12. Who can keep you accountable to follow through on your commitment?

For more Bible passages on prayer, see Psalm 6:9; Proverbs 15:8, 29; Matthew 21:22; Philippians 4:6, 7; Colossians 4:2; 1 Peter 3:12.