



After nine weeks we've arrived at the end of the letter that James wrote to the early church. We've discovered that James was a caring leader and that his love for the church was expressed throughout his letter to them. His concluding thoughts to the early church focused on having a thriving prayer life. James knew that a thriving prayer life was an overflow of a thriving relationship with Jesus; therefore, he encouraged the church to pray in all situations. As an example, James reminds us of the power of prayer from the life of Elijah the prophet.

1. With your group think about your personal prayer life. Think about a time when God didn't answer your prayers. How did it feel? Now, think about a time when God answered your prayer, but it was better than you could have imagined. How did that feel?
2. **Read James 5:13-16.** James asks the church several questions about prayer. He exhorts us to pray in all situations. **Read Job 35:9-10, 2 Corinthians 12:6-10, and 1 Thessalonians 5:17.** When you're in trouble what is your first response?
3. Looking at the life of Jesus, we read that He healed many. **Read Matthew 8:5-13, Mark 2:1-12, and Luke 9:37-43.** We are encouraged to seek prayer from the elders of the church during times of sickness. What hinders us from doing that?
4. It seems that James includes an aspect of sin that can bring about sickness and/or hurt our relationship with others. Share about a time in your life where your sin brought about a sickness or broken relationship with someone in church.
5. **Read James 5:17-18.** To fully understand the story of Elijah we must look back to his life. Take some time in your group to **read 1 Kings 17 and 18.** After reading these stories about Elijah, what most stands out to you about his life?
6. James said that Elijah was a man just like us. Elijah prayed earnestly and God answered his prayers. How does Elijah's prayer life encourage you? Are there times that you give up on praying and resign yourself to apathy in your prayers?
7. The letter of James ends with a reminder to reach those who are living a life of sin. **Read James 5:19-20.** Share about the person who told you about Jesus. Who is God inviting you to share your faith with? What will that take?
8. Close your time in prayer.