

1) Jumping back in with a quick read of chapter 5 vs. 12 ...

James 5:12 (NASB 2020)

¹² But above all, my brothers *and sisters*, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you do not fall under judgment.

2) I became curious after our discussions last week so I look around and found this for the state of Texas.

In Texas, the oath of office can be affirmed instead of sworn, with the phrase "and this you do under the penalties of perjury" replacing "so help me God".

Here's a more detailed explanation:

- **Affirmation Option:** Instead of swearing, individuals can affirm their oath of office.
- **Alternative Phrase:** When affirming, the phrase "so help me God" is replaced with "and this you do under the penalties of perjury".
- **Example:** The Texas Municipal Courts Education Center provides an example of the oath that allows for affirmation, with the alternative phrase:
 - "I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of _____ of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States and of this State, so help me God (or and this you do under the penalties of perjury)."

3) I took a brief look at federal provisions like this one but did not find anything specific such as this one..

Any further discussion or comments on our discussion of oaths from last time?

4) Ok continuing, let's look at these next verses one at a time starting with verse 13.

James 5:13 (NASB 2020)

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? *Then* he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

5) James begins here with a couple of easy "to do's"

- a) Praying if we are suffering
- b) Singing praises if we are cheerful

6) I am sure everyone prays when they are suffering – that's what we might call a "no brainer".

7) However, singing praises when we are cheerful might be another thing altogether.

- a) First, let's get a clear definition of "cheerful"

What does cheerful mean to you?

Oxford = noticeably happy and optimistic.

Webster = full of good spirits

- b) The root word = lightness of mind and feeling

A related question just for thought as we proceed is – Is cheerfulness directly related to joy (or can it be)?

- 8) I really can't address the singing part but I know for myself, on the occasions when I do feel cheerful by either of those definitions, I am consciously thankful for it.
- 9) As I thought about this, I realized that I really don't feel that way as much as I would like.
- 10) There are lots of things in life today that steal our joy and without that it is hard to be cheerful.

How does that ring with you all? Is this just me or do you guys feel basically the same way?

- 11) There was another question that came to my mind along these lines.

Is cheerfulness (being cheerful) the same as being at peace?

- a) I personally think there is a marked difference between the two.
- b) I am a lot more at peace now (most of the time) than I used to be.
- 12) I will also say that I am thankful for that as well.
- 13) The key here is not the singing, it is the thankfulness and the praise we give God for the life we have that allows us to feel that cheer and peace.
- 14) How does cheerfulness fit with what we learned from Paul in Philippians when he said:

Philippians 4:4–7 (NASB 2020)

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all people. The Lord is near.

Does having a gentle spirit indicate cheerfulness?

- 15) If I may share, I personally came to the realization this week that a gentle spirit is a barometer.
- a) By itself it may not really indicate anything in particular.
- b) Its absence, however, is an indicator that something may be drastically wrong at that moment. Again, just a personal observation.

Finally, what can we do to move our personal needles toward joy, cheerfulness, and even a gentle spirit?

- c) First, we have to become aware that one or all of these are gone.
- i) This takes some inspection of our personal space.
- ii) Sometimes we find the situation makes it painfully obvious. Unfortunately, many times after the fact.

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- iii) Other times, we have to really think about our state of mind and heart to see that one or all of these may be missing.

16) Next, James gives us a formula for healing if we are sick (OR Perhaps Not). Starting in verse 14 we read...

James 5:14–15 (NASB 2020)

¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵and the prayer of faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

Before we discuss this let me ask a question – have any of you ever seen or heard of elders visiting the sick for specific purpose of anointing and healing?

- a) I can honestly say that I have not.
 - b) Obviously visiting the sick – absolutely a part of the calling to be an elder. But anointing specifically for healing I have not seen.
- 17) Now this is another of those sticky passages.
- a) Much discussion centers on what the word translated “sick” really means.
- 18) The verb used here can indeed mean sick or ill.
- a) It is used 38 times in the New Testament.
 - b) A little over half (21) the times it means ill or sick.
 - c) Most translations for this passage I looked at had either sick or ill.
 - d) In the rest of its usage it means either
 - i) **To be weak (abstractly) (12)** – to be or become wanting in moral strength, courage, will or other cognitive feature. OR
 - ii) **To be weak (deficient) (5)** – to be or become lacking or deficient in some skill or capability.
 - e) Either of those definitions could fit someone who is overwhelmed by persecutions and trials.
- 19) John MacArthur points out here that the context of this letter may indicate that the “being weak abstractly” meaning is intended.
- “become wanting in moral strength, courage, will or other cognitive feature”
- a) We must remember that James is writing to the Jewish Christians of the dispersion.
 - b) There is much in the way of persecution and trials going on with these folks.
 - c) James opens this epistle with an exhortation to patiently endure trials.
 - i) He returns to that theme in the first 6 verses of this chapter calling the rich to task for their treatment these folks.
 - ii) Further in verse 7, he calls for these folks to be patient in the trails they are enduring.
 - d) If that is the case James may truly mean if someone is weak in face of these persecutions or trials then the elders should take the indicated action.

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- e) In considering this weakness there is also associated with that the possibility of sin.
 - i) That perhaps why he says that their “sins will be forgiven” and they will be restored and raised up by the Lord.

20) Along those lines, we must address sickness caused by sin.

- a) Nowhere in scripture are we taught that sickness is **always** a direct result of sin.
- b) There is the incident Paul brings to the front in 1 Cor.

1 Corinthians 11:28–30 (NASB 2020)

²⁸ But a person must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For the one who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not *properly* recognize the body. ³⁰ For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number are asleep.

21) Again, considering context, we remove any issue we might have with the part of the elders in this passage.

- a) Elders were not specifically said to have healing powers.
- b) The only explicit sources of healing mentioned are:
 - i) Jesus himself
 - ii) The apostles
 - iii) Those whose spiritual gift is healing
- c) Even if we are looking at this from the “healing of the sick” perspective and not the “weak or overwhelmed” being supported, we must deal with those facts.
- d) Even in that regard I believe this passage is really indicating that it is the prayer and faith that is ultimately responsible for the healing – not a miraculous healing by the elders.
- e) The elders in the case of one who is weak in face of persecution could and should be a support.
 - i) Their prayers for and anointing of such a person could and should have a positive effect.

James 5:14–15 (alternate possible)

¹⁴ Is anyone among you *weak in the face of persecution*? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵ and the prayer of faith will restore the one who is *weak*, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

22) This is another one of those times where if we really consider context, all the pieces fit and the struggles go away.

23) If we do not, we have several very difficult questions to answer without much to go on to come to what one might think are good answers.

24) Again this is an ALTERNATIVE – NOT and absolute!

25) These next verses are not separate from but are really a continuation of James’ thoughts on this idea of prayer and its benefits.

James 5:14–15 (NASB 2020)

¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

26) Again, if we set aside the detailed questions for a moment – not that they are not valid – but there is a series of promises here that are more important perhaps than the details.

- a) If we are suffering – there is relief and comfort
- b) If we are sick, we can be healed through faith and prayer
- c) If we are weak, we can be strengthened through faith and prayer
- d) We have mature men in our elders that can support us in our trials
- e) Prayers offered in faith give us an avenue to our Father that if he wills can produce miraculous healing
- f) We have forgiveness of sin and support – not only from our God but from our brothers and sisters in Christ as well.

27) James then gives a rather challenging example – Elijah.

28) We must be careful when we read this not to be too quick to dismiss what James is saying.

29) We know without a doubt that Elijah was definitely different than us on many levels.

- a) He was a prophet
- b) A miracle worker
- c) He defended the worship of Yahweh over that of the Canaanite god Baal
- d) He confronted King Ahab and Queen Jezebell over their unjust actions such as the murder of Naboth.

30) All and all, quite a different person than any of us are **but** what James says here is **not** that he was the same in his activities **but** that we have the same nature.

31) By that I think he means we are a lover of God and a defender of the faith at whatever level is required of us – no less and for sure no more than Elijah.

So, with that as the basis for the statements can we agree that we and Elijah are the same – same nature?

So if that is the case, do we have the faith and the tenacity to accept the comparison – our prayers are like Elijah's? If not, why not?

32) By the way our new study will be on Jude and one of the overarching themes of that letter is contending for the faith so we will be talking more about that.