

James 5

Week 6 - Action And Reaction: Our Choices Matter

Wealth Does Not Excuse Exploitation

James 5:1-6 (NIV)

¹Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. ²Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. ³Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. ⁴Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. ⁵You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

? This passage lists consequences for rich people who are hoarding money, as well as workers and innocent people. What consequences stand out to you?

? How does this passage speak to the attentiveness of God?

? Throughout Scripture God chooses the lowly and oppressed people to be those who carry His message. How does this run counter to American expectations of wealth resulting from following God?

Persevere—God Has Perfect Timing

James 5:7-12 (NIV)

⁷Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

¹²Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned.

? What are the three commands that are given in this passage?

? What are examples given with these commands? What examples can you add from your own life and experiences?

? What are the consequences or blessings associated with obeying or rejecting these commands?

Three commands:			
Examples in the passage:			
Examples from your own life:			
Consequences:			
Blessings:			

? Which of these commands are the hardest for you to actually implement in your everyday life? Why? How can you work on obeying these commands this week and in the future?

The Power of Godly Relationships

James 5:13-20 (NIV)

¹³Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

¹⁷Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, ²⁰remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

? James is calling us to pray in every circumstance. Why is that? How do we do that in a way that is sincere rather than checking a box?

? What are your initial reactions when you're in trouble, happy, or sick? How does inviting the Lord into the equation enhance the experience? What does it look like to seek God first and focus on Him in community?

? What do we do when we earnestly pray for something and God chooses to respond in a way that is contrary to what we had hoped for? How do we believe that God is the God who will answer our prayers without believing He HAS to do so to be a good God?

Verses 17-18 of James 5 reference Elijah, an Old Testament prophet. We find this particular story in 1 Kings 17 and 18, where Elijah prays for the rain to cease (which it does for about 3 years) and then start again as a way to demonstrate God's authority to King Ahab. "Those who do God's will are exhorted to pray as Elijah did, with fervency, and they too can bring healing, both physical and spiritual, to the community." *The New International Commentary of the NT: James*, McKnight, pg. 451-452

? James' final command is to call sinners back to God. How can we reach out to those who are tempted or who have fallen into sin and draw them back?

? What can we do to live a life reflective of God's truth?

Final Thoughts

? The book of James is a call to live our lives in a way that reflects Gospel transformation. How can we avoid being driven by fear and legalism? How can we be aware of what God is calling us to do?

For Discussion And Accountability

? Which of the commands from this passage do you feel called to live out this week and long-term?

? As a believer in community, how can you encourage and support others in their obedience to God?