

## Faith that Works: How to be Happy when the World is Falling Apart

### Part 5: Happy Little Prayers

James 5:13-16

#### INTRO

Crazy journey these last 5 episodes. Hopefully these have helped you find happiness when it seems the world is falling apart.

Not easy... World falling apart... scary, no control, frustrating, anxiety, stress, anger... lonely

We all want to be happy... that's ok... it's how God designed us... God wants us to be happy.

There's one thing we can do that brings together everything we've talked about... it's been woven throughout this entire series, lurking just below the surface. It's really the key to all of it...

It's the key to fighting the fear, anxiety, loneliness, stress, anger...

It's the main/most powerful thing we can **DO** when the world around us is falling apart.

Going to sound too simple.. Going to be tempted to tune out... trust me that would be a mistake

And maybe you are not really in a place that you feel like you can totally trust God yet, and that's ok. You can still try what I'm about to tell you as much as you are able right now ... **If you want to be happy... pray.**

Might sound trite... but the happiest people I've known are also the prayingest people.

Find it at the end of the book of James

- **JAMES**

#### GOD:

**V. 13a** Are you suffering hardships? [who isn't, right?] **You should pray.**

- Cool. That was easy. Done. Alright go pray and be happy. See you next time.

But it's not that easy is it? What do we **usually** do when we are suffering hardships?

- Complain, fight back, find someone to blame, whine.
- Does that ever actually solve the problem we are facing?
- No, **How we usually respond to problems usually creates more problems.**

Examples:

Complain/whine? Just make yourself more miserable and bring others down with you

Fight back? Create enemies who then push back harder

James is saying, if you want to be happy especially when things are hard... pray about it.

- 1st episode... **Difficulties are opportunities to practice either trust or fear**. And... a happy life is a dependent life.

Think about it... What is prayer? Telling Genie Jesus what you want for Xmas? Nope. Kinda like a Xian form of meditation? Not really. Talking to God? Yes. But it's better.

### **Prayer is practicing trust.**

- When we pray we are trusting there actually is a God
- That he hears us
- That he cares enough to want to do something about our situation
- And that he is powerful enough to actually do something.

Instead of freaking out, overreacting, complaining, being consumed by fear and worry...

Prayer lets us acknowledge our dependence on God and allows him to focus our hearts/minds on him (love/power/care) instead of our problems.

And prayer doesn't just teach us to trust in hard times it also teaches us to trust when things are going well... and that prayer can take all kinds of forms...

### **V13b Are any of you happy? You should sing praises.**

Goes on... gets into some interesting waters... this is where things can get weird.

### **V. 14-15**

**Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.**

"Oh great that's all it takes? Great. Let's pray, get some essential oils, and get this COVID thing over with already."

Just ask Genie Jesus to heal you? No.

What is James actually saying?

It's this idea... God is sovereign (churchy world for having supreme, ultimate authority) over our lives.

James is saying when someone is sick we acknowledge this sovereignty... the anointing is a symbolic practice saying that this person belongs to God/is under his control... He can heal or not. He has the power, right, wisdom, and love to make the right decision.

This might be out there for some, but important to note... God has the power to heal and sometimes he does. Sometimes it's even immediate.

Why is it usually not the case? Don't know.

If we pray for someone to be healed and they aren't is James saying we just didn't have enough faith? No.

James also isn't saying that sickness is always the result of sin. That is a possibility, but it is usually not the case. Simply saying that IF it is then let's take care of it.

What he is getting at is the same thing his older brother said...

**John 14:14. Ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!**

The key here is "In His name" (not just tacking Jesus onto your prayers) and "prayer offered in faith".

Meaning... praying according to the will of God (God's perfect plan for the ultimate good), the confidence of knowing that healing IS what God has planned.

Not always the case. But there are times when those praying have an unexplainable, sometimes illogical, sense that God's will is to heal this person... and for whatever reason God loves to work through his people. So in that instance, when the Pray-er is aligned with his will/plan, God uses the prayers to heal.

But the MAIN POINT of what James is getting at is this...

**V. 16 Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.**

What he is saying is that... Prayer is actually a team sport.

Prayer shouldn't just be done alone...

**If you want to be happy, pray with and for others.**

It's not just about us and our own relationship and prayers. It's not just us asking God for what we want.

It's good to have your own private prayer life and be honest about what you want but prayer also needs to be done in a community of people who are committed to each other.

When we pray with and for others we encourage each other to rely on God... we remind each other that b/c of Jesus, our sins are forgiven.

Remember... We are happiest when we focus on others...

**Prayer is proof we care.**

If you really care about someone, and you trust that God hears, cares, and can do something then you pray with and for them.

“Righteous person?” Holy monk?

- Someone who is wholeheartedly committed to God and seeking his perfect plan for our world.
- Someone who follows Jesus. Given Jesus’ righteousness.
- This is available to all Jf’s not just a select few.

**It is the privilege and responsibility of every Jesus Follower to pray for others...** Especially each other.

The full experience of trusting prayer that produces happiness can’t be done alone.

**YOU:** So what do we do? How do we do this?

### **Pray**

- Just try it... no magic words. First time? “God, I don’t know if you’re really there. But if you are, thank you for what you’ve given me. Here’s what I’m dealing with... and here’s what my friend is going through”

### **Pray Thankfully**

- Can pray into a pit of despair... oh God help me, why me? This is so hard, so bad, oh no!

Instead... start with what you are thankful for, even if it seems silly or tiny. Thank you for loving me and promise to take care of me... and thank you for benign in control. Even if this doesn;t go the way I WANT... thank you that I can still trust you.

### **Phil 4:6-7**

**Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done [pray with thanksgiving]. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.**

### **Pray Selflessly**

- If God answered every one of your prayers with a ‘YES’... would anyone else’s life change for the better?
- “Well yeah, Id have more money for my kids” : )
- Care with your prayer
- Interesting for our time right now... First JF’s didn’t pray for deliverance but for endurance so others would know the peace, joy, and love of Jesus. Check out **Acts 4**.

### **Pray Together**

1. With your connect group, friend, family member... share a couple of things you are dealing with (stress, work, kids, school, etc) commit to pray for each other for a week, text each other “praying for you right now” (husbands... something amazing happens when your wife hears you praying for her)... then reconnect and check in on how its going add to the list, celebrate, continue if wanted... but it’s only a one week commitment right now.

**2. Email us on our connect form so that we can pray for/with you too!**

### **WE:**

If what Jesus said and showed us is true... then there is a God who loves us, sees and hears us, that we have instant access to the creator of the universe and every dimension by talking to him...

It's actually mind blowing. What would stop us? Why would we see this as "the least we can do?"

**If Jesus was right** (If he wasn't a crazy liar), **then prayer is the most powerful force for good in the world.**

Final Question: **Who are you relying on?** Yourself? Government? Money? Just wishing for a better future?

Why rely on the only reliable person in history? The one who predicted his death and resurrection and then actually accomplished it? The one who promises to never let you go?

Why not talk to him about your concerns, joys, challenges... and put that reliance into practice?

**When the world is falling apart, prayer is the most reliable path to happiness.**

### Questions

1. What do you think about prayer? What personal questions / stories do you have about it?
2. Read Psalm 86. What stands out to you as it relates to prayer?
3. As Jon said in the message, share a couple of things going on in your life right now. You might have to fight through the awkwardness, but spend some time specifically praying for one another in your group.