

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE:	How to Pray for Friends and Influence People
SERMON REFERENCE:	James 5:16-18
LWF SERMON NUMBER:	#0525

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) James 5:16-18
- b) There is no way to overstate the importance of prayer.
- c) Andrew Murray stated that it is in prayer that we change our natural strength for the supernatural strength of God.
- d) It has been said that when we depend upon prayer, we get what God can do.
 - i) What this world needs is not what education or organization can do, but what God can do.
 - ii) Our homes need what God can do.
 - iii) Our churches need what God can do.
- e) We do not have a need in our lives but what earnest, persistent, believing prayer can supply the answer for that need.
- f) A recurring theme in the book of James is the power of prevailing prayer.
- g) James is speaking in these verses about prayers of intercession; not just getting our needs met (as he spoke of in James 4), but helping our friends to have their needs met.
 - i) James 5:16

2) THE CONFESSION WE MUST MAKE (JAMES 5:16)

- a) We want to conceal our faults rather than confess them.
- b) Historically, great revivals are marked by confession of sin, not only to God, but to one another.
 - i) Where God's people are broken, God seems to move.
- c) Several things take place when we confess our faults to one another.
 - i) There is restoration.
 - (1) James 5:16
 - (a) The word "healing" here does not merely refer to the healing of the body, but it may also refer to the healing of the soul or spirit.
 - (2) Whether there is physical brokenness, emotional brokenness or spiritual brokenness, restoration is needed.
 - (3) When we begin to confess our sins, God begins to move in and work.
 - (a) Psalm 51:17
 - ii) There is reconciliation.
 - (1) Matthew 5:23-24
 - (2) When a wrong is done, there can be no reconciliation until there is confession.
 - iii) There is revival.
 - (1) Revival happens when we confess our faults.
 - (2) It will be a great day in the churches of America when confession replaces criticism and compassion replaces condemnation.
 - d) James does not say that we are to broadcast our faults or display our faults.
 - i) We need to be careful because the devil will use anything to his advantage, even confession.
 - ii) Jesus warned about casting our pearls before swine.

- (1) Matthew 7:6
- iii) The circle of confession needs to follow the circle of sin.
 - (1) Private sin means private confession between you and the Lord or with a trusted prayer warrior.
 - (2) Personal sin needs personal confession.
 - (a) If you have sinned against me or I have sinned against you, then we need to confess one to the other.
 - (b) We don't talk about it to other people.
 - (3) Public sin means public confession.
 - (a) If we publicly dishonor the Lord, then we need to publicly repent and publicly get right with God.
 - (i) Even though our hearts have changed, those around us may not know it.
- 3) THE COMMAND THAT WE SHOULD MIND (JAMES 5:16)
 - a) God commands us to pray for one another.
 - i) Luke 18:1
 - ii) 1 Thessalonians 5:17
 - iii) 1 Samuel 12:23
 - b) Prayer is the greatest Christian privilege.
 - i) The omnipotent God has invited us to talk with Him.
 - c) Prayer is the greatest Christian power.
 - i) More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.
 - d) Prayer is the greatest Christian failure.
 - i) We have not because we ask not.
 - ii) James 4:2
 - e) Prayer is not just getting ready for Christian service; prayer is Christian service.
 - i) We are serving God when we pray.
 - ii) We can do more than pray after we pray, but we can do no more than pray until we pray.
 - f) Those who are sick need more than our pity; they need our prayers.
 - g) Those with faults need more than our condemnation; they need our intercession.
 - i) Galatians 6:1
 - ii) We are not to criticize, but we are to help and to encourage.
- 4) THE CONDITIONS WE SHOULD MEET (JAMES 5:16)
 - a) Not all prayer is answered prayer; not all prayer gets to God.
 - i) James 1:6
 - (1) We are to ask in faith; nothing wavering.
 - ii) James 4:3
 - (1) We are to ask for the right things.

- b) In James 5, James adds two more conditions we should meet for answered prayer:
 - i) The intensity of the asking
 - (1) James 5:16
 - (a) The words “effectual, fervent prayer” are a translation of one Greek word that literally means “stretched out”.
 - (i) An illustration of this is the idea of an athlete running for the finish line, and he stretches himself out for the goal.
 - (ii) James says that this is the way we are to pray.
 - (2) We are to be eager, earnest, fervent and impassioned in our prayers.
 - (a) Prayer is to be intense.
 - (b) We give without sacrifice, we pray without fasting, we witness without tears; is it any wonder that we sow without results?
 - (3) It is not so much about the position of the body when we pray (whether we are on our knees or face down), but the intensity of our desire.
 - (a) Half-hearted, lukewarm and indifferent prayers don’t get through.
 - ii) The integrity of the asker

5) THE CHARACTER THAT WE OUGHT TO MANIFEST (JAMES 5:17-18)

- a) In this passage, “Elias” literally means Elijah.
 - i) James says that we can be like him.
 - (1) We can manifest the same character that Elijah had because he was a man of like passions as we are.
 - b) James references Elijah’s prayer recorded in the Old Testament.
 - i) The character that we should mimic and manifest is found here.
 - ii) 1 Kings 18:42-45
 - (1) This is the episode that James chose to use as an illustration of the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man.
 - c) We need to notice the integrity of the asker:
 - i) Elijah was God’s man.
 - ii) He was a man of integrity, and he was a righteous man.
 - (1) If we want our prayers answered, then we must be righteous.
 - (2) The reason why most of our prayers go unanswered is because of sin.
 - (a) Proverbs 15:29
 - (b) Psalm 66:18
 - (c) Isaiah 59:1-2
 - iii) The righteousness that James references is both positional and practical righteousness.
 - (1) There is positional righteousness.
 - (a) Have you been saved?
 - (b) Is Jesus Christ your personal Savior?
 - (c) There is no possible way we can be righteous apart from Jesus Christ.

- (2) There is practical righteousness.
 - (a) Are you obeying God's commandments?
 - (b) Are you living day by day quoting His promises?
 - (c) Are you living a pure, clean life?
 - (i) Psalm 66:18
 - 1. How foolish we are to not relinquish our sins so that we might have the blessings of God upon our lives.
- d) There are several things we should notice about Elijah's prayer in 1 Kings 18:
- i) The person of the prayer
 - (1) 1 Kings 18:42
 - (2) It was Elijah who prayed.
 - (3) Elijah was a man of like passions as we are.
 - (a) James 5:17
 - (4) The same God who answered Elijah's prayer will answer our prayers.
 - (a) Many ask, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"
 - (b) We should be asking, "Where are the Elijah's of God?"
 - (i) Where are the people who are willing to believe God like Elijah did?
 - (5) Elijah was not perfect; he made mistakes.
 - (a) 1 Kings 19:1-4
 - (b) Elijah knew what it was to be depressed.
 - (c) Elijah knew what it was to fail.
 - (6) Elijah was an ordinary man.
 - ii) The place of the prayer
 - (1) 1 Kings 18:42
 - (2) Elijah went to the top of Mt. Carmel.
 - (a) He went off by himself.
 - (b) Matthew 6:6
 - (3) Elijah sought a place where he could be alone with God.
 - (a) The secret of our success as teachers and ministers will not be measured by how well we prepare or teach in public, but how well we prevail in private.
 - (i) The effect of our teaching and ministering is measured by the power of Almighty God upon our lives because we've been alone with Him in prayer.
 - iii) The posture of the prayer
 - (1) 1 Kings 18:42
 - (2) Elijah was a man who was bent over; he was broken.
 - (a) He stretched out before God with his face between his knees.
 - (3) Elijah was such a bold man when he stood before the wicked King Ahab because he had spent time with God in prayer.
 - (a) No man needs fear any earthly king when he's just had an audience with the King of kings.

- (b) The person who can kneel before God can stand before any other man.
- (4) Elijah was a humble man.
 - (a) James 4:10
- iv) The passion of the prayer
 - (1) 1 Kings 18:42
 - (a) Elijah cast himself down upon the Earth.
 - (2) With great intensity, Elijah came before God.
 - (a) He prayed a passionate prayer, and therefore, a powerful prayer.
 - (3) Hebrews 5:7
 - (a) The Lord Jesus prayed with strong cryings and tears.
 - (4) Genesis 32:26
 - (a) When was the last time you said to the Lord as Jacob said, "I won't let You go except You bless me"?
 - (5) Colossians 4:12
 - (6) Prayer is hard work, and Elijah prayed passionately.
- v) The persistence of prayer
 - (1) 1 Kings 18:43-44
 - (a) Elijah was praying for rain.
 - (b) He prayed and sent his servant seven times to look for a cloud.
 - (2) Matthew 7:7
 - (a) In the Greek language, this passage says to keep on knocking, keep on seeking and keep on asking.
 - (3) Luke 18:1
 - (4) Galatians 6:9
 - (5) Colossians 4:2
 - (6) Isaiah 30:18
 - (a) Sometimes God does not answer right away because He has a gracious purpose.
 - (7) God's delays are not God's denials.
 - (a) Elijah knew this, and he persistently and passionately prayed the same prayer seven times; and he found the answer.
 - (b) May God enable us to find a holy purpose and to continue with God in prayer until that purpose is answered.
- vi) The power of prayer
 - (1) 1 Kings 18:45
 - (2) Elijah prayed, and God sent a great rain.
 - (3) A Bible preacher once said that nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God.

6) CONCLUSION

- a) Our lives, our homes and our churches need the unmistakable stamp of God upon them, and that comes through prayer.
- b) Our homes can be blessed by prayer.

- c) Our weak wills can be strengthened through prayer.
- d) Our needs can be met by prayer.
- e) We can have victory over the world, the flesh and the devil by prayer.
- f) We need to pray for one another.
- g) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can come to Him today through prayer.
 - i) Pray to Him and ask Him to come into your life.
- h) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16