

STUDY NOTES

JAMES: A FAITH THAT ENDURES

A series at New City Church

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message “The Prayer of Elijah and the Power to Heal” on 4/31/19 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: JAMES 5:12-18

KEYS TO PRAYER

James turns our attention to prayer to conclude his letter to the Church. James gives us a story from the Old Testament to illustrate some principles on prayer. The story is about the prophet Elijah praying for rain because it hadn't rained for three and a half years. **Read about the conclusion of the story here: 1 Kings 18:41-45.**

There are five keys to prayer that we can learn from the story of Elijah and from the teaching of James.

Key 1: It is not the person praying who is primary, but the Person being prayed to, that truly matters.

What's important is that we are praying to the God of the universe through the work of his son Jesus. Jesus allows us to access God just like Elijah and James had access to God.

- *What is it like to know that you have the same access to God—through Jesus—as any great hero of the faith?*
- *How does it take the pressure off you to know that regardless of what your life looks like, you can come to God?*

If you read more of the story of Elijah, He went back down into the valley to destroy the false prophets. The false prophets had to die (in the story it is literally those opposed to God) in that valley.

Key 2: Often something must “perish” in you before you pray.

- *What do you think it means that something must die in you as you pray?*

Key 3: Prayer is more about our posture than it is about our words.

The words of Elijah's prayer are not even given in the text, but he postured himself humbly before God. This highlights how important our posture toward God is rather than the exact words we say.

- *With what kind of posture should you come to God? How can you posture yourself like that?*

God asked Elijah to climb up the same mountain seven times. Elijah had to be persistent in his pursuit of God. The same principle applies to us.

Key 4: Prayer involves a constant and persistent pursuit of God.

- *Describe an experience when you had to be persistent with God.*

Elijah heard the sound of rain before he saw the rain. It requires faith to believe that God can answer prayers before we see him work. The writer of Hebrews says, “Faith is assurance in things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1)

Key 5: Prayer perceives the unseen. We most often hear the answer to prayer before we see the answer to prayer.

- *Why do you think God calls us to pray in faith? How has that been difficult for you?*

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

God will answer your prayers. He may answer by saying “yes.” He may answer by saying “no.” God asks us to trust him with the answer to our prayers. It can be really hard to be at peace with an answer that we didn't want, but Jesus promises to raise us up with the same power with which he was from the dead. Whether that's in this life or the next, we have hope in the power of Jesus to heal our circumstances for good.

- *How have you learned to trust God with the answers to your prayers?*
- *Pray with each other to have the strength to pray.*