

BOOK OF JAMES
ARE YOU AFFLICTED?—PRAY!
JAMES 5:13a

BOOK OF JAMES
ARE YOU AFFLICTED?—PRAY!
JAMES 5:13a

Introduction

We who have trusted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour have been blessed by God our Father with many Spiritual Blessings from our being ***“In Christ”!*** *Ephesians 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:”*

One of those Spiritual Blessings is that now, through Christ, we have access to our Heavenly Father by the Holy Spirit that now indwells us! *Ephesians 2:18 For through him [Christ Jesus] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

Ephesians 3:12 [Speaking of Jesus Christ] In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Hebrews 4:15-16 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Let’s just think about this for a moment! **This ability for us to bring our prayers unto the LORD is certainly one of the high and holy privileges we have as Believers in Christ!**

To know that, as God's children, we can come freely and boldly to His throne and share with Him our needs and know that He not only hears us, but that He cares about what is going on in our lives! What a great blessing that is!

1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Seven times in the closing verses of this chapter, we see that James mentions prayer. The point that James is making here is that **Believers are to be prayerful in the midst of the troubles of life!**

Instead of complaining about our troubles and trials, **we are to talk to God about them knowing that God hears and answers prayers!**

Our response to trials speaks to our spiritual maturity! Taking things to the Lord in prayer is certainly one thing that marks one’s spiritual maturity!

Tonight I want to deal with just the first part of one verse—Verse 13! I want us to see this truth this evening! THE BELIEVER SHOULD PRAY WHEN HE IS AFFLICTED! (JAMES 5:13a)

That word translated ***“AFFLICTED”*** here comes from two words. One of those words means ***“evil”*** and the other word means ***“suffering”***. Giving it the meaning of ***“suffering in difficult circumstances”*** or ***“to undergo hardship.”***

Any time we find ourselves ***in difficulty*** or ***in trouble***, THAT is what being ***afflicted*** is!

As we Believers go through life, we often must **endure some difficulties or afflictions** that can come at us from different directions!

I. WHEN AFFLICTIONS COME FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL—PRAY!

This same word translated here as ***“afflicted”*** is used 3 times by Paul in 2 Timothy to refer to **things suffered for the Gospel’s sake.**

2 Timothy 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:8 Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

2 Timothy 4:5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

II. **WHEN AFFLICTED BY SATAN AND HIS COHORTS—PRAY!**

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Satan Doesn't Like Us Because We Now Belong To Christ!

We have a **NEW FATHER!** We have a **NEW FAMILY!**

And Satan doesn't like it one bit!

Because of that:

He will use whatever he can to DISTRACT us!

(He wants to get us distracted from the things that really matter—eternal things! And he wants to get our focus on the things that don't really matter—temporal things!)

He will use whatever he can to cause us to DOUBT!

(He wants us to Doubt God's Word, Goodness, and Power!)

He will use whatever he can to cause us to be DISCOURAGED or DISAPPOINTED!

When God doesn't do things in our life on our time table!

When bad things happen to us while we watch those living in sin flourish!

When things don't happen the way we expect them to.

He will use whatever he can to cause us to be DEFEATED and to keep us that way!

Satan is **one of the main sources of affliction** in the life of believers!
But **we don't always recognize where it is coming from!**

Even some of the rest of the **afflictions** that we will look at tonight I want you to understand that **Satan is behind most of it either directly or indirectly!**

Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Fighting a Spiritual Battle takes Spiritual Means!

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

*WHEN AFFLICTIONS COME FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL—
PRAY!*

WHEN AFFLICTED BY SATAN AND HIS COHORTS—PRAY!

III. **WHEN AFFLICTED BY UNBELIEVERS—PRAY!**

e.g. The persecution laid against Apostles and the Churches in the Book of Acts— **Acts 4:23-31 (Peter and John); Acts 12:5, 12 (Peter) Acts 16:25 (Paul and Silas).**

Remember, unbelievers are of their father the devil and lusts of their father they will do! So, being **afflicted** by unbelievers is a form of being **afflicted** by Satan and his cohorts!

We live in the perilous times prophesied by Paul in **2 Timothy 3:1-5!** Paul said there would be men who would be “...*false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good...*”

In the same Chapter, Paul told Timothy:
2 Timothy 3:12-14 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. 14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.

BOOK OF JAMES
ARE YOU AFFLICTED?—PRAY!
JAMES 5:13a

WHEN AFFLICTED BY UNBELIEVERS—PRAY!

IV. WHEN AFFLICTED BY BRETHREN—PRAY!

You would think that we'd be safe from having to bear *affliction* from our Brethren! But that's not the case! In my personal experience, some of the worst *afflictions* that have been inflicted upon me as a Pastor have come from folks who called themselves Brethren!

In fact, I had a period of 9 ½ years (From 5/1989 to 11/1999) when I was affected by *afflictions* from some "Brethren" to such an extent that my ministry changed from Pastoral Ministry in a local Church to serve the LORD preaching and pastoring in a couple of prison ministries and doing some interim pastoral work for Churches that didn't have a Pastor! At that time I had been hurt so much that I didn't know that I could ever or would ever Pastor a Church again!

Some might ask, were those really Brethren that perpetrated those *afflictions*? God only knows. He's the one that sees mens hearts! Its not for me to judge that! But I do know that in **2 Corinthians 11:26** the Apostle Paul mentions being in "**perils among false brethren!**"

e.g. In **2 Timothy 4:14-18** the Apostle Paul mentions how Alexander the coppersmith **did him much evil causing even the brethren to forsake him!** Think about that! In that instance we see how that Paul's *afflictions* stemmed from both words and actions of even brethren! (We used to say on the playground "*sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me*", but we didn't have it right! Even then we knew we didn't have it right! Words can hurt!

Sadly, Satan can use professing Believers that are out of God's will to *afflict* with words and actions those who are trying to do something for God!

*WHEN AFFLICTIONS COME FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL —
PRAY!*

WHEN AFFLICTED BY SATAN AND HIS COHORTS—PRAY!

WHEN AFFLICTED BY UNBELIEVERS—PRAY!

WHEN AFFLICTED BY BRETHREN—PRAY!

BOOK OF JAMES
ARE YOU AFFLICTED?—PRAY!
JAMES 5:13a

V. WHEN AFFLICTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSED BY OTHERS—PRAY!

I believe that a lot of what we are seeing happening in our country with all the natural disasters piling one on top of the other are in response to the increasing ungodliness in our society!

Understand that even Believers, can sometimes be affected (*afflicted*) by what God pours out on the ungodly!

Let me give you some examples:

A. First—Two Old Testament Examples.

Think of Joshua and Caleb who had to wander in the wilderness with all those folks that were under God's judgment from having disobeyed the LORD!

Think of the faithful remnant of Judah who were carried into Babylonian captivity along with those who were unfaithful to God and failed to heed God, causing the invasion and captivity! (Jeremiah, Daniel and the Hebrew children and even others!)

B. Second—A New Testament Example.

Remember Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner in Acts 27. The ship he was arrived at Crete for a stop. The Lord showed Paul that if they sailed the ship was going to be in peril! He shared that with the captain of the ship who ignored Paul and sailed on anyway! The result was a shipwreck!

VI. WHEN AFFLICTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSED BY LIVING IN A SIN CURSED WORLD—PRAY!

Believers are not exempt from dire circumstances that are caused by living in a sin cursed world and among sinful people!

e.g. The terrorist attacks known as 9/11. This world is a sinful world and we live in some of the most perilous of times! But also, natural disasters—hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.

BOOK OF JAMES
ARE YOU AFFLICTED?—PRAY!
JAMES 5:13a

BOOK OF JAMES
ARE YOU AFFLICTED?—PRAY!
JAMES 5:13a

VII. WHEN AFFLICTED BY CHASTENING FROM THE LORD—PRAY!

Sometimes the afflictions we suffer as Believers may come from us sinning and getting out of the LORD's will for our life!

(e.g. The Prophet Jonah knew the storm he was in and the whale he wound up in were of his own disobedience to the LORD!)

Jonah 2:1-2 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, 2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

Lamentations 3:31-32 For the Lord will not cast off for ever: 32 But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

Lamentations 3:40 Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD. 41 Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.

Hebrews 12:5-6 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We must NOT be envious and critical of the saints who are having an easier time of it than we are! (*James 5:9*)

We should pray, asking God for the wisdom we need to understand our situation and use it to His glory! (*James 1:5*)

Prayer can remove affliction, if that is God's will. But prayer can also give us the grace we need to endure troubles and use them to accomplish God's perfect will.

God can transform troubles into triumphs. *James 4:6 "He giveth more grace"*

In *2 Corinthians 12:7-10*, the Apostle Paul prayed that God might change his circumstances, but instead, God gave Paul the grace he needed to turn his weakness into strength.

Our Lord prayed in Gethsemane that the cup might be removed, and it was not; yet the Father gave Him the strength He needed to go to the cross and die for our sins.

WHEN AFFLICTIONS COME FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL — PRAY!
WHEN AFFLICTED BY SATAN AND HIS COHORTS—PRAY!
WHEN AFFLICTED BY UNBELIEVERS—PRAY!
WHEN AFFLICTED BY BRETHREN—PRAY!
WHEN AFFLICTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSED BY OTHERS—PRAY!
WHEN AFFLICTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSED BY LIVING IN A SIN CURSED WORLD—PRAY!
WHEN AFFLICTED BY CHASTENING FROM THE LORD—PRAY!

Conclusion

What should we do when we find ourselves afflicted by trying circumstances?

We must NOT murmur against the LORD or his leaders as the Israelites did in the wilderness! Don't get bitter against the LORD or you will just compound your affliction! (Affliction on top of affliction!)