



Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide
James 5:13-20 | November 23, 2025
Prepared by DJ Severin
DJ@gspc.org | 562.493.2553 x115

I. Introduction to this Study

As James brings his letter to a close, he returns to many of the themes that have shaped the entire book: perseverance in trials, humble dependence on God, and the necessity of a community that cares for one another.

This final passage centers on one of the most practical and important expressions of faith: prayer. For James, prayer is not a last resort; it is the natural reflex of a life anchored in God. Whether we are suffering, joyful, sick, or spiritually wandering, James calls us back to God and back to one another. The Christian life is not meant to be lived alone. It thrives in community through confession, restoration, and mutual prayer.

As we study these verses, we are invited to reflect on how prayer shapes our lives and how our community can embody the kind of care James envisions.

II. Connecting with One Another

When something surprising or stressful happens, which reaction is most “you”: grabbing your phone, grabbing a snack, a quick prayer, or something else?

III. Study the Text

Read James 5:13–14

- Why do you think James begins with such a wide range of human experience, suffering and cheerfulness?
- What does this teach us about the place of prayer in ordinary, everyday life?
- Why does James tell the sick person to call the elders instead of handling it privately?
- What does this reveal about the nature and responsibility of Christian community?

Read James 5:15–16

- How do these verses connect physical healing with spiritual restoration?



- Why might confession be essential for the health of a community?
- In a culture that values privacy and independence, why is mutual confession so difficult?
- How do these verses connect back to James's earlier teaching on the tongue and relationships?

Read James 5:17–18 (Elijah as an example)

- Why does James emphasize that Elijah was a human being just like us?
- What do Elijah's prayers teach us about perseverance and trust in God?
- How does Elijah's example reshape our ideas about what makes prayer "powerful"?
- How does this connect to James's earlier teaching about asking in faith rather than doubting?

Read James 5:19–20

- What does this assume about the Christian community's responsibility for one another?
- How does this echo James's concern for consistent obedience throughout the letter?
- What does it mean to "cover a multitude of sins"?
- How does this call to restore someone who has wandered shape our understanding of Christian fellowship?

V. Prayer

Spend time in prayer together:

- Pray for those in your group who are suffering or discouraged.
- Give thanks for any answered prayers or areas of joy.
- Pray for healing (physical, emotional, or spiritual) for those who need it.
- Ask God to make your group a place of honesty, confession, and restoration.
- Pray for anyone who has wandered from faith, asking God to draw them back.

VI. Digging Deeper

- **1 Kings 17–18** – Elijah's ministry and the prayers James references.
- **Psalms 32:1–5** – The blessing of confession and forgiveness.
- **Galatians 6:1–2** – Restoring someone who has fallen and carrying one another's burdens.
- **Matthew 18:15–20** – Jesus' teaching on pursuing a wandering brother or sister.
- **Philippians 4:6–7** – Praying in all circumstances with thanksgiving.

