

The Letter of James 5:13-20

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers,
2 take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

3 ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained
4 steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job,
5 and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the
6 Lord is compassionate and merciful.

7 ¹² But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by
8 heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your
9 “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not
10 fall under condemnation.

11 ¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is
12 anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone
13 among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the
14 church, and let them pray over him, anointing him
15 with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of
16 faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will
17 raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be
18 forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another
19 and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The
20 prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is
21 working. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours,
22 and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for
23 three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.
24 ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and
25 the earth bore its fruit.

26 ¹⁹ My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the
27 truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰ let him know
28 that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering
29 will save his soul from death and will cover a
30 multitude of sins.

**Read the passage through completely
before looking at these questions.**

Observation (What does it say?):

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- Make a list of one or two words for each topic James mentions as he ends his letter.

Use the back if you need more room!

- What else do you observe in this passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- How does James connect the various topics?
- What parts of this passage challenge your previous thinking?
What parts confirm your previous thinking?
What parts are completely new ideas?
- Why do you think James ends his letter like this?
- What questions come to mind as you read?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- What would be different (attitudes, behavior) if God used this passage to change you?

For additional thought and discussion:

For more suggested methods of study: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/methodical-bible-study/>

For examples of inductive studies: <http://www.goodnotsafe.com/inductive-bible-study-examples-2/>

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures,
but draw everything from them,
and suffer nothing to remain
hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**

For a much more detailed description of the methodology, see

Robert A. Traina, *Methodical Bible Study*. Wilmore, Kentucky: Asbury Theological Seminary, 1952.

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