

# **AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY SERIES**

## **“A NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE”**

### **JAMES 5:7-20**

We need to be:

- v. 7-8a BELIEVING GOD'S PLAN ENOUGH TO BE A WAITING CHRISTIAN
- v. 8b-12 TRUSTING GOD'S WILL ENOUGH TO BE A LOOKING CHRISTIAN
- v. 13b SEEKING GOD'S PROMISES ENOUGH TO BE A SINGING CHRISTIAN
- v. 13a, 14-18 DESIRING GOD'S POWER ENOUGH TO BE A PRAYING CHRISTIAN
- v. 19-20 LOVING GOD'S SHEEP ENOUGH TO BE A CARING CHRISTIAN

To protect us from being tricked as to our true spiritual condition, James gives 11 clear indicators of what an Authentic Christian looks like. You are assured of Authentic spiritual life when these areas are in line:

1. AN AUTHENTIC (OR NORMAL) CHRISTIAN endures and grows through troubles 1:2-11
2. An AUTHENTIC (or NORMAL) Christian RECOGNIZES AND TURNS FROM TEMPTATION 1:12-16
3. An AUTHENTIC (or NORMAL) Christian RECEIVES AND OBEYS THE WORD 1:17-27
4. An AUTHENTIC (or NORMAL) Christian LIVES A PREJUDICE-FREE LIFESTYLE 2:1-13.

5. An AUTHENTIC (or NORMAL) Christian PRODUCES AND DOES GODLY WORKS 2:14-26.
6. An AUTHENTIC (or NORMAL) Christian BRIDLES AND DIRECTS THEIR TONGUE 3:1-12
7. An AUTHENTIC (or NORMAL) Christian RECEIVES AND RETAINS HEAVENLY WISDOM 3:13-18
8. An Authentic (or NORMAL) Christian RECOGNIZES AND TURNS FROM PRIDE AND ITS EVILS 4:1-12.
9. An Authentic (or NORMAL) Christian TRUSTS THE FUTURE TO GOD (4:13-17).
10. An Authentic (or NORMAL) Christian AVOIDS THE DANGERS OF WEALTH (5:1-6).
11. An Authentic (or NORMAL) Christian WAITS PATIENTLY FOR CHRIST'S RETURN 5:7-20.

v. 7-8a BELIEVING GOD'S PLAN ENOUGH TO BE A WAITING CHRISTIAN. James 5:7-8a Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early (October to December) and latter (April and May) rain.<sup>8</sup> You also be patient.

James used two different words for patience. *Patience* means "to stay put and stand fast when you'd like to run away."

- In James 5:7–8, 10 it was the word "long-tempered."
- The words "endure" and "patience" in James 5:11 literally mean "to remain under" and speak of endurance under great stress.
- Many Greek scholars think that "long-suffering" refers to patience with respect to persons, while "endurance" refers to patience with respect to conditions or situations.

v. 8b-12 TRUSTING GOD'S WILL ENOUGH TO BE A LOOKING CHRISTIAN. v. 8b Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! 10 My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and<sup>1</sup> patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended<sup>2</sup> by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. 12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by

---

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. NKJV

<sup>2</sup> Job 42:5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. NKJV

heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

v. 13b        SEEKING GOD'S PROMISES ENOUGH TO BE A SINGING CHRISTIAN. v. 13b Is anyone

cheerful? Let him sing psalms. (two words: happy euthumei 'well souled'; let him sing is one word in greek psalleteo)

- 1 Chronicles 16:8-10 Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! 9 Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works! 10 Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord! NKJV
- Psalm 95:1-2 Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. NKJV
- Luke 24:53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen. NKJV

v. 13a, 14-18        DESIRING GOD'S POWER ENOUGH TO BE A PRAYING CHRISTIAN. v. 13a Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. In this verse availeth is energoumene a word always used for God at work

- v. 13a Is anyone among you suffering? (lit. in distress, anxiety, affliction) Let him pray.
- v. 14 Is anyone among you sick? (lit. without strength, incapacitated). Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. NKJV        James is not prescribing a formula for healing all the sick. In the churches I have pastored for the past 20 years, the elders and I have prayed for the sick, and sometimes God has given healing. But other times, He has not seen fit to heal the person. In two cases within a month of each other: one was restored in an

almost miraculous way, but the other one had to enter the hospital, and eventually the Lord called them home.

- There are several clear steps: first, the sick person seeks the elders of the church (not a healer, etc.). Next, the elders are to anoint (the word used is *aleipho* "to rub, apply" and was used for an athletic trainer rubbing down sore athletes. On noted Bible teacher comments, "In this passage James urged the treating of sickness by medical means accompanied by prayer. The two are to be used together; neither to the exclusion of the other. So instead of teaching faith healing apart from the use of medicine, the passage teaches just the opposite."<sup>3</sup> Finally, the outcome must be entrusted to God. Note v. 14 "in the name of the Lord".
- v. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. NKJV *The person is healed by "the prayer of faith" (v. 15).* It is not the anointing that heals, but the praying. But what is "the prayer of faith" that heals the sick? The answer is in 1 John 5:14–15—"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." The "prayer of faith" is a prayer prompted by God. It is a circle that begins and ends in heaven. God moves a sick person to seek the elders, God moves their hearts to respond to His Spirit and all are confident of His plan
- *Remember some sickness is because of sin (vv. 15b-16).* The Greek text says, "If he has been constantly sinning." This parallels 1 Corinthians 11:30, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (have died). James has described a church member who is sick because he is being disciplined by God. This explains why the elders of the assembly are called: the man cannot go to church to confess his sins, so he asks the spiritual leaders to come to him.
- James 5:16a Confess your trespasses to one another **KEEP SHORT ACCOUNTS WITH SIN.** If it builds up we lose! Sin blocks both fellowship with God and with our fellow man. In order to be healthy both spiritually and physically, our relationship must be kept clean.
- James 5:16b, and pray for one another **REMEMBER WE ARE CHRIST'S FAMILY.** We must pray for one another. If someone has a problem that has hurt or wounded you, when they repentantly come to you lift them up to God in prayer. Let them see your love

---

<sup>3</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Competant to Counsel* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1970), pp. 107-8. It is also helpful to note that Mark 16:1 and John 12:3-7 refer to ceremonial anointing, while Luke 10:33-34 refers to medical anointing.

and support before God's throne for their needs, strength and spiritual growth in this area.

- James 5:16c that you may be healed. GOD CAN HEAL. If He does give Him the glory. There is no room in this Biblical picture for divine healers. I believe as do most Bible teachers today, there are no divine healers today. I believe in Divine healing (God healing individuals) but not in healers. There is faith healing but there are not faith healers in God's plan for His church.
- James 5:16d "The effective prayer of a righteous man," James says, "can accomplish much" PRAYER IS POWERFUL. We need to pray at all times. There is so much that will never happen in your life and mine apart from fervent and focused prayer! What are some examples?
  - Abraham's servant prayed, and Rebekah appeared.
  - Jacob wrestled and prayed, and Esau's mind was turned from twenty years of revenge.
  - Moses prayed, and Amalek was struck.
  - Hannah prayed, and Samuel was born.
  - Isaiah and Hezekiah prayed, and in twelve hours one hundred eighty-five thousand Assyrians were slain.
  - Elijah prayed, and there were three years of drought; he prayed again, and rain came.

PRAYER CHANGES THE WAY GOD ACTS. IN OTHER WORDS: GOD RESPONDS TO PRAYER! The practice of prayer has:

- brought forth water from a baked rock in a trackless desert (Moses),
- split the waters of the Jordan (Elijah, Elisha and Joshua),
- subdued the strength of fire (three Hebrews),
- it has bridled the rage of lions (Daniel),
- hushed the anarchy of mobs (Moses),
- extinguished the terrors of wars (Hezekiah on Sennacherib),
- calmed the raging storms (Christ),
- expelled the occupation of demons (Paul on girl of Philippi),
- burst the chains of death (Elijah, Peter, Paul & Christ ),
- unlocked the doors of prisons (Peter by the saints),
- expanded the borders of the Kingdom (Lord of harvest, laborers),
- cut short the ravages of disease (Peter for Dorcas),
- exposed fakes (Peter on Ananias & Saphira),
- saved cities from destruction (Jonah on Ninevah),
- held the Sun in the sky (Joshua at Gibeon),
- dried the skies of rain (Elijah on Ahab).

Prayer is

- an all sufficient supply of power,

- an endless vein of treasures to be mined,
- an overflowing spring that never runs dry,
- a glorious view of heaven that can never be obscured,
- a place of peace never invaded and
- a fountain of blessing never exhausted!

Those are but a small sampling of answered prayer just from the Bible. We who hold the wondrous record of God's faithfulness should have unlimited confidence in God's ability through our prayers.

We should all be encouraged by Elijah. James 5: 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. NKJV Why? Because God says he had a nature like ours. "subject to like passions" *homiopathes* lit. of the same experience! God sent rain to drought-stricken Judah in response to Elijah's prayers (1 Kings 18: 16-46). But within less than a day Elijah despaired of life and asked the Lord to take him home. Unmoved by fear even before the 450 frenzied, false prophets, he is smitten by the threats of one brazen Jezebel (19: 1-4). From the exhilaration of victory he plunged so soon into deep depression. God picks normal people and pours His grace on them. Satan wants our sins and failures to convince us to give up. But one look at the people of the Bible should defeat that temptation. The work of God is performed by weak individuals like us, surrendered to the God whose power is perfected in man's weakness (2 Cor. 12: 9). God has always had only weak and sinful humans to work with. Listen to the team God has used to win the championships:

1. As soon as God delivered Noah and his family through the Flood, Noah became drunk and acted indecently.
2. Abraham, the father of the faithful, doubted God, lied about his wife, and committed adultery with her maid.
3. Isaac told a similar lie about his wife when he thought his life was in danger.
4. Jacob took advantage of his brother Esau's weakness and extorted the birthright from him.
5. Moses was a murderer, and in pride he struck the rock instead of speaking to it as God had instructed.
6. His brother, Aaron, the first high priest, led Israel in erecting and worshiping the golden calf at the very time Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God.
7. Joshua disobeyed the Lord by making a treaty with the Gibeonites instead of destroying them.
8. Gideon had little confidence in himself and even less in God's plan and power.

9. Samson was repeatedly beguiled by Delilah because of his great lust for her.
10. David committed adultery and murder, was an almost total failure as a father, and was not allowed to build the Temple because he was a man of blood.
11. Elijah stood fearlessly before 450 false prophets but cowered before one woman, Jezebel.
12. Ezekiel was brash, crusty, and quick to speak his mind.
13. Jonah defied God's call to preach to the Ninevites and resented His grace when they were converted through his preaching.

Apart from the brief ministry of His own Son, the history of God's work on earth is the history of His using the unqualified. Even the twelve disciples who became apostles were no exception. From the human standpoint they had few characteristics or abilities that qualified them for leadership and service. Yet God used those men, just as He did Noah, Abraham, and the others, in marvelous ways to do His work.<sup>4</sup>

Elijah was a man passionate and focused prayer. Remember others:

- Jacob dislocated his body to straighten his soul in Genesis 32:22-32.
- Hannah was so overcome in prayer Eli diagnosed her as impaired I Samuel 1:14-15.
- Ezra mortified his body, tore his clothing and fell on his face before God in Ezra 9:5-6.
- Nehemiah wept as he cried out to God and was heard Nehemiah 1:4.
- Paul was willing to commit spiritual suicide for Israel in Romans 9:3 that they might be saved, that is passion.
- Epaphras was willing to angonize in wrestling prayers Col. 4:12.

#### Six Prayer Lessons from the Life of Elijah

1. LIVING LIKE US ON THE EARTH James 5: 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. NKJV
2. TRUSTING THE GOD HE COULD NOT SEE 1 Kings 17:2-7 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,<sup>3</sup> "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.<sup>4</sup> "And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."<sup>5</sup> So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.<sup>6</sup> The ravens

---

<sup>4</sup>MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 10*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.<sup>7</sup> And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. NKJV

3. FORSAKING THE WORLD WE MUST NOT LOVE. Hebrews 13: 13-14  
Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.<sup>14</sup> For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. NKJV
4. PRAYING TO THE GOD WHO HEARS AND RESPONDS. 1 Kings 18: 36-37  
And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word.<sup>37</sup> "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." NKJV
5. LEANING ON THE ONE WHO NEVER FAILS. 1 Corinthians 10: 12  
Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. NKJV  
Philippians 4: 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. NKJV
6. OBEYING THE GOD WHO DOES ALL THINGS WELL. Mark 7: 37  
And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." NKJV  
1 Peter 4: 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. NKJV

v. 19-20 LOVING GOD'S SHEEP ENOUGH TO BE A CARING CHRISTIAN. v. 19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,<sup>20</sup> let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. NKJV

- Galatians 6: 1-2 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.<sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. NKJV

Some Plans for Growing Old in Godliness Psalm 71

1. I WILL FLEE TO GOD RATHER THAN DROWN IN MY TROUBLES.  
v. 1
2. I WILL TRUSTS GOD'S WORD OVER MY FEARS. v. 3



3. I WILL KEEP REMINDING MYSELF OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS ALL DURING MY LIFE TO THIS MOMENT. v. 5, 17
4. I WILL USE MY MOUTH SO MUCH FOR PRAISE, NO ROOM WILL BE LEFT TO COMPLAIN. v. 8, 14b, 24
5. I WILL NEVER GIVE UP EVEN IF I END UP ALL ALONE, SICK OR EVEN FORGOTTEN BY EVERYONE IN THE WORLD EXCEPT GOD. v. 14
6. I WILL NEVER STOP LOOKING FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE A TESTIMONY OF GOD'S GOODNESS IN MY LIFE. v. 15
7. I WILL SEEK OUT YOUNGER PEOPLE AND PASS ON TO THEM MY TESTIMONY OF GOD'S GOODNESS AND GREAT FAITHFULNESS. v. 18 like Bill Eddy!
8. I WILL NEVER STOP PURSUING A DEEPENING EXPERIENCE OF KNOWING GOD DAILY. v. 19 like Howard Smith
9. I WILL SEE PAIN AND SUFFERING AS GOD'S PERFECT TOOLS FOR SHAPING MY LIFE. v. 20 like Dorothy Crebs, Joni Erikson Tada
10. I WILL FORSAKE THE STEREOTYPES OF OLD TIMERS AND SING AND SPEAK AND SHOUT ABOUT GOD'S GOODNESS. v. 22-24

Are you:

- BELIEVING GOD'S PLAN ENOUGH TO BE A WAITING CHRISTIAN?
- TRUSTING GOD'S WILL ENOUGH TO BE A LOOKING CHRISTIAN?
- SEEKING GOD'S PROMISES ENOUGH TO BE A SINGING CHRISTIAN?
- DESIRING GOD'S POWER ENOUGH TO BE A PRAYING CHRISTIAN?
- LOVING GOD'S SHEEP ENOUGH TO BE A CARING CHRISTIAN?

O Worship the King