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Are Any Among You Sick?

James 5:14 (KJV)

14 Is any sick among you? 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:

This has become an absolutely rhetorical question. However, at the time Holy Spirit inspired its writing through God's servant, James, it was in the early church and it is believed that there were few sick in the church. So when sickness did occur it was occasional and not the norm. Today the Christians have become so polluted with sin and deception of God's power for us today, we rarely find a locale or church with members seldom sick or little of no sickness.

Much of the church, particularly in the USA, today fall captive to this truth in;

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (NIV)

1 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

It would be easy to venture into the many verses and teachings of Jesus about - Faith in God, believing His Word and the demonstration of His power through faith, believing in Jesus. But the scope of this article is to focus on the complete passage from which the focal verse has been taken and do some specific teaching and dissecting of each phrase. This will be done to highlight the fullness of this passage for the reader to be encouraged and exhorted in the Word of God. Hopefully it will be complete enough to even be used for group study so to release and experience the Power of God in our daily lives.

James 5:14-16 (NIV)

14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

To begin with, notice this passage is an imperative and specific instruction. It does

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not imply a maybe 'do this' but a 'to do' command with specific instruction with specific results and it is directed to The Church, the believers in Jesus Christ.

14 Is any one of you sick?

At this point in the verse it is clear to whom Holy Spirit is speaking. Specifically a sick person within the church. If one is sick then God says to that person "Sick person" you are to do this. Follow these instructions.

He should call

He, the sick person, not his brother nor their spouse or friend is to call. There is another verse that is so applicable to expose the issue that is here. Many will quote verse 7 but leave 5 and 6 out of

1 Peter 5:7 (KJV)

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

But notice what the last part of 5 and verse 6 declare.

1 Peter 5:5-6 (NIV)

5 ... All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,
"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

ONLY THEN are we to cast our cares on Jesus- in humility. The requirement here is to humble one's self, ask God and then God will lift us up. This is God Almighty's promise. Wow what a promise.

So the instruction in James 5:14 says for the sick person to call. It has been observed that this alone is a humbling experience to submit ones self and ask. So when we cast our cares on Jesus and follow His instruction for the sick it will almost always be done with a humble heart, OR the sick will not be able to ask or will not ask therefore disobeying God's instruction and not be able to experience His power toward us from His promise expressed here. Remember it is written: "God opposes the proud" (Prov 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5) but in humility God lifts us up. Also a simple fact to this same issue of 'to go and ask' shows humility but it is also a step of faith by the sick person.

call the elders of the church to pray over him

In humble heart the sick person calls the elders. It should be noted that in many churches today there are no elders, even though scripture shows the church that both elders and deacons should be in the church. There is a teaching about the eldership but again it is not within the scope of this article. For alternative here we can safely say, the men of the church that oversee the church where the sick person

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is active are to be called. (Note: men is plural just as elders is plural).

Once the sick person calls the elders per the scripture in James 5, the actions and 'to do' is now on the elders of the church. Again it is an imperative direct instruction. There are four. First the elders are to pray over the sick person.

and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

Second, and just as distinctly expressed, the elders are to anoint the sick person with oil. Care must be taken here by the leaders and overseers of the church (elders). Much deception and misguided teachings has been spread concerning this instruction, to anoint, which has no support. You will find NO other instructions or explanation about this process in this passage. It clearly says, "Anoint him with oil". There is no room to explain it away nor to justify or not justify its validity. I tell you the truth, this is an instruction to carry out in obedience and obedience alone. For God has said: pray - anoint in oil in the NAME OF THE LORD. I urge all concerned in this - be obedient out of the fear of God and not be contemptuous toward God's Word and instruction. It is simply a faith issue. Do you believe God, then obey, trusting Him. So third thing for the elders is to do these in the name of the Lord.

15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well;

Forth, the elders MUST believe, and pray in faith. Their responsibility is clear. IT IS GOD'S WILL. Read the verse. "Faith will make the sick person well AND The Lord will raise him up. So none of this - "Oh God, If it be Your will, heal him." Wrong! This is a prayer of doubt and double mindedness and is no good and unproductive.

James 1: 7-8 (NIV) 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Double minded - to pray as instructed then pray words not believing is double minded. For it is God's will. Read the verse and believe AND RECEIVE! See and believe in your heart what God says. Reject what one may have experienced or seen with the eyes for we are commanded to live by faith and not by sight. Trust God in this and not the reasoning of the mind of man. God is faithful - ALWAYS. Then God promises:

the Lord will raise him up.

Now God reveals His part in this simple but important instruction to us. God will raise the sick person up. Praise God.

If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Now there remains the final instruction to the sick person. The importance of this can be shown by hundreds of verses throughout the Bible regarding sin. Simply, here sin is shown to hinder the healing for God has said "IF" the sick person has sinned, God will forgive as it is written:

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1 John 1:9 (NIV)

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

God purifies us or KJV says cleanses us. This is the first step of the healing, to be cleansed from unrighteousness that exist from our sins done in the flesh, affecting the body and soul so that the second step, healed in our body as confirmed in the last part of this statement in James - "so that you may be healed"

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

The final instruction to the sick person is, confess ones sins in the first half - to God so to be cleansed and second "therefore confess to one another your sins" "so that you may be healed." This confession of sin with the obedience in faith of these instructions is what releases God's promise to heal us when we are sick.

Interesting to consider - why confess to one another? As was referenced earlier to 1 Peter 5:6 above, there is an aspect of humility in this whole passage. To be humble before God, before God's appointed leaders and before one another, the body of Christ, the church, because in sickness, there is a great need for God's grace, to receive that which we do not deserve. But God's grace is given to the humble.

For it is written as we saw in

1 Peter 5:5 (NIV) (which is quoting Prov 3:34)

5 All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

You will find also that in James 4 before our passage (James 5:14-16), James quoted the same verse from Prov 3:34, for us that have believed for God's grace.

James 4:6-7 (NIV)

6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

So with humility and submission our passage concludes with God's powerful promise.

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Here, since it is the elders that are to pray, it appears that this is giving another insight to stature of a man that is effective in his prayer. Righteous- God says all His children are righteous, the new creation, in their spirit (born again of the spirit). But we also know unconfessed sin has an issue of unrighteousness that is clearly effecting the body and soul, as shown in 1 John 1:9. For a second witness to the truth

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about sin and sickness is found with the man Jesus had healed and later said to him:
John 5:14 (NIV)

14 Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."

In considering a righteous man, 1 Timothy and Titus give qualifications of an elder, which is good for all men to walk in, defines a godly man to be called an elder and could be looked at as an outline of a righteous and humble man. So 'call the elders', the righteous men in the church for effective and powerful prayer for the sick.

Let's summarize this by starting with v 16 and what each party's role is:

<u>God:</u>	<u>Sick person:</u>	<u>Elders:</u>
1. give <u>grace</u>	IF He will in HUMILITY	IF they will in HUMILITY, OBEY and BELIEVE (must be a prayer of faith or it lacks the power)
2. to <u>forgive</u> and	1. Confess his sin to God	
3. to <u>heal</u> the sick person	2. Confess his sin to man (the one another)	
IF	3. Confess he is sick by going and asking for prayer	1. Be a righteous man (believer in Jesus, with his sins confessed, clean from all unrighteousness)
		2. Pray in faith for the sick & believe God that the person will be healed according to His promise stated in this passage
		3. Anoint the sick with oil
		4. All in the name of Jesus

So the question is posed for you the reader. Does your church believe and practice this? Are there many sick in your church? If no to the first, could it be this is the reason it is a yes for the second question. God's word is true. Let every man be a liar when this passage is ignored or explained away.

1 John 2:4 (NIV) 4 The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

You, a saint, a believer can start by meditating on the incredible truth in God's Word and ask God to grace you with a spirit of faith to believe and RECEIVE this awesome and simple promise, "faith will make the sick person well, the Lord will raise him up" and "so that you may be healed". How simple can it get. God is so good.

So Dear child of God-Live - 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV) 7 We live by faith, not by sight. AND Matthew 4:4 (NIV) 4 "... on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

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