

# FAITH IS EXPRESSED THROUGH PRAYER AND PURSUIT

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: LIVING FOR JESUS / SERIES: JAMES

## BIG TRUTH: FAITH IS EXPRESSED THROUGH PRAYER AND PURSUIT

1 Thessalonians 3:10; 5:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 1 Timothy 6:11

## BIBLE VERSE: JAMES 5:16

*"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."*

## BIG IDEAS

- We pray in faith asking that God would bring physical and spiritual healing to our broken lives.
- We pursue God's people believing that their faithful prayer has great power.
- We pursue those who have wandered into sin praying that God would save them.

## BIBLE PASSAGE: JAMES 5:13-20

## TRANSFORM: LIVING FOR JESUS

In High School, the Transform Year is an exploration of what it looks like to have transformed influence as we seek to live for a Kingdom that is greater than our own. First, we recognize that we will never be transformed if we are not Living for Jesus. To do this, we must first know who Jesus is by looking at who He says He is (John 8:58), and then look at what the Bible says about how in Him, we live by faith (James 1:6). Next, we recognize that to have transformed influence means that we must live as disciples in pursuit of Christ and His Kingdom over ourselves and our own kingdoms.

## SERIES AIMS



### Every student should know...

- God is a God of compassion and mercy.
- We are prone to self-deception.
- If our faith does not have works, it is dead.



### Every student should feel...

- Joy, even in trials, because of God's goodness.
- Thankful for every good and perfect gift from the Father.
- Responsible to use their influence for Jesus alone.



### Every student should strive to...

- Read the entire book of James.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Reject and repent of faith without works.



### Every student should want...

- To grow in their understanding of biblical faith.
- To practice religion based on what Scripture says, not the world, culture, or our feelings.
- To know and generously show mercy.

## GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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## BIBLE VERSE: JAMES 5:16

*"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."*

### People of faith are transparent with one another.

*"Therefore, confess your sins to one another..."*

- God joins His people together as one body and one family for His purposes. One of those purposes is for the spiritual growth and health of His people. As Jesus followers live life with other Jesus followers, they experience growth by sharing their highs and lows with one another. As we live transparent lives with one another, we encourage each other to live holy lives.
- Part of living a transparent life is being willing to confess our sins to other believers. When we are humble enough to admit that we are sinners and to acknowledge those sins before others, we can grow in our own faith and help others to grow in their faith, too. We show our true faith when we are willing to confess our sins and to be authentic with other believers.

### People of faith pray for one another.

*"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another..."*

- Pursuing other believers means living life with them and sharing in their burdens. It also means allowing them to share our burdens, too. We do this by asking them to pray for us and by praying for them.
- We pray for one another's burdens and for others to be healed. James speaks to this in 5:16 as he encourages believers to pray for each other in their times of illness. We express our faith by praying for the healing of others. When we believe that God is who He says He is, we will pray for others.

### People of faith live righteous lives together.

*"The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."*

- We are made righteous by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. When we have saving faith in this work, we are washed clean of the sin debt we owe. This makes us righteous in God's eyes.
- God works in our hearts throughout our lives to make us more and more like Christ. This righteousness is the holiness that we seek each day. This righteousness, or right living is achieved as we live life with other believers and pray for one another, particularly for the healing of one another. We should desire to see others healed and growing in their walk with the Lord.

# FAITH IS EXPRESSED THROUGH PRAYER AND PURSUIT

## BIG IDEA #1: WE PRAY IN FAITH ASKING THAT GOD WOULD BRING PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALING TO OUR BROKEN LIVES.<sup>1</sup>

### [ THIS ]

Healing is a gift from God. Throughout Scripture and here in James 5:13-14, believers are told to pray for physical healing. James 5:15 shows us that when we do pray for healing, we must pray with faith and not with any doubt in our minds or hearts. While our level of faith doesn't necessarily determine if a sick person is healed or not, it is most surely a reflection upon our belief in God's power and ability to heal if He wills. It is good, right, and expected that believers would pray for the physical healing of others and themselves. Even in our day of medical advancements and easy access to medical care, we are still expected to pray in faith for God to heal people. This is part of being in Christ's family and part of expressing our trust and faith in Jesus.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**How does our ease of access to medicine and medical care make us apathetic towards praying for physical healing?**

We often turn to God when we feel we have no other choice, but Scripture teaches us to depend upon God for all things. Galatians 6:2 and 1 Timothy 2:1 point out that we should always ask God for physical healing. No matter how easily we gain access to medical care, we cannot forsake the healing power of God.

### [ THIS ]

As we journey together as believers in this life, the command to pray for one another is clear in Scripture. James speaks to this in James 5:15. Not only are we to pray for physical healing, but we are to ask for spiritual healing as well. If we know Christ, then it is our duty to ask God to awaken others to the reality of Christ. We should pray for those with in their lives and pray believing God will call them to repentance and heal them spiritually. We should pray for our own spiritual healing and an awareness of our own blind spots. We all have areas of sin that we don't see clearly. These blind spots can keep us from growing in our relationship with Christ. We should pray for God to reveal these to us and to heal us spiritually. As we pray in faith for God to heal us and others, we will be healed and grow as His people.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**Do you pray for the spiritual healing of others? Why or why not?**

We can take for granted our part in the lives of other believers. We are all connected and God calls us to pray for the healing of our fellow believers. Ephesians 6:18 and Colossians 1:19 reminds us of the importance of asking God to help our fellow believers. Praying for one another should be a part of our daily lives.

**How does praying in faith for the healing of others express your faith in God?**

When we pray for anything, we express great faith. When we pray for the healing of ourselves and others, we express greater faith in the power that we trust God has. 1 John 5:14, Mark 11:24, and Matthew 5:44 teaches us that prayer and faith are connected. Prayer is an expression of our faith. Because we cannot physically see God, when we pray to Him, we are stepping out in faith by speaking to Him. When we pray, asking Him to do great and mighty things in our lives and the lives of others, we are showing that we trust Him greatly.

1. James 5:16: People of faith are commanded to ask for physical and spiritual healing for themselves and others.

# FAITH IS EXPRESSED THROUGH PRAYER AND PURSUIT

## BIG IDEA #2: WE PURSUE GOD'S PEOPLE BELIEVING THAT THEIR FAITHFUL PRAYER HAS GREATER POWER.<sup>2</sup>

### [ THIS ]

The life of a person of faith is a life of pursuit. People of faith pursue one another as they seek to grow in their relationship with Christ. In James 5:16, James explains what this pursuit looks like. First, we pursue others for relationship so that we might hold one another accountable for the type of life we are living. We live with other believers in a way that allows us to be honest about our sin and that creates space for them to be honest about their struggles. We humbly confess our sins to one another and live in pursuit of deep relationship with one another. Building relationships with other believers means that we are seeking to fulfill God's purpose for our lives. We are opening ourselves up to live in community with other believers so that we might become more and more like Christ. Pursuing God's people reveals our faith that He is at work in us and them.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**Read James 5:16. How does pride prevent you from confessing sins to other believers?**

Often, we think more of ourselves than we should as Galatians 6:3 warns us. Pride keeps us from opening up to other believers about our sin. Proverbs 29:23 and 18:12 teach us that pride leads to our destruction. Humility before others is our only real choice.

### [ THIS ]

As we pursue other believers, we do so because we value and covet their prayers. As the body of Christ, believers have the privilege of praying for one another and are commanded to do so again and again in Scripture. In James 5:16-18, James shows the power of the prayers of God's people. He uses the example of Elijah and points out that the prayers of those who have been redeemed have great power. We are all made right in God's eyes through our faith in Jesus and His saving power. Additionally, as we seek to be holy as God is holy, we become more and more like Him. As we live in community with one another, we grow together in our Christlikeness. Living in relationship with other believers allows us to pray for one another. God chooses to hear and answer His people's prayers. This is why James says that there is great power in the prayer of a righteous person. It is God's way to hear His people's prayers and to answer them. God wants us to pray for one another. It joins us closer together and helps us grow together.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**Read James 5:16-18. How have you experienced the power of someone else's prayers?**

Elijah is a great example of a man who prayed believing that God had great power and God answered His prayer. When we pray, we will experience God's power as He works in our lives and the lives of others. When others pray for us, we can experience His power also.

**How does the example of Elijah encourage you to pray more faithfully?**

In James 5:17, we see the Elijah was a person just like us. When we read this, we should be encouraged to pray faithfully like he did. Elijah was no supernatural hero. He was a man who was redeemed just as all of God's people are. He prayed, believing God and God answered. God hears our prayers and answers according to His will.

2. James 5:15: God hears the prayers of His people and He answers them. The prayers of God's people have great power.

# FAITH IS EXPRESSED THROUGH PRAYER AND PURSUIT

## BIG IDEA #3: WE PURSUE THOSE WHO HAVE WANDERED INTO SIN PRAYING THAT GOD WOULD SAVE THEM.<sup>3</sup>

### [ THIS ]

God uses His people in His redemption plan. He chooses to use His church to draw sinners to Himself. As believers, we pursue those who are far from the truth. We do this as God's instruments of sharing the Gospel. As we pursue those who do not know God, we are working to hold them back from an eternity of separation from God. In James 5:19-20, we see that all believers should seek out those who have wandered into sin. It is part of our purpose to pursue the lost. We go to the places we would find lost people and we seek them out that we might share God's truth with them. We leverage our lives that we might intersect the lives of lost people so that we can tell them about Jesus and the salvation that He offers. We also pray for them, believing that God will save them and draw them back from the path of destruction.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**What are some areas or places in your life that you can go to in order to interact with lost people?**

Every part of our lives should be used to reach lost people. Luke 19:10 and Ezekiel 34:16 help us see that we are to seek out the lost instead of waiting for them to come to us. As we seek them out, we should pray for God to move in their hearts, awakening them to His truth.

### [ THIS ]

As we pursue those who have wandered into sin, we do so praying that God would save their souls. Only God saves from sin, yet He used His people to share the truth of the Gospel. It is a believer's job to call back those who wander into sin. When we go to someone in sin and share truth with them and they turn to Christ, we are part of helping to save their soul from death. This truth applies to those who have yet to experience saving faith in Christ and for those who are professing believers and have fallen into sin. Either way, when we speak the truth of Christ to someone, we are taking a step towards calling them back from death. We cannot and should not do any of this without the discipline of prayer. As we pursue them, we should pray for God to do the work in their hearts. When we combine our boldness in speaking truth with the discipline of praying, we reveal that we understand it is God who is actually working through us. This shows true humility and trust in God as He uses us to do His will on earth.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**What fears keep you from sharing truth with someone who has wandered into sin?**

Ephesians 4:25 shows us that we are members of one another. God's people are joined together as His body and His church. It is our responsibility to speak the truth to one another. We often fear the person's reaction to us. We fear they will be angry or upset. We fear conflict, but we cannot let our fears keep us from doing what we should.

**How can you admonish someone who is in sin? What does it look like for you to do this?**

Because we are members of one another, it is important that we encourage those who are in sin to repent of their sin. Ephesians 4:15 tells us to speak the truth in love to one another. When we do this, we will admonish others to repent of their sin.

3. James 5:19-20: We are connected to other believers. God calls us to pursue others and to pray that God would call them from their sin to Himself.