

1 **Effectual Prayer**

- James 5:13-20

2 **Tonight's Scripture**

- Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. 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. (James 5:13–14 NIV)
- 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. (James 5:15 NIV)

3 **Tonight's Scripture**

- 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. (James 5:16 NIV)
- Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. (James 5:17–18 NIV)

4 **This is Your Brain on Drugs**

- This Is Your Brain on Drugs
- This was a large-scale US anti-narcotics campaign by Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA) launched in 1987, that used two televised public service announcements (PSAs) and a related poster campaign.

5 **This is Your Brain on Drugs**

- In the thirty second version of the commercial it shows a man in a starkly furnished apartment who asks if there is anyone out there who still doesn't understand the dangers of drug abuse.
- He holds up an egg and says, "This is your brain," before motioning to a frying pan and adding, "This is drugs."
- He then cracks open the egg, fries the contents, and says, "This is your brain on drugs."
- Finally he looks up at the camera and asks, "Any questions?"

6 **Reviews**

- TV Guide named the commercial one of the top one hundred television advertisements of all time, and
- Entertainment Weekly named it the 8th best commercial of all time.

7 **Brain Scan Results**

- More recently, researchers have found that THC -- the psychoactive compound in marijuana -- can disrupt focus, memory, decision-making and motivation for about 24 hours.

- An instructor in psychology at Harvard's medical school tells The New York Times (October 29, 2014) that “we can see these structural effects in the brain,” and the effects may be longer lasting than previously thought.

8 Brain Scan Results

- When this instructor looked at the brain scans of 20 pot smokers, ages 18 to 25, she didn't see a fried egg on her computer screen.
- But she did see evidence of structural differences in two regions of the brain—not a good sign.
- What we smoke, eat and drink can clearly have an effect on our brain. No surprise there.
- But how about what we pray? What happens to a brain on prayer?

9 The Effects of Prayer

- In his letter to a group of Christians outside of Palestine, James calls for prayer when people are suffering, cheerful and sick, promising that “the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective” (v. 16).
- James is convinced that prayer can have a significant effect on our brain, body, heart and soul -- in bad times and good.
- And today, medical researchers are finally catching up with him.

10 The Effects of Prayer

- Dr. Andrew Newberg of Thomas Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia has been studying the effect of prayer on the brain for more than 20 years.
- He injects radioactive dye into people, and then looks for changes in their heads when they pray.
- He does not claim that prayer is a cure-all, but he believes that it can be every bit as important as science in helping patients to heal.

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12 The Effects of Prayer

- Pointing to a computer screen that showed brain activity, Newberg said to NBC News (December 24, 2014), “You can see it's all red here when the person is just at rest, but you see it turns into these yellow colors when she’s actually doing prayer.”
- Without prayer, your brain is red -- a hot and inflammatory color -- and with prayer, your brain is yellow.

13 Prayer & Stress

- One way that prayer directly affects health through the brain is by reducing stress as it seemingly kicks off the body's fight-or-flight responses.

- But even low levels of chronic stress, which is common in modern life, are detrimental to the immune system.
- However, prayer activates the half of the nervous system that is the opposite of the fight-or-flight reflex.
- Harvard doctor Herbert Benson calls it the body's relaxation response.
- By stimulating the relaxation response, we reduce stress and allow the immune system to recover.

14 **Prayer & Stress**

- According to a U.K.-based study published in the British Journal of Health Psychology, praying can reduce your risk of developing depression and anxiety.
- It also found that you have a higher probability of being positive and less depressed if you prayed at a place of worship.

15 **Prayer & Stress**

- Other studies have found that praying helps in the quicker healing of surgical scars.
- This is because when your body is out of sync and stressed, it focuses all its efforts in equalizing itself, thereby offering less resources to the healing of wounds.

16 **Prayer & Stress**

- The practice of praying has shown a lot of benefits on the functioning of your heart.
- It is known to speed up the recovery of the heart after a heart attack and surgery.
- Apart from that, it also helps regulate your heartbeat, makes it stronger and less stressed.

17 **Prayer & Stress**

- So the bottom line here is that prayer is a great stress reducer and since stress weakens our immune system, we will generally enjoy better physical and mental health—if not spiritual health, when we pray.
- However, as good as all of this is, it is not, necessarily, the point James is trying to make in his epistle.
- He is saying that since the prayers of ordinary righteous people are effectual, let us pray over the sick with confidence.
- This is also why that the church is to call upon the Elders of the Church to pray, as they are suppose to be some of the most mature and righteous people in the community of God.

18 **God's Covenant of Grace**

- The Covenant that God has given to us is a free gift.
- However, the promises contained in the covenant are conditional.

- If we through faith in God’s power and grace are faithful to the covenant, God has promised us that He will be faithful as well.
- This is why the Apostle Paul says, Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. (Eph 5:15–16 NIV)

19 Why Careful?

- Again, why should we be careful? {Because the days are evil.}
- Why are the days evil?
 - Because . . . Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Pet 5:8 NIV)
 - In other words, the devil—our real enemy is going around tempting Christians to compromise their walk, so that God’s covenant of grace to us is frustrated by making our prayers ineffective.

20 Prayer’s Conditional?

- If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. (John 15:7 NIV)
- “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” (Mark 11:24–25 NIV)
- . . . and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. (1 John 3:22–23 NIV)

21 Prayer’s Conditional?

- Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (1 Pet 3:7 NIV)
- Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. (1 Pet 3:8–9 NIV)

22 Prayer’s Conditional?

- For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.” (1 Pet 3:10–11 NIV)

- “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” (1 Pet 3:12 NIV)

23 **War Room**

- Last week several people from our church went to see the movie War Room.
- It was about a family called the Jordans who seemingly had it all.
- Nevertheless, appearances can be deceiving as there was trouble in the marriage and the wife had become increasingly bitter and resentful toward her controlling husband.
- Things changed though when the wife decided to fight the battle for her marriage with prayer and not the advice she got from her worldly friends.

24 **War Room**

- However, this movie wasn't just about praying but also about getting right with God.
- In other words, we can't chase the devil out of our lives by simply praying more, we are going to first need to submit to God's lordship over our lives.
- As the Apostle James has said, Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7 NIV)

25 **War Room**

- So then, using the advice from her godly mentor, Elizabeth Jordan started to see changes in her marriage as well as changes in her relationship with her daughter.
- Submitting herself to God and taking her problems to the Lord, she saw God move in her life and in her family.
- God started to change her husband's heart as well as her own.
- The invisible force of evil that was once allowed to roam freely and create mischief now had to pack their bags and leave. Why?
- Because no one was taking the bait of Satan anymore.
- Instead of holding on to resentment and complaining about the actions of others, the Jordans became a happy family.

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28 **Conclusion**

- The Lord chose you because you were contrite in spirit and humble of heart.

- So then, don't harden your heart when the Holy Spirit speaks to you.
- Pray for your enemies and do good to those who get under your skin or treat you poorly.
- Be overcomers and resist the temptation to pay back evil with evil. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you.
- For we were called to inherit a blessing. Therefore, let nothing come between you and your prayers.
- Don't take the bait of Satan!