

## OPEN

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For our fourth and final week in our series Plugged into Prayer, we are going to look at what James says about prayer. In our text, James says that pretty much every situation is an opportunity to pray. Are you in trouble? Are you happy? Are you sick? Are you in need of getting right with God? The answer, James says, is always to pray – to go to God, to talk with God, to relay your heart and your needs – as well as the needs of others – to God through this incredible gift we call prayer.

But sometimes, our prayers don't always feel that effective. Sometimes that is simply because we don't see God answer right away or in the way we want. But other times the problem may be that we don't pray effectively. James says, *"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."* One of the ways our prayers become more effective is by us growing into our spiritual authority – the righteous position God has given us with him through Christ. As Rob Reimer states, *"Spiritual authority is rooted in identity, expanded in intimacy, and activated by faith."* Let's look at these ingredients to a more powerful prayer life.

## REFLECT

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- James says that prayer should be our first response to trouble (v.13.) Why? In James 1:2-4, how might God answer?
- In verse 13, In response to happiness or really 'joy,' James says we should praise. How is praise distinct from prayer?
- In praying for healing, James says to call on the elders (v.14). Why do you think the elders, as opposed to just anyone?
- God is the one who heals, so why the instruction to anoint with oil when praying for healing? What's the purpose?
- Lastly, in v. 17, why does James remind us that Elijah "was a human being, even as we are"?

## DISCUSS

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- Have you ever had an experience of prayer that seemed powerful in some way? Share the most powerful experience of prayer you have had – was the prayer of someone else or your own? What made that experience of prayer powerful or remarkable?
- The message this week talked about the concept of authority. For example, what gives a police officer authority is their badge. In general, what other ways do people gain or have authority?
- How does this concept of authority apply spiritually? What qualifies or gives someone spiritual authority when they pray?
- In your opinion, do all believers have the same level of authority when they pray? Why or why not?
- In Colossians 1:12-13, Paul states that in Christ, God has 'qualified' us to share in his inheritance. In verse 14, what is the basis of our being qualified? How should this change our attitude when we pray or come before God?
- In the message, two sides of God's righteousness were discussed - our positional righteousness in Christ and the 'fruit of God's righteousness' in our actions. Which of these two aspects of righteousness do you think James is talking about?
- Have you ever witnessed a healing or know someone who has been healed through prayer? Share.

## APPLY/PRAY

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- What one thing stands out to you most from this week's text or message that you need to apply in some way?
- Share with your group one thing you need prayer for – pray for that one thing in the moment for one another in boldness!
- Who as a group do you need to keep remembering in prayer as you pray? Assign someone to let that person know you are praying for them.