

Avails Much 1 – Accomplishes Much

Dr. John Carmichael

[Jas 5:16-18 NASB95] 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish 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 earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

- In our text, James paints a picture of prayer that changes history.
- He doesn't start with a deified prophet; he reminds us Elijah had a nature like ours; same fears, emotions, and limitations. Yet, through prayer, Elijah saw the heavens close and open.
- This series will explore what it means to pray prayers that "avail much"! Prayers that are effective, powerful, and Spirit-empowered.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to us about effective praying from James 5?

Here are four power truths from James 5 about effective praying.

I. Effective Prayer Flows from a Righteous Life

- [Jas 5:16b NASB95] The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.
- The Greek word for "effective" (*energeō*) means "to be active, operative, powerful." It's not mechanical repetition. It's energized by relationship with God. We will have more on the subject of praying to affect things. To change things.
- [Psa 66:18-19 NASB95] 18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear; 19 But certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer.
 - It was important to make clear that the psalmist did not only sacrifice but also gave God the better: obedience. (Guzik)
 - literally, "see iniquity with pleasure." (JFB)
- [1Pe 3:7 NASB95] 7 You husbands in the same way, live with [your wives] in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.
- [Isa 1:15 NASB95] 15 "So when you spread out your hands [in prayer,] I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.
- Confess sin quickly. Keep short accounts with God and people. Live with a clean conscience so nothing hinders your prayer flow.

II. Passionate Prayer Is Earnest and Specific

- [Jas 5:17 NASB95] 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 earth for three years and six months.
- "Earnestly" translates from a Hebraic idiom meaning "prayed with prayer": intense, focused intercession. (Ellicott's Commentary)
- [Col 4:12 NASB95] 12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.
- Be specific. [Mar 10:51 NASB95] 51 And answering him, Jesus said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"
- Don't just pray "bless me" prayers. Pray targeted, faith-filled prayers. Set aside time for focused intercession, removing distractions.

III. Persistent Prayer Holds On Until Heaven Moves

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- a. [Jas 5:17-18 NASB95] 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 earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.
- b. Elijah prayed for rain seven times (1 Kings 18:42–44) before the cloud appeared.
- c. [Mat 7:7 NASB95] 7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Present tense: continuous tense in Greek).
- d. [Luk 18:1 NASB95] 1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,
- e. Don't stop praying just because you don't see immediate results. Keep interceding until there's a visible change.

IV. Prophetic Prayer Aligns with God's Word and Will

- a. Elijah's prayer to stop and start rain aligned with God's covenant warnings in Deuteronomy 11:16–17.
 - b. [1Jo 5:14-15 NASB95] 14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us [in] whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
 - c. Anchor your prayers in Scripture. [Jhn 15:7 NASB95] 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
 - d. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the Word that matches Heaven's intention for the situation.
- **Spirit-empowered prayer, offered in faith and righteousness, brings Heaven's authority into earth's reality.**
 - **Elijah wasn't superhuman. He was a surrendered human.**
 - **The same God who answered his prayers is ready to answer yours.**
 - **This is the call of Avails Much: righteous living, earnest intercession, persistent faith, and alignment with God's will.**