

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
James: A Sermonic Call Unto Practical Godliness
Part IX: Godliness In Our Prayer Lives, James 5:13-20
A. Balancing Life's Emotional Extremes Via Prayer And Praise
(James 5:13)

I. Introduction

- A. On the one hand, Job 5:7 NIV claims "man is born unto trouble as surely as sparks fly upward", so since trouble is such a constant pressure we face, one can develop a very negative, melancholy outlook on life.
- B. However, life also hands us blessings: Psalm 116:12 asks, "How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?" and one can thus be tempted to take an overly positive view of life that is equally unrealistic.
- C. There thus exists a temptation for even a believer in Christ to be so moved by the emotional extremes of life that he falls into a "spiritual bipolar" behavior mode, flipping from one extreme to the other.
- D. James 5:13 offers God's solution, that of getting the believer emotionally balanced in living (as follows):

II. Balancing Life's Emotional Extremes Via Prayer And Praise, James 5:13.

- A. First, if any believer is "suffering ill" (*kakopathe*), he should pray, James 5:13a (B. K. C., N. T., p. 834):
 - 1. Set against the preceding context of temptations to take vengeance or to do wrong in retaliation of wrongs suffered in employment (James 5:1-12), James called his readers instead to pray, James 5:13a; R. V. G. Tasker, The General Epistle of James, 1974, p. 126.
 - 2. The believer has great access to God, so he possesses a great opportunity to find balm in times of trouble that is simply unavailable to the unsaved world (as follows):
 - a. Unlike those apart from Christ who do not have effective access to a personal God, the believer has such access by faith due to his standing in Christ in God's gracious salvation, Romans 5:1-2.
 - b. Also, Christ Who died for the believer is seated at the Father's right hand in heaven (Eph. 1:20), and He is always (24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year) willing and able to intercede for his weaknesses and sins were the believer to bring them to Him in prayer, Hebrews 7:25; 2:18.
 - c. The believer is even urged by God to come boldly to him in prayer with his needs, Hebrews 4:16.
 - d. Lest the believer wonder if God really cares about him, that the Lord may not want to bless him, he must only recall that Ephesians 1:6 claims he has been accepted by the Father in His Beloved Son!
 - e. Of course, the believer needs to confess his sins for cleansing (1 John 1:9) for God to hear his prayer request (Psalm 66:18 NIV), and his requests must fit God's revealed Biblical will (1 John 5:14-15), but effective prayer for help is the Christian's blessed opportunity, one the world does not possess.
 - f. Accordingly, like the Apostle Paul, the prayerful believer can eventually come to the point in his life where he can say, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Philippians 4:12-13 KJV; Ibid., p. 126-127.
- B. Second, if any believer is conversely happy, he should sing songs of praise to the Lord, James 5:13b:
 - 1. The word "merry" (KJV) ("happy" NIV) means "cheerful," Ibid., p. 127, and in the immediate context this word contrasts with the generally emotionally low experiences faced in the Christian walk.
 - 2. Such emotional highs bring their own temptation, that of drawing the believer away from seeing his need still to rely on God for blessing, so James urged him to praise God, to *psallo*, Ibid.
 - 3. This Greek New Testament word initially meant to play a stringed instrument, then to sing to the accompaniment of a harp, but it eventually to praise God in music as in Romans 15:9, Ibid., p. 128.
 - 4. Thus, when God blesses the believer with bounty so that he feels an emotional high, he must consider the Source of that blessing, God Himself, and render unto Him the praise that is due His Name! (Ibid.)
- C. Thus, by prayer and praise, the believer handles life's emotional lows and highs to remain balanced.

Lesson: *When life hands us believers in Christ portions of emotional lows or highs, God calls us to a balanced demeanor in offsetting the lows by effective prayer and the highs with praise unto Him.*

Application: *May we live lives of prayer and praise to the Lord to be emotionally mature believers who shine as lights of our immutably emotionally BALANCED Heavenly Father!*