

Introduction

1. Young mother in my former church was an Occupational Therapist at Spectrum Hosp.
 - a. An ear condition developed causing vertigo. Drs. could not treat it or heal it.
 - b. She was in danger of losing job/career because vertigo impaired her performance.
 - c. She came for anointing of oil & prayer by the spiritual leaders of our church.
 - d. W/in wks the condition disappeared & she kept her job & career. PTL!
 - e. She told me that she believed the Lord healed her thru the spiritual leaders' prayers.
 2. Drew two conclusions from that experience in my thinking (Show):
 - ① That is God's method of faith healing. (Only instructions given for healing the sick.)
 - ② If we believe this, should never seek a faith healer. (Godly elders = no faith healer)
 3. If like me, you have a lot of questions about this. Let's answer them. (Show title/text)
- I. **Who Makes The Request? – The Sick Person Does.**
- A. Reasons Related to the Ill – text makes it vry clear that the ill one is to summon the elders.
 1. Practical reason – sick (v. 14) = near death; person may be too sick to get to church
 2. Spiritual reason – faith of the person very important for genuine healing
 - a. Jesus said to the blind men “according to your faith be it unto you.” See Heb. 11:6.
 - b. This request must come from a person seeking God and His will.
 - c. This comes from a person wanting to be right w/Lord and accept His plan for life.
 - d. This request comes fr. some1 who strongly feels the Lord moving them to do this.
 - e. It is not to be used as a last ditch effort by some1 who says, ‘I’ll try anything.
 - B. Reasons Related to the Elders
 1. They are not to form a faith-healing team & go around seeking people to heal.
 2. Purpose of the church is to heal sick souls from sin, not sick bodies from sickness.
 - a. When the church gets on a healing crusade the gospel often gets lost.
 - b. People get attracted for lesser needs rather than for their greatest need.
 - c. God is concerned about our bodies (this text), but He does not always heal.
 - d. Fine for elders to suggest some1 ask them, but they aren't to promote themselves.
- II. **What Does The Oil Mean?**
- A. Two Improbable Views
 1. Extreme Unction (Last Rights)—anointing of the sick, esp. when administered to dying¹
 - a. This text gives no hint this is a sacrament to prepare dying people to enter heaven.²
 - b. That practice is unbiblical. The purpose is to help sick people stay on earth.
 2. Medicine – good Samaritan poured oil on the wounds. V. 14 = rub olive oil on them.³
 - a. (Actually, I like this because it solves the problem of cults who reject Drs.)
 - B. The Symbolic View of the Holy Spirit (Show)⁴
 1. The oil represents the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Soanes, C., & Stevenson, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Concise Oxford English dictionary* (11th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

² Contra <http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/does-the-bible-teach-the-sacrament-of-extreme-unction>. 11/17/16.

³ Good News Bible: Today's English Version. *American Bible Society*. 1992: New York, NY.

⁴ Oil A Symbol of the Holy Spirit. <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/3KyMvd1PpJo/hqdefault.jpg>. Accessed 11/17/16.

2. Mark 6:7 – disciples given the power of God by Jesus. V. 13 – the oil revealed that.
3. This symbol emphasizes the consecration and enablement of the Holy Spirit's anointing grace, the illumination of His teaching & the soothing balm of healing that comes from His touch. (Show)⁵
4. Lord, we consecrate this person to you and ask for your healing power.

III. Why Must There Be Confession of Sin? – Sin Hinders Prayer.

A. Verses That Teach Us This

1. Psalm 66:18 – if I had cherished iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.⁶ (Show)
2. Isaiah 59:2 – But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God. And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.
3. John 9:31 – We know that God does not hear sinners. He won't listen.

B. When Confession is Needed before Anointing

1. **When illness is because of sinfulness (vv. 15-16).**
 - a. Notice confession is to Lord & those who may have been hurt by our sin, not Elders.
 - b. That was the case w/the Corinthians – many of you are sick/weakly (1 Cor. 11:30).
 - c. Must be careful we don't become like Job's 3 friends. **IF he has sinned** (see v. 15).
 - d. Dr. Haik used to say it burned him up when people assumed sick folks had sinned.
2. **When illness makes us aware of waywardness.**
 - a. Sometimes God uses sickness to get our attention.
 - b. We may be out of the will of God, cruising through life ignoring heaven.
 - c. We become deathly ill. Begin realizing our own mortality. Think of spiritual issues.
 - d. If we call for the elders, we need to confess & repent of waywardness.
 1. King Hezekiah is a beautiful illustration of this (see 2 Kings 20:1-6).
 2. I have prayed for sick people not walking with the Lord in this manner.

IV. What Is The Prayer of Faith (v. 15)?

A. Confidence in an Awareness from God.

1. This phrase appears only here in the whole Bible. It is not an ordinary prayer.
 - a. **Prayer of faith** = a special prayer God grants when He has made His will clear.
 - b. It is a conviction created by the Holy Spirit & given to the elders that God will heal.
2. Listen to Pastor Warren Wiersbe's experience.⁷
 - a. As I visit the sick among my congregation, I do not always know how to pray for them. (Paul had the same problem; read Rom. 8:26.) Is it God's will to heal? Is God planning to call His child home? I do not know; therefore, I must pray, "If it is Your will, heal Your child." Those who claim that God heals every case, and that it is not His will for His children to be sick, are denying both Scripture and experience. But where we have the inner conviction from the Word and the Spirit that it is God's will to heal, then we can pray "the prayer of faith" and expect God to work.
3. What if God doesn't grant the prayer of faith so the elders are convinced of healing?

⁵ Oil or Anointing. http://images.slideplayer.com/29/9460349/slides/slide_11.jpg. Accessed 11/17/16.

⁶ Cherish here = choose, enjoy. Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.

⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1989. *The Bible exposition commentary*. " Vol. 2, p. 383. Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.

B. Submission to the Decision of God.

1. Ellen and I were not healed of infertility. God is sovereign. He gives faith.
2. I have never been in this situation where I felt I knew God's will.
3. Keep in mind that it is not one individual who is praying: it is the body of elders—spiritual men of God—who seek God's will and pray. James does not instruct the believer to send for a faith healer. The matter is in the hands of the leaders of the local church.⁸

V. What Lessons Do We Learn About Prayer?

A. God Wants Us To Be Praying People, v. 13.

1. Theme of this whole section is not healing but prayer (see v. 13).
2. If suffering, pray. If happy, pray. If sick, call for the elders to pray.
3. Prayer should be a constant in our lives and our church.

B. Through Prayer Ordinary People Can Accomplish Extraordinary Results, v. 17-18.

1. Elijah was like us (v. 17). Afraid/ran; Discouraged/quit. Depressed/die.
2. Yet his prayers controlled the rainfall for three years.

C. The Key To A Powerful Prayer Life Is A Holy Life, v. 16. (Show Dobson photo at FOF)⁹

1. Back in 1998 Dr. James Dobson suffered a life-threatening stroke.¹⁰
 - a. I suffered a stroke on June 16, 1998 that could've ended my work or even my life.
 - b. A tiny blood clot, about the size of a pencil lead, suddenly developed and lodged itself in the left temporal lobe. It was a critical place to have a stroke. Neurologists refer to that part of the brain as the "eloquence cortex," responsible for speech, creativity, and understanding.
 - c. When I arrived at the hospital...I could not communicate at all. I was unable to identify common objects or even touch my thumb to my forefinger. It was a terrifying experience for Shirley. That's when our friends, perhaps a million strong, began petitioning the Lord on my behalf. It is wonderful to tell you that the Great Physician heard those prayers and has clearly healed me! With a week, I was out of the hospital and back to work. Two physicians said they had never seen anyone recover from that kind of stroke so quickly.
 - d. I also want to express appreciation to the outstanding medical team that brought me through...especially the neurologists who administered a powerful but risky drug called Tissue Plasminogen Activator or TPA. Within 24hrs, I was on my way to recovery. One of the neurologists said the next morning, *You had an angel sitting on your shoulder.*
2. The prayer of a righteous person has great effectiveness, v. 16.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ http://a4.img.talkingpointsmemo.com/image/upload/c_fill,fl_keep_iptc,g_faces,h_365,w_652/uasys6xyatqb9dalwrwa.jpg.

¹⁰ Family News From Dr. James Dobson, August 1998.

