

M E T R O P O L I T A N

New Testament Mission Baptist Church

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M E T R O U

**A Pathway to
Discipleship**

**When Life Happens:
A Study of the Book of James
Spring Semester Syllabus**

January 18 – May 10, 2023

STUDENT EDITION

v.6

1/19/2023

Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Overview of James | 1 |
| When the Heat's Turned Up | 7 |
| When Wrong Seems Right | 9 |
| When the Mirror Doesn't Lie | 10 |
| When Justice Isn't Blind | 11 |
| When Faith Doesn't Work | 13 |
| When Your Tongue Isn't Tied | 14 |
| When Wisdom is Foolish | 15 |
| When Worship Turns to War | 16 |
| When Your Goals Are Not God's | 19 |
| When Your Net Worth is Worthless | 20 |
| When You're in a Hurry but God Isn't | 21 |
| When Pain Leads to Prayer | 23 |

Metro U is an educational opportunity offered by the Metropolitan New Testament Mission Baptist Church, where participants are led through a chronological study of the books of the Bible. Its inaugural launch was in September 2017 and the 2023 Spring semester will mark its Twelfth semester of study.

The 2023 Spring Semester presentation outline is as follows:

| SESSION | DATE | SESSION TOPICS |
|---------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | January 18, 2023 | Overview Book of James |
| 2 | January 25, 2023 | When the Heat's Turned Up |
| 3 | February 8, 2023 | [Small Groups Session] |
| 4 | February 15, 2023 | When Wrong Seems Right |
| 5 | February 22, 2023 | When The Mirror Doesn't Lie |
| 6 | March 1, 2023 | When Justice Isn't Blind |
| 7 | March 8, 2023 | [Small Groups Session] |
| 8 | March 15, 2023 | When Faith Doesn't Work |
| 9 | March 22, 2023 | When Your Tongue Isn't Tied |
| 10 | March 29, 2023 | When Wisdom is Foolish |
| 11 | April 5, 2023 | When Worship Turns to War |
| 12 | April 12, 2023 | [Small Groups Session] |
| 13 | April 19, 2023 | When Your Goals Are Not God's |
| 14 | April 26, 2023 | When Your Net Worth Is Worthless |
| 15 | May 3, 2023 | When You're in a Hurry But God Isn't |
| 16 | May 10, 2023 | [Small Groups Session] |
| 17 | May 17, 2023 | When Pain Leads to Prayer |

**No class on February 1, 2023*

Metro U is open to all. Participants can receive course credit by purchasing a syllabus at \$10.00 each and meeting the attendance requirements of participation in a minimum of **ten (10)** out of the **thirteen (13)** instruction sessions, plus participation of at least **three (3)** of the **Four (4)** scheduled small group sessions.

Certificates of completion will be emailed at the end of each semester and the culmination of certificates (ie. matriculation) will qualify the participant for graduation. Additionally, the Metro U 2023 Spring Semester will be accredited by the Sunday School Publishing Board Department of Christian Education Accreditation and Credentials, and therefore participants meeting the attendance requirements of at least ten (10) participation hours will also receive a Certificate of Progress Program (COPP) course card #1104 James. This course is a required course of the national COPP requirements.

Registered participants who achieve "perfect attendance" by attending all scheduled teaching and small group sessions will receive a SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD.

REFERENCE BOOKS

- Dr. David Jeremiah. Turning Toward Integrity
- Terrence Chandler-Harrison, Spiritual Cross Training: The Book of James

OVERVIEW

Journey With James

“When Life Happens”

INTRODUCTION

1. The Author:

There were three James’ in the New Testament. Probably the brother of Jesus

2. The Letter:

- Some say earliest of New Testament books
- It was written before the fall of Jerusalem
- It was written to Jewish Christians

3. The Theme:

- A belief that behaves

James and Paul Conflict? No. They are writing about their faith from two points of view

OUTLINE

Introduction (1:1)

- I. A Christian and His _____ (1:2-16)
 - A. His _____ (1:2-12)
 - B. His Temptations (1:13-16)
- II. A Christian and His _____ (1:17-27)
 - A. A Gift (1:17-18)
 - B. A Graft (1:19-22)
 - C. A Glass (1:23-27)
- III. A Christian and His _____ (2:1-13)
 - A. Partiality and the Lord (2:1-7)
 - B. Partiality and the Law (2:8-13)
- IV. A Christian and His _____ (2:14-26)
 - A. Declared (2:14-17)
 - B. Debated (2:18-20)
 - C. Decided (2:21-26)

- V. A Christian and His _____ (3:1-4:12)
 A. Sin Revealed (3:1-4:4)
 B. Sin Resisted (4:5-10)
 C. Sin Repudiated (4:11-12)
- VI. A Christian and His _____ (4:13-5:6)
 A. Plans (4:13-17)
 B. Prosperity (5:1-6)
- VII. A Christian and His _____ (5:7-20)
 A. Poverty (5:7-12)
 B. Prayer (5:13-18)
 C. People (5:19-20)

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS CANNOT be called faith. It is dead, and a dead faith is worse than no faith at all. Faith must work, it must produce; it must be visible. Verbal faith is not enough, mental faith is insufficient. Faith must move into action. Throughout his epistle to Jewish believers, James integrated true faith and everyday practical experience by stressing that true faith “works.” It endures trials, it obeys God’s Word; it produces doers, it harbors no prejudice; it controls the tongue; it acts wisely; it provides the power to resist the devil, it waits patiently for the coming of the Lord.

| Focus | Test of Faith | | Characteristics of faith | | Triumph of faith | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|--|------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1:1 | 1:18 | 1:19 | 5:6 | 5:7 | 5:20 | | | | | | |
| Divisions | Purpose of Tests | Source of Temptation | The Outward Demonstration of the Inner Faith | | Endures Awaiting Christ' s Return | Prays for the Afflicted | Confronts the Erring Brother | | | | | |
| | 1:1 | 1:12 | 1:13 | 1:18 | 1:19 | 5:6 | 5:7 | 5:12 | 5:13 | 5:18 | 5:19 | 5:20 |
| Topics | Development of faith | | Works of faith | | Power of faith | | | | | | | |
| | Response of faith | | Reality of faith | | Reassurance of faith | | | | | | | |
| Place | Probably Jerusalem | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Time | A.D. 46-49 | | | | | | | | | | | |

Introduction and Title

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS CANNOT be called faith. Faith without works is dead, and a dead faith is worse than no faith at all. Faith must work; it must produce; it must be visible. Verbal faith is not enough; mental faith is insufficient. Faith must be there, but it must be more. It must inspire action. Throughout his epistle to Jewish believers, James integrates true faith and everyday practical experience by stressing that true faith must manifest itself in works of faith.

Faith endures trials. Trials come and go, but a strong faith will face them head-on and develop endurance. Faith understands temptations. It will not allow us to consent to our lust and slide into sin. Faith obeys the Word. It will not merely hear and not do. Faith produces doers. Faith harbors no prejudice. For James, faith and favoritism cannot coexist. Faith displays itself in works. Faith is more than mere words; it is more than knowledge; it is demonstrated by obedience; and it overly responds to the promises of God. Faith controls the tongue. This small but immensely powerful part of the body must be held in check. Faith can do it. Faith acts wisely. It gives us the ability to choose wisdom that is heavenly and to shun wisdom that is earthly. Faith produces separation from the world and submission to God. It provides us with the ability to resist the devil and humbly to draw near to God. Finally, faith waits patiently for the coming of the Lord. Through trouble and trial, it stifles complaining.

The name *Jakobos* (James in 1:1) is the basis for the early title *Jakobou Epistole*, “Epistle of James.” *Jakobos* is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Jacob, a Jewish name common in the first century.

Author

Four men are named James in the New Testament: (1) James, the father of Judes (not Iscariot), is mentioned twice (see Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13) as the father of one of the twelve disciples, but is otherwise completely unknown. (2) James, the son of Alphaeus (see Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13), elsewhere called James the Less (Mark 15:40), was one of the twelve disciples. Apart from being listed with the other disciples, this James is completely obscure, and it is doubtful that he is the authoritative figure behind the epistle. Some attempts have been made to identify this James with the Lord’s brother (Gal. 1:19), but this view is difficult to reconcile with the gospel accounts. (3) James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John (see Matt. 4:21; 10:2; 17:1; Mark 3:17; 10:35; 13:3; Luke 9:54; Acts 1:13), was one of Jesus’ intimate disciples, but his martyrdom by A.D. 44 (Acts 12:2) makes it very unlikely that he wrote this epistle. (4)

James, the Lord's brother (see Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19), was one of the "pillars" in the church in Jerusalem (see Acts 12:17; 15:13-21; 21:18; Gal. 2:9,12). Tradition points to this prominent figure as the author of the epistle, and this best fits the evidence of Scripture. There are several clear parallels between the language of the letter drafted under his leadership in Acts 15:23-29 and the epistle of James (e.g., the unusual word *chairein*, "greeting," is found only in Acts 15:23, 23:26, and James 1:1). The Jewish character of this epistle with its stress upon the Law, along with the evident influence by the Sermon on the Mount (e.g., 4:11-12, 5:12), complement what we know about James "the Just" from Scripture and early Tradition.

It has been argued that the Greek of this epistle is too sophisticated for a Galilean such as James, but this assumes that he never had the opportunity or aptitude to develop proficiency in Koine ("common") Greek. As a prominent church leader, it would have been to his advantage to become fluent in the universal language of the Roman Empire.

For various reason, some assert that James was a stepbrother of Jesus by a previous marriage of Joseph, or that the "brothers" of Jesus mentioned in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 were really His cousins. However, the most natural understanding of the gospel accounts is that James was the half brother of Jesus, being the offspring of Joseph and Mary after the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1:24-25). He apparently did not accept the claims of Jesus until the Lord appeared to him after His Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7). He and his brothers were among the believers who awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14). It was not long before he became an acknowledged leader of the Jerusalem church (see Acts 12:17; Gal. 2:9, 12), and he was a central figure in the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. Even after Paul's third missionary journey, James continued to observe the Mosaic Law as a testimony to other Jews (Acts 21:18-25). Early tradition stresses his Jewish piety and his role in bringing others to an understanding of Jesus as the Messiah. He suffered a violent martyr's death not long before the fall of Jerusalem.

The brevity and limited doctrinal emphasis of James kept it from wide circulation, and by the time it became known in the church as a whole, there was uncertainty about the identity of James (1:1). Growing recognition that it was written by the Lord's brother led to its acceptance as a canonical book.

Date and Setting

Jesus is addressed "To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad"(1:1), and it is apparent from verses like 1:19 and 2:1, 7 that this greeting refers to Hebrew Christians outside of Palestine. Their place of meeting is called a "synagogue" in the Greek text (2:2), and the whole

epistle reflects Jewish thought and expressions (e.g., 2:19, 21; 4:11-12; 5:4, 12). There are no references to slavery of idolatry, and this also fits an originally Jewish readership.

These Jewish believers were beset with problems that were testing their faith, and James was concerned that they were succumbing to impatience, bitterness, materialism, disunity, and spiritual apathy. As a resident of Jerusalem and a leader of the church, James no doubt had frequent contact with Jewish Christians from a number of Roman provinces. He therefore felt a responsibility to exhort and encourage them in their struggles of faith.

According to Josephus, James was martyred in A.D. 62 (Hegesippus, quoted in Eusebius, fixed the date of James's death at A.D. 66). Those who accept him as the author of this epistle have proposed a date of writing ranging from A.D. 45 to the end of his life. However, several factors indicate that this letter may have been the earliest writing of the New Testament (c. A.D. 46-49): (1) There is no mention of Gentile Christians or their relationship to Jewish Christians as would be expected in a later epistle. (2) Apart from references to the Person of Christ, there is practically no distinctive theology in James, suggesting an early date when Christianity was viewed in terms of Messianic Judaism. (3) The allusions to the teachings of Christ have such little verbal agreement with the synoptic Gospels that they probably preceded them. (4) James uses the word "synagogue" (assembly, 2:2) in addition to "Church" and indicates a very simple organization of elders and masters, that is, teachers (3:1; 5:14), which was patterned after the early synagogue. (5) James does not mention the issues involved in the Acts 15 Council in Jerusalem (A.D. 49).

Theme and Purpose

Throughout his epistle, James develops the theme of the characteristics of true faith. He effectively uses these characteristics as a series of tests to help his reader evaluate the reality of their relationship to Christ. The purpose of this work is not doctrinal or apologetic but practical, as James seeks to challenge these believers to examine the quality of their daily lives in terms of attitudes and actions. A genuine faith will produce real changes in a person's conduct and character, and the absence of change is a symptom of a dead faith.

Keys to James

Key Word: Faith That Works

Key Verses (1:19-22; 2:14-17)—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the

implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (1:19-22)

“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works” Can faith save him” If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have work, is dead” (2:14-17).

Key Chapter (1)—One of the most difficult areas of the Christian life is that of testings and temptation, James reveals our correct response to both; to testings, count them all joy; to temptations, realize that God is not their source.

Christ in James

James refers to the “Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1; 2:1), and he anticipates “The coming of the Lord” (5:7-8). Compared to other New Testament writers. James says little about Christ, and yet his speech is virtually saturated with allusions to the teaching of Christ. The Sermon on the Mount is especially prominent in James’ thinking (there are c. fifteen indirect references; e.g., James 1:2 and Matt. 5:10-12; James 1:4 and Matt. 5:48; James 2:13 and Matt. 6:14-15, James 4:11 and Matt. 7:1-2; James 5:2 and Matt. 6:19). This epistle portrays Christ in the context of early messianic Judaism.

WHEN THE HEAT'S TURNED UP

**In this lesson, we discover how it is possible
to endure trials with joy.**

OUTLINE

JAMES 1: 1 - 12

Most people try to avoid trials and difficulties in life, but sometimes it's impossible. What then? James gives us five ways to look at life's tests from a biblical standpoint and stay focused on their positive results and rewards.

- I. **Celebrate the Reason Behind Your Trials**
- II. **Calculate the Results of Your Trials**
 - A. Trials Produce _____
 - B. Trials Produce _____
- III. **Call Upon god's Resources in Your Trials**
 - A. God Is _____
 - B. God Is _____
 - C. God Is _____
- IV. **Consider Your Reactions to Your Trials**
- V. **Contemplate the Rewards of Your Trials**

SMALL GROUP STUDY

WHEN WRONG SEEMS RIGHT

**In this lesson, we learn to overcome temptation
by understanding it.**

OUTLINE

JAMES 1: 13 - 18

The old gag line says, “I can resist anything but temptation!” Biblically speaking, that’s true. Temptations cannot be resisted; we will always be subject to them. But they can be overcome if we understand their source and the steps they follow to enslave us.

- I. Acknowledge the Reality of Temptation**
- II. Assume the Responsibility for Temptation**
- III. Anticipate the Routine of Temptation**
 - A. Step One: _____
 - B. Step Two: _____
 - C. Step Three: _____
 - D. Step Four: _____
- IV. Activate the Replacement of Temptation**
- V. Accept the Reason for Temptation**

WHEN THE MIRROR DOESN'T LIE

**In this lesson, we will discover the need to apply
the Word of God in addition to simply
knowing what it says.**

OUTLINE

JAMES 1: 19 - 27

The Bible plays one of three roles in the Christian's life: On Sunday only; as an occasional source of information or inspiration; or as a daily guide to belief and behavior. The last of the three is the correct choice. James gives six steps for learning to be a daily "doer" of the Word.

- I. Step One: Preparation**
 - A. Concentrate Your Attention
 - B. Control Your _____
 - C. Contain Your _____
 - D. Clean Up your Life
- II. Step Two: Examination**
- III. Step Three: Application**
 - A. The _____ Approach
 - B. The _____ Approach
- IV. Step Four: Meditation**
- V. Step Five: Memorization**
- VI. Step Six: Demonstration**
 - A. The test of _____
 - B. The Test of Spiritual Compassion
 - C. The Test of _____

WHEN JUSTICE ISN'T BLIND

In this lesson, we discover why discrimination among people is sin in God's eyes.

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| OUTLINE | JAMES 2: 1 - 13 |
|----------------|-----------------|

Christians often shake their heads at the discrimination that takes place in society. But James was shaking his head at the church, for they were guilty of discrimination against the poor. He gives six reasons why discrimination should never be found in the church.

- I. Social Discrimination Is Incompatible with the Christian Faith**
- II. Social Discrimination Is Insensitive to the Church's Calling**
- III. Social Discrimination Is Inconsiderate of the Choices God Makes**
- IV. Social Discrimination Is Inconsistent with the conduct of the Rich**
 - A. Who Is _____ You?
 - B. Who Is _____ You into Court?
 - C. Who blasphemes that Noble Name by Which You Are Called?
- V. Social Discrimination Is Indifferent to the Character of the Law**
- VI. Social Discrimination Is Ignorant of the Future Judgement**

SMALL GROUP STUDY

WHEN FAITH DOESN'T WORK

**In this lesson, we learn why a faith that
doesn't work is not a true faith.**

OUTLINE

JAMES 2: 14 - 26

Are there two kinds of Christianity—one that is more cerebral and abstract, the other more hands-on and practical? Some would say yes, but James would say no. He explains that true faith is faith that believes and works at the same time.

- I. Real Faith Is More Than Verbal Affirmation**
 - A. Verbal Faith Does Not _____
 - B. Verbal Faith Does Not _____
 - C. Verbal Faith Does Not _____
- II. Real Faith Is More Than Mental Assent**
- III. Real Faith Is More Than a Positive Attitude**
 - A. Abraham the Patriarch
 - B. Rahab the Prostitute

WHEN YOUR TONGUE ISN'T TIED

In this lesson, we learn about the amazing power of the tongue.

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| OUTLINE | JAMES 3: 1-13 |
|----------------|---------------|

What are the smallest things with the greatest power you can think of? Atoms? Bacteria? Ranked right near the top, James would say, is the human tongue. In relationships, nothing has more power to destroy, or to heal, than human speech.

- I. The Power of the Tongue to Influence Many**
- II. The Potential of the Tongue to Indicate Maturity**
- III. The Pictures of the Tongue that Illustrate Meaning**
 - A. The _____ and the Bridle
 - B. The Ship and the Rudder
 - C. The Forest Fire and the Spark
 - D. The Animal and the _____ Trainer
- IV. The Poison of the Tongue that Infects the Mouth**
 - A. The Poison of _____
 - B. The Poison of _____

WHEN WISDOM IS FOOLISH

**In this lesson, we will discover the difference
between heavenly and earthly wisdom.**

OUTLINE

JAMES 3: 14 - 18

Education, advancement, and outward success can suggest the presence of wisdom. But James says true wisdom is measured by heaven's criteria, not earth's. The truly wise person will want to study the standards for wisdom which James presents.

- I. The _____ of Worldly Wisdom
 - A. Earthly Wisdom
 - B. Natural Wisdom
 - C. Demonic Wisdom
- II. The _____ of Worldly Wisdom
 - A. Jealous Anger
 - B. Selfish Ambition
 - C. Proud Arrogance
 - D. Deceitful Actions
- III. The _____ of Worldly Wisdom
 - A. Confusion
 - B. Every Evil Work
- IV. The Origin of Heavenly Wisdom
- V. The Operation of Heavenly Wisdom
 - A. Heavenly Wisdom Is Pure
 - B. Heavenly Wisdom Is _____
 - C. Heavenly Wisdom Is Gentle
 - D. Heavenly Wisdom Is Willing to Yield
 - E. Heavenly Wisdom Is _____
 - F. Heavenly Wisdom is Without Partiality
 - G. Heavenly Wisdom Is without Hypocrisy
- VI. The outcome of Heavenly Wisdom

WHEN WORSHIP TURNS TO WAR

**In this lesson, we learn how to deal with
conflict in the church.**

OUTLINE

JAMES 4: 1- 12

Though the church is the divine creation of our Lord, its human members are subject to every temptation the devil can send us. In his epistle, James outlines the causes and cures of conflict within the church.

- I. The Cause of Conflict in the Church**
- II. The Characteristics of Conflict in the Church**
 - A. Unsatisfied _____
 - B. Uncontrolled Passion
 - C. Untapped _____
 - D. Unanswered Prayer
- III. The Condemnation of Conflict in the Church**
 - A. Friendship with the World Destroys Our
_____ with God.
 - B. Friendship with the World Denies Our Faith in God's Word
- IV. The Cure for Conflict in the Church**
 - A. Grace Principle One: Relinquish _____ of Your Life
 - B. Grace Principle Two: _____ the Devil
 - C. Grace Principle Three: Restore Worship to a _____
 - D. Grace Principle Four: _____ Sinful Actions
 - E. Grace Principle Five: Reject Sinful Attitudes

- F. Grace principle Six: React to Sin with Sorrow
- G. Grace Principle Seven: Refrain from a _____Attitude
Toward Evil
- H. Grace Principle Eight: Respond Humbly to Success
- I. Grace Principle Nine: Refuse to Slander Your Brother

SMALL GROUP STUDY

WHEN YOUR GOALS ARE NOT GOD'S

**In this lesson, we learn how to submit
our future plans to God.**

OUTLINE

JAMES 4: 13 - 17

It has been wisely said that “to fail to plan is to plan to fail.” Scripture speaks about the wisdom of planning but the foolishness of planning without God’s help. James outlines three mistakes that are easy to make in planning-and how to avoid them.

- I. Mistake One: Planning the _____ Without God**
- II. Mistake Two: Presuming to _____ the Future**
 - A. They Failed to Comprehend the Complexity of Life
 - B. They Failed to Comprehend the Uncertainty of Life
 - C. They Failed to Comprehend the Brevity of Life
- III. Mistake Three: Postponing Until the Future What Should Be Done _____**
 - A. Facing Up to Pride
 - B. Deo Volente

WHEN YOUR NET WORTH IS WORTHLESS

In this lesson, we discover the dreadful consequences of hoarding wealth.

OUTLINE

JAMES 5: 1 - 6

While we may not consider ourselves wealthy by the world's standards, God still considers us stewards of what we have. James uses the practices of some wealthy wicked people to illustrate principles that will help us avoid the trap of hoarding our money.

- I. The _____ of the Wealthy Wicked
- II. The _____ of the Wealthy Wicked
 - A. Your Riches Are Corrupted
 - B. Your Garments Are Moth-Eaten
 - C. Your gold and Silver Are Corroded
- III. The _____ of the Wealthy Wicked
- IV. The Deluxe Lifestyles of the Wealthy Wicked
- V. The Deadly Crimes of the Wealthy Wicked

WHEN YOU'RE IN A HURRY BUT GOD ISN'T

**In this lesson, we discover the trait most needed
during times of testing.**

OUTLINE

JAMES 5: 7 - 12

What options are available during times of testing? Fight and flight are certainly two used by many people. But James has another solution—one employed by farmers, prophets, and the patriarch Job. The biblical response to the testing of our faith is patience.

- I. We Need Patience When We Face _____
- II. We Need Patience When We Face _____
- III. We Need Patience When We Face Disapproval
- IV. We Need Patience When We Face _____
- V. We Need Patience When We Face Dishonesty

SMALL GROUP STUDY

WHEN PAIN LEADS TO PRAYER

In this lesson, we discover four reasons to pray.

OUTLINE

JAMES 5: 13 - 20

Sometimes knowing the “why” and “how” of something helps motivate us to accomplish it. Such is the case with prayer. James establishes four good reasons for believers to pray, and gives especially good guidance on how to pray for the sick.

- I. It is Important to Pray for _____ Reasons
- II. It Is Important to Pray for _____ Reasons
 - A. The sick person Is to Summon the Elders of the Church
 - B. The Elders Are to Come and Pray Over the Sick Person
 - C. The Elders Are to Anoint the sick Person with Oil in the Name of the Lord
- III. It is Important to Pray for _____ Reasons
- IV. It is Important to Pray for _____ Reasons



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