

I. Pray, Praise, and Confess as Solutions in Difficult Situations

Situation #1—**Is anyone among you in trouble?**

Injunction #1—**Let them pray.** Bunyan defines prayer as "a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the soul to God in the name of Christ for all that God has promised.

Situation #2—**Is anyone happy?**

Injunction #2—**Let them sing songs of praise.** Rom 15:9 Col 3:16 Psa 126:1-2 Psa 137:3-4

Situation #3—¹⁴**Is anyone among you sick?**

Injunction #3—**Let them call the elders of the church to**

pray over them and anoint them (YLT—having anointed) **with oil in the name of the Lord.**
¹⁵**And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned,**
(John 9:1-3) **they will be forgiven.** ¹⁶**Therefore**

Injunction #5—**confess your sins to each other and** Heb 4:14-16 Neh 9:2 Psa 32:1-6

Injunction #6—**pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.**
Acts 4:29-31

Having been commanded to pray three ways, now be refreshed by the earnest example of Elijah's prayers.

II. Elijah's Earnest Prayers Encourage Our Imitation

¹⁷**Elijah was a human being, even as we are.** See 1 Kings 17-18 on Elijah. Also Matt 16:13-14.
He prayed earnestly (YLT—"with prayer he did pray") **that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.** ¹⁸**Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.**

God calls us to pray like Elijah, but that is not all: it may be your turn to turn someone around.

III. "Remember This" Situation—God Can Use You to Turn "Sinners" and Cover Sins

Situation #4—¹⁹**My brothers...if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring (him) back,**

Injunction #7—²⁰**remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.**

The Sermon-in-a-Sentence: For those in trouble, happiness, sickness, or sin, the earnest prayers of God's people and of Elijah-like elders are powerfully effective.

The Big Questions: (1) What steps do you need to take to become an Elijah-like prayer warrior? (2) Is there someone wandering in sin whom God is calling you to "bring . . . turn" back?

The Gospel: Beyond John 3 and 1 Cor 15, which are beautiful, foundational, and crucial: One in the church may wander into sin (v. 19). Another must be dispatched to bring him or her back (v. 19). "Whoever" (that is, God, with you) turns that person from their error (v. 20) "saves" their "soul" (NIV has merely, 'will save them') from death and covers their sins. In other words, if one claiming to be saved (see 1 Cor 5:11) strays into sin and they repent, you have won your brother (see Matt 18:15). If they do not repent, then they have proven to be a false convert. They can still repent and be saved, but presently they must be considered unsaved. It is often the case that such a person who persists in sin, rejecting friendly counsel, still persists also in a fatal confidence about their salvation. This is the counsel of James 5:20; it does not contradict the counsel in James 4:11-12.

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