

James

Lesson #2, Chapter 1 Overview

The goal of this lesson is to teach you how to look at and begin to study a text of Scripture. *Observation* is a necessary part of Bible study, but can often be overlooked or rushed through. Observation begins with reading through the chapter and then reading and rereading it again and again! At this stage in our Bible study you're noticing and then recording what God has put into the chapter. You're not making any interpretations about what it means or how it applies to your life—that will come later. Don't rush through this lesson. Set aside time this week to peer into the living and abiding Word of God. You'll be glad you did!

I've included Chapter 1 at the end of this lesson so you can print it out and mark it up if you'd like. I find it helps me see items more easily if I'm marking and noting things as I go.

1. To begin, read through Chapter 1. Now, *summarize* the contents of Chapter 1. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4th grader the contents of the chapter.
 - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-4).
 - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 5-8).
 - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 9-18).
 - d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 19-25).
 - e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 26-27).

2. After reviewing the chapter and what you wrote for your summaries, ask yourself: What is the *main point* of this chapter? How do all these details and events reveal the main idea of the chapter? Record your answer below.

3. Next, look for a verse in the chapter that best summarizes the contents of the chapter. You might be tempted to choose your favorite verse here, but please don't do that. Instead, *consider which verse best sums up what's in the chapter*. Write down the verse you chose here.

4. Now you're ready to *title* your chapter. Your 3-5 word title should reflect the contents of the chapter. Remember, a title's purpose is to help you remember what is in each chapter.

5. List the things you observe about *God* in this chapter. Look for things *He* does, *His* attributes, and truths about *Him*. Be sure to list the verse reference with your answer. Your answer might look like this: James is God's bond-servant (verse 1) *or you could phrase it like this*: God has bond-servants and James is one of them (verse 1).

6. Now do the same thing for *Jesus Christ*. Look for things *He* does, *His* attributes, and truths about *Him*. *Usually*, the word *Lord* will refer to Jesus Christ so include those references here also. Be sure to list the verse reference with your answer.

7. What do you learn about the recipients of James' letter in this chapter? Be sure to list the verse reference with your answers.
8. What do you learn about *wisdom* in this chapter? Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.
9. What do you learn about *tempt, tempting, temptation* in this chapter? Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.
10. List what you observe about *doers* versus *hearers*. Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

There's more observations to be found to this chapter than what I've asked you here. If you're eager for more, try looking for and noting:

- *References to time*
- *Repeated words*
- *Transition words like "for," "therefore," "so," "finally."*
- *Commands*
- *Comparisons*
- *Contrasts*
- *Lists of words, phrases or related thoughts*

11. Write down at least one thing you thought was interesting from this chapter.

James Chapter 1

1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position;
10 and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away.

11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.

27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.