



*James* **TEACHER'S GUIDE**

**AN 18 WEEK INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY**

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*By Lisa Hughes*

# James

## Lesson #1, Introduction to the Book

Read through the book of James two times before answering the questions below. It's important to take the time to read through the whole book before beginning this lesson. Ask the Lord to help you maintain interest and diligence.

Using only the text of James, try to answer the following questions. Be sure to note the Scripture references to show where you found your answer from the Bible. *At this point in the lesson you may not be able to answer every question using only your Bible.* You will have an opportunity at the end of this lesson to come back and complete your answers using other Bible study sources.

### 1. Who wrote the book?

James, who identifies himself as a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus. 1:1. In 3:1 James also lines up in the “teacher” category.

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.

Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, [Talk Thru the Bible](#) (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983), 463.

- A. The traditional author is James (Hebrew, “Jacob”), the half-brother of Jesus (one of four, cf. Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Acts 1:14; 12:17; Gal. 1:19). He was the leader of the Jerusalem Church (a.d. 48–62, cf. Acts 15:13–21; Gal. 2:9).
  1. He was called “James the Just” and later nicknamed “camel knees” because he constantly prayed on his knees (from Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius).
  2. James was not a believer until after the resurrection (cf. Mark 3:21; John 7:5; Jesus appeared to him personally, 1 Cor. 15:7).
  3. He was present in the upper room when the Spirit came on Pentecost (cf. Acts, recorded in 2:1).
  4. He was married (cf. 1 Cor. 9:5).
  5. He is referred to by Paul as a pillar (possibly an apostle, cf. Gal. 1:19) but was not one of the Twelve (cf. Gal. 2:9; Acts 12:17; 15:13ff).
  6. In *Antiquities of the Jews*, 20:9:1, Josephus says that he was stoned in a.d. 62 by orders from the Sadducees of the Sanhedrin, while another tradition (the second century writers, Clement of Alexandria or Hegesippus) says he was pushed off the wall of the Temple.
  7. For many generations after Jesus’ death a relative of Jesus was appointed leader of the church in Jerusalem.

Robert James Dr. Utley, [Jesus’ Half-Brothers Speak: James and Jude](#), vol. Volume 11, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 1.

### 2. To whom was it written?

1:1 to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad (meaning it’s not just one church body, but believers who have been spread out).

He writes to the “brethren.” See 1:2, 16, 19 and so on through the rest of the book.

Brethren who have rich and poor among them (see 2:1-7). Brethren who are of Jewish descent apparently since James references Abraham and Isaac (2:21) and Rahab (2:25), as well as the prophets, Job, and Elijah in chapter 5.

James 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*<sup>w</sup> 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 or 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.

Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, [\*Talk Thru the Bible\*](#) (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983), 464.

It is likely that Peter wrote to the Jewish Christians scattered to the West (cf. 1 Peter 1:1) and that James addressed the Jewish Christians scattered to the East, in Babylon and Mesopotamia.

J. Ronald Blue, "[James](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 816.

### 3. When was it written?

No real indication in the text. Just that it was after Jesus died and rose again. 1:1 indicates that something happened to the believers so that they did disperse.

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 [p 465](#) 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.

Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, [\*Talk Thru the Bible\*](#) (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983), 464–465.

### 4. Where was it written?

No indication in the text. But most likely from Jerusalem since James was a leader in the church there.

### 5. What's the general tone of the author in the book?

Very forthright. Exhorts with boldness. No one exempt from the words he speaks. He wants all to do what is right.

### 6. What's the author's purpose in writing this book?

James' purpose is to get all believers to realize that the life of faith is a transformed faith. See 1:22; 3:10, 13; 5:19-20. I would say either 5:19-20 or 1:22 are the key verses of the book that explain its purpose.

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.

Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, [\*Talk Thru the Bible\*](#) (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983), 465.

The purpose of this potent letter is to exhort the early believers to Christian maturity and holiness of life. This letter deals more with the practice of the Christian faith than with its precepts. James told his readers how to achieve spiritual maturity through a confident stand, compassionate service, careful speech, contrite submission, and concerned sharing. He dealt with every area of a Christian's life: what he is, what he does, what he says, what he feels, and what he has.

With his somewhat stern teaching on practical holiness, James showed how Christian faith and Christian love should be expressed in a variety of actual situations. The seemingly unrelated parts of the book can be harmonized in light of this unified theme. The pearls are not rolling around in some box; they are carefully strung to produce a necklace of priceless beauty.

J. Ronald Blue, "[James](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 818.

7. What topics are included in this book?

Living well in the midst of trials. Not blaming God for our sinful responses in trials. Being a doer, not just a hearer of God's Word. Addresses partiality/favoritism in the church. The importance of living out your faith in your "works" or deeds. The need for believers to govern their tongues. To live by godly wisdom, not worldly wisdom (what comes naturally to us). Repenting for our wrong attitudes. Encouraging the persecuted and wrongly treated to trust and hope in the Lord. Encouragement in prayer.

8. What are the key words of the book? Key words are words that are repeated or carry an important thought.

Faith, works. Hearer, doer. Wisdom. Trials. Brethren. Truth. Right or righteousness.

9. What are the main themes of the book? A theme is the main idea, the overall message.

Living like a believer—transformed by grace. Living out what you believe. Persevering in trials and suffering. Applying godly wisdom to our living.

10. List 5 attributes of God that you see in this book. Attributes are those characteristics or qualities that are true of Him. They describe who He is.

Judge in 5:4, 7-9. A loving God who is jealous for our love in 4:5. A gift giver in 1:17. Unchanging in 1:17. A planning God in 1:18. A creating God in 1:18. A holy and sinless God, who never does evil in 1:13. A generous God in 1:5, 12. He is compassionate and full of mercy in 5:11.

11. List 5 attributes of Christ that you see in this book.

He is Lord in 1:1. He is glorious in 2:1. He is the one we put our faith in from 2:1. He is imminent—coming soon in 5:7-8. He has power to raise us up in 5:15. And He forgives in 5:15.

Now you can go back and add to your answers above using a Bible dictionary or Bible commentary.

12. What insights have you gained thus far into the book of James?

The idea of making sure that I am truly "hearing" God's Word—in that I am obeying it and applying it by living it out each day. I love how this book challenges me to examine just how I am living. Am I truly living like I should? As a believer?

13. What's one verse in the book that has caught your attention? How did it encourage or convict you, or make you want to study and think about it more?

James 5:9 is such a good exhortation for me. I just love chapter 5.

## 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 4<sup>th</sup> grader the contents of the chapter.

a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-4).

Encouragement to believers undergoing trials to count their trials as beneficial, with joy even, because God is using the trials to perfect and complete their faith.

b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 5-8).

Yet, trials being uncertainty so James urges the believers to ask God for wisdom, trusting Him that He will give it completely.

c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 9-18).

James puts our trials into perspective by showing the transience of life and encourages believers that persevering will bring a crown of glory. Yet, those trials can bring temptations to not think rightly so he reminds us of God's character to always do what is right.

d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 19-25).

Yet, trials are no excuse for bad behavior! Instead, believers are encouraged to guard their tongues, continue to strive for holiness, and be effective doers of the Word, not just those who hear it.

e. Summarize paragraph 5 (verses 26-27).

In fact, the part of the life of a "doer of the Word" is described in guarding of the tongue and ministering to those who can't care for themselves.

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.

The main point of this chapter is to show that their trials have purpose, have help from the Lord, can be lived through, can be lived through without giving way to sin, and we are called to live differently, as effective doers of the Word, not just hearers.

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.

1:21 but not thrilled with that choice. Feel that it shows the transformed life we need to be living. Could go with 1:12 as it shows the persevering in trials theme. Or 1:25 which shows that we need to live, really live, not just hear God's Word.

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.

Don't Use Trials As An Excuse  
Trials, Schmials, Be Godly!

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).

Verse 1: James is a bond-servant of God

Verse 5: we are to ask God for wisdom. He gives wisdom! He gives it generously. He gives it without reproach.

Verse 7: ask for wisdom in faith or don't expect to receive it from God.

Verse 13: don't say you're tempted by God.

Verse 13: God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He ever, ever, ever tempt anyone.

Verse 17: God is the Father of lights. With Him there is no shifting shadow. No variation or change.

Verse 18: God exercises His will.

Verse 18: God brought us forth by the Word of truth. i.e. we are born again by the Word. ☺

Verse 18: God desired that the believers would be among the first fruits of His creatures.

Verse 20: man's anger doesn't attain to God's righteousness.

Verse 27: God sees our religion lived out. God is our Father.

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.

Verse 1: James is Christ's bond-servant.

Verse 1: Jesus is the Lord.

Verse 12: The Lord has promised His servants a crown of life.

Verse 12: The Lord's promise is for those who love Him.

7. What do you learn about the recipients of James' letter in this chapter? Be sure to list the verse reference with your answers.

Verse 1: the twelve tribes. The dispersed ones.

Verse 2: brethren.

Verses 9-10: there are rich and poor among them—all being tested by trials.

Verse 16, 19: beloved brethren.

Verse 18: first fruits among God's creatures.

8. What do you learn about *wisdom* in this chapter? Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Verse 5: God gives wisdom. Believers can lack wisdom. God, being the giver of wisdom, supplies it generously and without reproach.

Verse 6: we ask for wisdom, but if we want help, we must ask in faith.

9. What do you learn about *tempt, tempting, temptation* in this chapter? Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Verse 13: when we are tempted, we are not to say we are tempted by God.

Verse 13: God cannot be tempted by evil.

Verse 13: God never tempts anyone.

Verse 14: when we give way to temptation we are carried away and enticed by our lust.

10. List what you observe about *doers* versus *hearers*. Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Verse 22: prove or show ourselves doers of the Word.

Verse 22: hearers delude themselves.

Verse 23: hearers look at self in mirror and (verse 24) *immediately* forgets what kind of person he is.

Implied: a doer looks in the mirror and remembers what kind of person he is.

Verse 25: the doer looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it.

Verse 25: effectual doers will be blessed in his efforts to live out his faith.

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.

I love the long range thinking of verses 2-4.

Love the "take responsibility for your own sin" approach in verses 13-16.

Verse 20: man's anger doesn't attain to God's righteousness. Want to be like God? Then don't give in to the ungodly response of anger.

Verse 21: the Word has the power to save our souls all the way through to heaven.

Verse 22: Hearers delude themselves.



## 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.

## James

### Lesson #3, Chapter 1:1-8

Go to the Lord and ask Him for insight, understanding, and a teachable heart from this passage. Read through Chapter 1 before beginning this lesson.

1. What clues can you gain about the one who wrote the book from verse 1? Now look up the following verses and summarize what you learn about him: Matthew 13:55; Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Galatians 1:18-19; 2:9, 12; Jude 1.  
He names himself as James, who is a bondservant of God and of Jesus Christ. He is writing to believers who are also Jews.

55 "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? BROTHER OF JESUS

17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, "Report these things to James and the brethren." Then he left and went to another place.

PETER ACKNOWLEDGES JAMES AS A LEADER OF THE BELIEVERS

13 After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. AFTER PAUL AND BARNABAS REPORTED GOD'S WORKING IN THE GENTILES, JAMES TAKES CHARGE OF THE PROCEEDINGS, ALSO SEE VERSE 19 WHERE HE WISELY GIVES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO PROCEED.

18 And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. JAMES AGAIN IS THE ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER.

18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. PAUL KNEW HIM.

9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. PILLAR OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. JAMES DISPATCHED OTHER MEN TO CHECK ON THE CHURCHES AND THEIR PROGRESS.

1 Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: JAMES IS ALSO JUDE'S BROTHER.

2. What do you learn about the author's spiritual journey from Mark 3:20-21; 6:1-6; John 7:2-5; Acts 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:3-7?

20 And He came home, and the crowd gathered again, to such an extent that they could not even eat a meal. 21 When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses." HE DIDN'T BELIEVE JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH WHILE JESUS WAS ALIVE. KIND OF THOUGHT JESUS WAS CRAZY FOR WHAT WAS GOING.

1 Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him. 2 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands? 3 "Is

not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him. 4 Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household." 5 And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And He wondered at their unbelief. And He was going around the villages teaching. EVEN HIS FAMILY WAS UNBELIEVING IN HIS MIRACLES.

2 Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. 3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. 4 "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him. JAMES AND JUDE AND POSSIBLY HIS OTHER BROTHERS TOLD JESUS WHAT THEY THOUGHT HE NEEDED TO DO. NONE OF THE BROTHERS BELIEVED IN JESUS AT THIS POINT.

14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. BUT BY THE TIME THE BOOK OF ACTS WAS WRITTEN, JAMES AND HIS BROTHERS HAD COME TO BELIEVE IN JESUS AS THEIR OWN MESSIAH AND LORD.

3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; JAMES ALSO RECEIVED A POST RESURRECTION VISIT FROM JESUS.

3. James identifies himself as a *bond-servant* of God and of Christ. Describe what he means when he uses that word, especially as it relates to the Lord [Strong's<sup>1</sup> #1401 (ESV, NIV *servant*)].

*Doulos*—slave. Someone whose life is not their own. Paul said it in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: 14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

*Doulos* (**bond-servant**) depicts a slave, a person deprived of all personal freedom and totally under the control of his master. Absolute obedience and loyalty to his master (who provided him with food, clothing, and housing) was required of every *doulos*. In contrast to the *andrapodon*, who was made a slave, the *doulos* was born a slave. James had become a *doulos* by his new birth through faith in Jesus Christ.

To be a *doulos* of God was considered a great honor in Jewish culture. Such Old Testament luminaries as Abraham (Gen. 26:24), Isaac (Gen. 24:14), Jacob (Ezek. 28:25), Job (Job 1:8), Moses (Ex. 14:31), Joshua (Josh. 24:29), Caleb (Num. 14:24), David (2 Sam. 3:18), Isaiah (Isa. 20:3), and Daniel (Dan. 6:20) are described as God's servants. In the New Testament, Epaphras (Col. 4:12), Timothy (Phil. 1:1), Paul (Rom. 1:1), Peter (2 Pet. 1:1), Jude (Jude 1), John (Rev. 1:1), and our Lord Himself (Acts 3:13) all bore the title of *doulos*. **By taking that title, James numbered himself with those honored not for who they were, but whom they served—the living God.**

John F. MacArthur Jr., [James](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), 12.

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<sup>1</sup> Created in 1890 by James Strong, Strong's Concordance indexes every word in the Bible and gives it a number, which then allows the Bible student to look up the Hebrew or Greek word attached to that number and discover the word's meaning. You can even use that number with online Bible study helps to discover the word's definition. If you've never used these helps, I also have a step-by-step guide on using word study resources.

4. What attitudes are necessary to be a faithful servant? Now, don't be overwhelmed at the list of verses that follow. What's amazing to consider is that we could have looked at more! *Choose any 5* of these verse references (or all of them) and see what you glean about the attitudes every servant of God must possess. See Psalm 116:16; Matthew 8:9; 10:24-25; 20:28; 24:45-46; Luke 1:38; John 12:24-26; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Galatians 1:10; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:6; 2:5-8.

16 O LORD, surely I am Your servant, I am Your handmaid, You have loosed my bonds. COMMITMENT, LOVE, LOYALTY, ALLEGIANCE.

9 "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." RECOGNIZES GOD'S AUTHORITY TO RULE OVER AND ORDER OUR LIVES.

24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. 25 "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household! SLAVE WON'T SURPASS MASTER. SLAVES SUFFERED OR ENJOYED THE SAME "FATE" AS THEIR MASTERS.

28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." SLAVES FOLLOW CHRIST'S EXAMPLE TO SERVE AND GIVE UP LIFE.

45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. SLAVES ARE TO BE FAITHFUL AND SENSIBLE. GIVEN CHARGE OVER THINGS. TO BE FOUND DOING WHAT WAS ASKED.

38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. TRUST IN GOD'S WILL AND PLAN. SUBMISSION, NO MATTER WHAT IS ASKED.

24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.

26 "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. SLAVES DIE TO SELF TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE. SLAVES FOLLOW THEIR MASTER. "HATE" MY OWN LIFE AND LOVE MY MASTER.

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. LOVES THE IDENTITY OF A SLAVE.

10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. SLAVES SEEK TO PLEASE THEIR MASTER'S NOT THE OPINIONS OF MEN.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. CREATED TO BE SLAVES OF JESUS CHRIST. GOD PREPARED OUR WORKS BEFORE TIME BEGAN.

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE EXAMPLE OF A SLAVE'S ATTITUDE—DOESN'T SEEK EQUALITY OR AN EQUAL SHARE OF THE "GLORY," WILLINGLY EMPTIES SELF, IS OBEDIENT TO THE EXTREME.

5. What attitudes [that] you discovered from the preceding question are the most challenging for you right now? What do you think would help and encourage you to have a more consistent response? Are there any specific things you need to do to ensure that takes place?

Jesus' example of not seeking equality with God or an equal share of the "glory." Realize that I need to be content in whatever God gives for me and not seek after the greater "gifts." To be more consistent, I need to daily re-submit my life and heart to God—to be lived His way, whenever or however He desires.

Need to seek to please God more than I desire to please others. To please my master must be first and take precedence.

To love my identity as a slave. To just be a slave means humiliation. It means waiting quietly. Standing back. Not seeking my own way.

Just need to keep checking my heart so that I don't overreach myself.

6. Who is James writing to and what is unique about them according to verse 1? The twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad.

By New Testament times, many Jews lived **abroad**. The Greek word *diaspora* ("scattering") became a technical term to identify Jews living outside Palestine (cf. 1 Pet. 1:1).

John F. MacArthur Jr., [James](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), 13.

7. What are we to *consider* according to verse 2? In what manner is all that "consideration" to take place (also from verse 2)?

When we encounter various trials, we are to consider it all joy.

The consideration is to be "all joy."

How should the readers consider their many trials? As "all joy." The participle states why: because their faith is thus developed into constancy, brave perseverance. It grows into strong manhood. It is tested out; the dross is removed. Christians ought to rejoice because of that and not pity themselves or grow sad.

R. C. H. Lenski, [The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James](#) (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), 524.

8. Let's look further at the word *consider* so we can more faithfully obey this admonition. What does the word mean [Strong's #2233 (ESV *count*)]? Also see the following verses to gain a better sense of the word's meaning: Philippians 3:8; Hebrews 11:11, 26.

Count it; regard it; think on; in the verb tense means to do it now and once for all.

8 More than that, I *count* all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she *considered* Him faithful who had promised.

26 *considering* the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

9. Now define *encounter* [Strong's #4045 (ESV *meet*; NKJV *fall*; NIV *face*)].

Literally to fall into or have fall around. Picture of being surrounded by trials. Falling into something which surrounds.

10. What do you learn about the word *trials* used here [Strong's #3986]? Look up the following texts to see a similar treatment of the word: Luke 22:28; Acts 20:19; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:6.

28 “You are those who have stood by Me *in My trials*;  
 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with *trials which came upon me* through the plots of the Jews;  
 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.  
 6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

The English word temptation is Latin and originally meant trials whether good or bad, but the evil sense has monopolized the word in our modern English, though we still say “attempt.”

A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Jas 1:2.

It embraces all that goes to furnish a *test* of character.

Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 633.

11. How can encountering different kinds of trials bring joy? See verse 4.

Because it yields endurance which yields a perfect result. One that makes us perfect, complete, and lacking in nothing. Oh my! When you look at it that way, then it seems like we should be thrilled anytime we have trials! When surrounded by these trials, one should respond with joy. Most people count it all joy when they *escape* trials. James said to count it all joy in the midst of trials (cf. 1 Peter 1:6, 8).

J. Ronald Blue, “James,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 820.

12. What challenges do you face when you seek to find joy in your trials? What core attitudes must be in your heart for you to obey this command? See also Romans 8:28 as an encouragement.

I don’t want to go through the difficulties or challenges or I don’t like the “loss” associated with the trials. Still desiring my will above God’s will. Oy!!!

Submission. LOVE, love, love for the Lord—just joy in doing His will and trust that all that He is doing is good and lovely and right.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

13. What do you learn about the meaning of the word *testing* [Strong’s #1383]? Also, see 1 Peter 1:7, the only other place this word is used in the New Testament.

That by which something is tried or proved. The testing proves our faith. The trying, that is testing, the proving of our faith. Trials reveal its genuineness and endurance is produced in us.

**Testing** is from *dokimion*, a completely different term from *peirasmos* (**trials**), used in the previous verse, but one that carries much the same meaning. Both have the basic idea of testing something in order to prove or disprove its genuineness or validity.

John F. MacArthur Jr., *James*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), 26.

In 1 Peter this word appears to denote the result of the testing process: ‘the genuineness of your faith’ (rsv). In both Septuagint occurrences, however, the word refers to the *process* by which silver or gold is refined by fire. This is probably the meaning intended by James: suffering is a means by which faith, tested in the fires of adversity, can be purified of any dross and thereby strengthened. The idea, then, is not that trials determine whether a person has faith or not. Rather they strengthen the faith that is already present.



Douglas J. Moo, *James: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 62–63.

Your faith like gold stands the test of fire and is approved as standard.

A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Jas 1:3.

1 Peter 1:7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though *tested* by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14. Define *endurance* [Strong's #5281 (ESV *steadfastness*; NKJV *patience*; NIV *perseverance*)].

Also see James 1:4; 5:11; as well as 2 Thessalonians 1:4 and 2 Peter 1:6.

Staying power. Endurance. Patience. Long suffering. Steadfastness. Perseverance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ENDURANCE RESULTS IN A PERFECTED AND COMPLETED FAITH, ONE THAT ISN'T LACKING IN ANYTHING.

11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. JOB'S ENDURANCE LIFTED UP AS AN EXAMPLE.

4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. AN EXAMPLE OF PERSEVERANCE AND FAITH EVEN WHILE GOING THROUGH SUFFERING AND TRIAL.

6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, THE COMPANIONS OF ENDURANCE ARE SELF-CONTROL, KNOWLEDGE AND GODLINESS.

*Steadfastness* (*hypomonē*) is the intended outcome of this testing process. This word occurs frequently in the New Testament to indicate the quality required by Christians as they face adversity, temptation and persecution (cf. e.g. Luke 8:15; 2 Thess. 1:4; Rev. 2:2; 13:10). 'Fortitude' (neb), 'staying power' (Ropes), 'heroic endurance' (Dibelius) are attempts to capture the meaning of the word. Trench helpfully distinguishes between 'patience' (*makrothymia*), which Christians are to exercise towards *people*, and *hypomonē*, with which they are to respond to external difficulties. This *hypomonē* is not a meek, passive submission to circumstances, but a strong, active, challenging response in which the satisfying realities of Christianity are proven in practice.

The believer is asked to respond to trials with joy, then, because he knows that they are working to produce a deeper, stronger, more certain faith. The sequence of ideas, and of terminology also, is closely paralleled in two other New Testament passages: Romans 5:3–4 and 1 Peter 1:6–7. In the former Paul reminds the Romans that suffering (*thlipsis*) produces endurance (*hypomonēn katergazetai*) and endurance produces character (*dokimēn*). Peter speaks of suffering as testing 'the genuineness (*dokimion*) of your faith'.

Douglas J. Moo, *James: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 63.

15. What are we supposed to do with *endurance* according to verse 4? See also Galatians 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 12:1-2.

We are to let it have its way in our hearts, rather than fighting against the process.

Don't lose heart.

God will preserve us. God will ensure we persevere until the end.

Run! Let us run—with endurance. Endurance is possible when we fix our eyes on Jesus!

9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

16. How do we do that? See 1 Peter 5:6-7.

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

17. What is the goal of letting our trials do God's intended work in our souls? See verse 4; Hebrews 12:10-11; 13:20-21; 1 Peter 5:10.

To not impede the work that our enduring will produce in us, where we will be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us *for our good*, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields *the peaceful fruit of righteousness*.

20 Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, 21 *equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight*, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself *perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish* you.

On accepting adversity in our lives: Always it is initiated by an act of will on our part; we set ourselves to believe in the overruling goodness, providence, and sovereignty of God and refuse to turn aside no matter what may come, no matter how we may feel. (Margaret Clarkson, *Grace Grows Best in Winter*)<sup>2</sup>

18. What situation does James address in verse 5?

The need for wisdom, especially when we are going through trials.

19. Explain how verse 5 fits in with the previous context of verses 2-4. How does that understanding help you apply verse 5 in your life?

Trials are difficult and often we don't know the best way to proceed. Often our emotions are heightened and we need wisdom from the Lord as to the specific ways He will lead us. Just knowing that God desires to help us when we are hurting, that there is no reproach when we seek Him out for help. What sweetness!

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<sup>2</sup> Margaret Clarkson, *Grace Grows Best in Winter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 40-41.

20. What do we learn about God's response to our lack of wisdom in verse 5? How does that encourage you to apply this verse? What further encouragements and insight do you gain from Psalm 25:4-5, 8-9; 32:8-10; Proverbs 3:5-7; James 3:13-18.

No reproach. Just generosity of spirit and an understanding of our frailty. JUST READ ALL THOSE VERSES ALOUD. LET THEIR ENCOURAGEMENTS POUR OVER YOUR HEART.

4 Make me know Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. 5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day.

8 Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He instructs sinners in the way. 9 He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way.

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. 9 Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, Otherwise they will not come near to you. 10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, But he who trusts in the Lord, lovingkindness shall surround him.

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

21. What attitude should underscore our request for wisdom in our trials, according to verses 6-8? Why?

Asking in faith. Because without faith we won't receive the help that we need.

22. Why is this attitude important to the Lord? See also Hebrews 11:6; Psalm 62:5-8; 147:10-11; Proverbs 1:7; 29:25.

6 And *without faith it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

5 My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him. 6 He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken. 7 On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. 8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

10 He does not delight in the strength of the horse; He does not take pleasure in the legs of a man. 11 The LORD favors those who fear Him, Those who wait for His lovingkindness.

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

25 The fear of man brings a snare, But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.

Faith and waiting for the Lord to answer and lead us shows trust and a fear of the Lord that honors Him.

23. What do the presence of those soul-sanctifying trials reveal about God's care for you? See also Hebrews 12:5-8. Now from James 1:1-8 and Hebrews 12:5-8 make a list of observations about God's intended good for you when you encounter those various trials. That He loves me and desires my best. Amazing wisdom!

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.  
ENDURANCE; PERFECT RESULT; PERFECT, COMPLETE, LACKING IN NOTHING; GUIDANCE, WISDOM FROM GOD; STEADFAST FAITH.

5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; 6 For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives." 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.  
THE LORD DISCIPLINES THOSE HE LOVES. EVERY SON HE RECEIVES, HE SCOURGES.

God does not delight in our suffering. He brings only that which is necessary, but He does not shrink from that which will help us grow.  
(Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*)<sup>3</sup>

We can be sure that the development of a beautiful Christlike character will not occur in our lives without adversity.... Love, joy, peace, and patience—can only be developed in the womb by adversity.  
(Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*)<sup>4</sup>

The trials which come from God are sent to prove and strengthen our graces, and so at once to illustrate the power of divine grace, to test the genuineness of our virtues, and to add to their energy. Our Lord in his infinite wisdom and superabundant love, sets so high a value upon his people's faith that he will not screen them from those trials by which faith is strengthened. You would never have possessed the precious faith which now supports you if the trial of your faith had not

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<sup>3</sup> Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988), 177.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 174.

been like unto fire. You are a tree that never would have rooted so well if the wind had not rocked you to and fro, and made you take firm hold upon the precious truths of the covenant grace. (Charles Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings, Sept. 3*)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings, Complete and unabridged; New modern edition*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), Sept. 3 Evening.

## James Lesson #4, Chapter 1:9-18

As you read Chapter 1 before beginning this lesson, ask the Lord for insight, understanding, and a teachable heart.

1. Summarize the contents of verses 1-8. Be sure to explain the subject jump from *trials* to *wisdom* to asking in *faith* and how those thoughts connect.

James opens his letter to the dispersed ones with the very topic they so need to hear—trials, and more specifically, God’s purpose in trials. James reminds them that God uses every single one of the trials to perfect their holy character, to build a holy endurance in us. Knowing this should help us have a spirit of joy and peace, even while going through difficulty and pain.

But often trials lead to unrest or not knowing how to proceed in a situation because we are so emotionally involved, so James reminds us to ask God for wisdom and He will give it! Yet, James also admonishes us to make sure we are asking in faith, for without faith it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6).

2. When we come across a difficult or puzzling section of Scripture, one of the first Bible study principles to employ is that of studying the *context* surrounding a verse or verses. A quick look at verses 9-11 may seem like James introduces a new topic, yet even a brief look at the surrounding context helps us determine the heart of what James communicates here. Let’s *briefly* establish the context of chapter 1.

- a. Verses 1-8 contain practical wisdom in how to live when something happens to us. What is that?

Trials.

- b. Now, jump down to verse 12. What is the basic subject of that verse?

Trials.

- c. Though verses 9-11 appear to introduce a new subject, the near preceding and following context provides the lens through which we view verses 9-11. What lens should guide how we see the instruction of verses 9-11?

How to view trials when we find ourselves surrounded by them.

3. What two groups of people does James address in verses 9-11?  
The brother of humble circumstances and the rich man.

4. In verse 9 James introduces us to the poor man. What does James mean by *humble circumstances* (ESV and NKJV *lowly brother*)? See Proverbs 18:23; 1 Corinthians 4:11-13; Philippians 4:12; Hebrews 10:32-34; James 2:1-6.

The man of humble circumstances is poor and at the mercy of the rich man. Pictures of humble circumstances include being hungry, thirsty, homeless, persecuted, sometimes wearing dirty clothes.

Just a picture of a poor and afflicted one. Yet, for the believer, he is only poor on the outside as A. T. Robertson says.

23 The poor man utters supplications, But the rich man answers roughly.

11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; 12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; 13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?

5. James tells us the poor man is to *rejoice* in his humble circumstances. What is it about his circumstances that allows the poor man to rejoice? See Jeremiah 9:23-24; Romans 8:16-18; James 1:2-4.

He can rejoice that he knows the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth. He can rejoice that the Holy Spirit testifies that we are children of God, heirs of Christ. In fact, the suffering reveals that very relationship so that we know we will be glorified with Christ. Can also rejoice knowing that the sufferings of this present time don't even compare to the glory that awaits. We can rejoice that our trials produce spiritual endurance in us. That spiritual endurance results in us being made perfect, complete, lacking in nothing.

23 Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord.

16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

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.

6. In contrast to the poor man, what do you learn about the rich man from verses 10-11? [[[delete What seems to be the underlying attitude about the rich man's spiritual state from these verses?]]]]

The rich man, in contrast to the poor man, is to glory in, rejoice in, be glad about his humiliation (remember the context) that comes from the trials he is experiencing.

7. What does James mean by telling the rich man to *glory* in his humiliation? Why is that important? See also 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; James 4:13-14; 1 Peter 1:22-25.

It's the theology of opposites at work here. The rich must be brought low and the poor man is revealed to his truth high position. Since the rich man habitually receives "glory" just because of who he is, his position, or even what his money does for him, he needs to humble his heart and rejoice that the playing field is leveled for all believers.

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. WE LIVE BY FAITH.

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. LIFE IS SOOOO MUCH MORE THAN MONEY. WE ARE ONLY HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE, SO LET'S LIVE FOR THE THINGS THAT WILL LAST.

22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, 25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you. WE'RE ONLY HERE FOR A SHORT TIME SO LET'S LIVE ON THE ETERNAL.

8. What were some of the situations these believers faced that contributed to their trials? See James 1:1; 2:1-7, 15-16; 4:1, 11.

They were dispersed, divisions in the church and attitudes of favoritism prevailed. They weren't looking out for each other and trying to love others. They were being critical of each other and judging each other. All this added to their misery and sorrows.

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

1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? 7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?



15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

9. No matter what our earthly station or status, what is the great equalizer? For a hint, see verses 2-4 and 12.

Trials. Trials bring us all to the place of dependence. Trials strip away pretensions. Trials bring us all to our knees and dependent upon the Lord.

10. Whether we're rich or poor or somewhere in between, how would maintaining the attitudes we discovered in questions 5 and 7 help us persevere in our trials?

We just need to remember who we are in Christ. We need to remember the truth about our position. Those truths, those promises help us to wait, endure, and persevere.

11. According to Jesus, what attitudes must the rich and the poor possess to be pleasing to the Lord? Make some observations from Luke 12:13-34.

13 Someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." 16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry." ' 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." 22 And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. 23 "For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 "Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! 25 "And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life's span? 26 "If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? 27 "Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 28 "But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! 29 "And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. 33 "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Beware of greed. In fact, beware of every form of greed. Remember our lives will never ever consist of the stuff we have or our stock portfolio.

Even while working and providing, we need to make sure our hearts aren't centered on those things. Our souls will be required of us on the judgment day. We will need to give an accounting for where we placed our hope. We must be rich toward God.  
 Don't worry about earthly things. God knows what we need. He will provide for us. Our job is to center our hopes on Him.  
 Our treasure is to be the Lord. Alone. Him.

12. Let's spend some time looking at verse 12. What observations can you make about the man referred to in verse 12?

He is in trial.  
 He is persevering in trial.  
 When he perseveres in trial he is blessed.  
 Blessing is upon the one who perseveres in trial.  
 Approval comes after the persevering in trial.  
 The approval comes with a reward.  
 Perseverance brings a crown of life.  
 All those who receive the crown of life are those who love Him!  
 The Lord has promised the crown of life to all those who persevere.

13. What does *perseverance* reveal about our spiritual state according to verse 12? See also Matthew 24:13; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; 1 John 5:4-5.

It's real. Only real faith, true faith, perseveres and makes it to the end. It also reveals that we love the Lord. Persevering faith loves the Lord! Think on that! Even when we feel more like Peter being questioned by the Lord, we know this one thing—those who love the Lord make it to the end. They don't wash out.

13 "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; 12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

14. What do you discover about the word *trial* in verse 12 [Strong's #3986 (NKJV *temptation*)] and *tempted* used in verse 13 [Strong's #3985]?

*They are the same word. Context determines the translation.*

Verse 13 is tempted where it means more to yield to temptation. Verse 12 is more A state of trial in which God brings His people through adversity and affliction in order to encourage and prove their faith and confidence in Him  
 Spiros Zodhiates, [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

15. James encourages the beleaguered believers with certain truths about God in verse 13. What do we learn?

God cannot be tempted by evil to do evil or anything unjust toward His children. God will NEVER tempt anyone to sin or fail.

Eager Beaver: How does that insight help explain why the translators used *trial* in verse 12 (except for the NKJV) and *tempted* in verse 13? Remember, context ultimately determines a word's definition.

Because James is showing the different purposes—God always seeks what is best for His children, while Satan and his demons, our own souls, and even other people might seek to tempt us to do evil, but God never will.

16. James then gives a little lesson on the nature of temptation. What do you learn from verses 14-15?

We are tempted to sin when we give way or give in to our lust. When we give into the enticements of our lust.

Then when lust has come to full term in us, it gives birth to sin.

And then when we give into sin, death comes with it. We experience death even when we sin as believers. Sin puts our fellowship with God to death.

17. In verse 16, James tells them not to be deceived. What weren't they to be deceived about? See verses 12-15.

They weren't to be deceived about the temptations. When under pressure and trial we often give into sin, but that's not from God at all. We give into our lusts for expression, for bitterness, for fear, for our own way, not God's and that temptation gives into sin.

18. Why do we need this admonition about temptation and sin when we find ourselves in the midst of trials?

Because we are so susceptible to wrong thinking when we are in the pressure cooker. See comments above.

19. How is that promise of perseverance from verse 12 an encouragement when we find ourselves tested and tried and doubting our own faith because of the trials we face?

So encouraging to know all those who love the Lord will persevere! When we feel weak and barely able to press on, the Lord will get us through to the finish line. What a sweet, sweet kindness from the Lord.

20. How do the truths contained in 1 Corinthians 10:13 lend substance and support to this passage?

There's no excuse for our sin. God will get us through to the end as we cling to Him. And though we may be tempted to give into sin, that is on us, never does it come from God. God is always right in all He does.

21. What do you learn about God's gifts from verse 17? See also verses 2-4 and verse 12.

Every good thing that is given comes from God.

Every perfect gift comes from God.

He is always in the light. There is no darkness in Him or in His ways or in what He gives. Every gift is good though it may come wrapped in pain, sorrow, and evil. God will use it for good to produce grace in us.

a. How should that understanding shape our response to the trials and troubles we face?

We can trust God. He only gives good gifts—even when it appears that it isn't a good gift. We can trust that He is doing what is best and right. If that's our response then we would never, never get close to blaming God either.

“Let me, O my God, stifle forever in my heart every thought that would tempt me to doubt Thy goodness. I know that Thou can only be good.” Fenelon in *Dictionary of Burning Words*, page 262.

22. Why does James wrap up this section on trials and temptations with a reminder about God’s gifts? See also Job 2:10; Lamentations 3:19-33; Romans 8:28; James 1:2-4. Because everything we receive from God—even trials—is a gift. And they are good. Right. Perfect. And produce what we need in our hearts.

10 But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

19 Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. 20 Surely my soul remembers And is bowed down within me. 21 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 22 The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 24 “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I have hope in Him.” 25 The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him. 26 It is good that he waits silently For the salvation of the Lord. 27 It is good for a man that he should bear The yoke in his youth. 28 Let him sit alone and be silent Since He has laid it on him. 29 Let him put his mouth in the dust, Perhaps there is hope. 30 Let him give his cheek to the smiter, Let him be filled with reproach. 31 For the Lord will not reject forever, 32 For if He causes grief, Then He will have compassion According to His abundant lovingkindness. 33 For He does not afflict willingly Or grieve the sons of men.

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

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.

23. Again, how should that understanding shape our response to the trials and troubles we face?

Trust. Hope. Perseverance. Inward joy that God is at work. Submission. Humility under the Lord’s hand and wisdom.

24. What good gift does James put on display for any believers under trial to consider? See verse 18. Also, see the following verses to help explain the meaning of the verse: Romans 8:23, 29-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 Peter 1:23.

His Word that wrought salvation in us. The people James was writing to were the first wave of believers. We may be the last harvest of believers, but it doesn’t matter. God is still at work and pleased with the harvest.

23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the *redemption of our body*.

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

All events are under the control of Providence; consequently, all the trials of our outward life are traceable at once to the great First Cause. Out of the golden gate of God's ordinance the armies of trial march forth in array, clad in their iron armor, and armed with weapons of war. All providences are doors to trial. Even our mercies, like roses, have their thorns. Men may be drowned in seas of prosperity as well as in rivers of affliction. Our mountains are not too high, and our valleys are not too low for temptations: trials lurk on all roads. Everywhere, above and beneath, we are beset and surrounded with dangers. Yet no shower falls unpermitted from the threatening cloud; every drop has its order ere it hastens to the earth. The trials which come from God are sent to prove and strengthen our graces, and so at once to illustrate the power of divine grace, to test the genuineness of our virtues, and to add to their energy. Our Lord in his infinite wisdom and superabundant love, sets so high a value upon his people's faith that he will not screen them from those trials by which faith is strengthened. You would never have possessed the precious faith which now supports you if the trial of your faith had not been like unto fire. You are a tree that never would have rooted so well if the wind had not rocked you to and fro, and made you take firm hold upon the precious truths of the covenant grace. Worldly ease is a great foe to faith; it loosens the joints of holy valor, and snaps the sinews of sacred courage. The balloon never rises until the cords are cut; affliction does this sharp service for believing souls. While the wheat sleeps comfortably in the husk it is useless to man, it must be threshed out of its resting place before its value can be known. Thus, it is well that Jehovah tries the righteous, for it causes them to grow rich towards God.<sup>1</sup>  
Charles H. Spurgeon

I asked the Lord that I might grow  
In faith, and love, and every grace;  
Might more of His salvation know,  
And seek, more earnestly, His face.

<sup>1</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings*, Complete and unabridged; New modern edition. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), Evening, September 3.

*Discovering the Treasures of the Word*

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,  
And He, I trust, has answered prayer!  
But it has been in such a way,  
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour,  
At once He'd answer my request;  
And by His love's constraining pow'r,  
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel  
The hidden evils of my heart;  
And let the angry powers of hell  
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea more, with His own hand He seemed  
Intent to aggravate my woe;  
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,  
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

Lord, why is this, I trembling cried,  
Wilt thou pursue Thy worm to death?  
'Tis in this way, the Lord replied,  
I answer prayer for grace and faith.

These inward trials I employ,  
From self, and pride, to set thee free;  
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,  
That thou may'st find thy all in Me.<sup>2</sup>

John Newton

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<sup>2</sup> John Newton, "I Asked the Lord that I Might Grow,"  
<http://www.hymntime.com/tch/htm/i/a/s/iaskedtl.htm>

## James Lesson #5, Chapter 1:19-27

Ask the Lord for His grace as you sit and study His Word. We always need His help in coming to the Word.

1. By way of review, explain the flow of thought in verses 1-18. James ministers to fellow believers in trial by reminding them of God's ultimate purpose in giving trials (verses 2-4), that God is always ready to give wisdom to His children who ask in faith without doubting (verses 5-8). James then goes on to remind them that *every believer* experiences trials—rich or poor and gives a proper mindset for both. And all must remember the promise of the crown of life that comes to all those who persevere. Yet in the persevering, all must remember that any sin is on us, and never comes from God, for God only gives good and perfect gifts, one of which is our salvation.

2. What does he remind them in verse 19?  
Everyone—rich or poor—must be quick to hear; slow to speak; slow to anger.

3. How would being *quick to hear* be an antidote to anger? How do the following verses help put feet to this instruction? See Proverbs 12:15; 18:13; 19:20.  
If we listened before we blasted off, we'd be less likely to fall into the sin of anger.

15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.  
13 He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.  
20 Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days.

4. Complete this sentence: If I am “quick to hear” then my interactions with others, whether face to face or in my thoughts, will be guided by....  
will be guided by righteousness and wisdom and teachability and humility, not shame or folly. I will be seeking peace first (James 3:17-18).

“Wherever wisdom is the goal, hearing will be a first virtue.”<sup>1</sup>

Kurt A. Richardson

5. How would being *slow to speak* also be an aid in overcoming anger? See also Proverbs 17:27; 21:23; James 1:26; 3:1-2.

Not going to allow sin to reign by a guarding of my tongue. Won't add to the discord.  
27 He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.  
23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles.

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<sup>1</sup>Kurt A. Richardson, *James, vol. 36, The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 88–89.

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.<sup>1</sup> Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

6. Complete this sentence: If I am "slow to speak" then my interactions with others will be guided by....

Wisdom, godly wisdom; peace; humility, a desire to give God glory.

7. How would just being *slow to anger* help us in battling the sin of anger? See also Proverbs 16:32; 19:11; Colossians 3:8, 15.

32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

11 A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.

8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Being slow to anger gives us time to get control of our emotions, our tongue, our spirit. It reminds us to look past another's sins and give them the benefit of the doubt or just allow the spirit of God to convict them. It gives us time to put aside our wrath. It gives time to allow the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts.

8. Complete this sentence: If I am "slow to anger" then my interactions with others will be guided by....

Will be guided by self-control, by a desire to let God take care of it all, to give God glory rather than give into my own passions, to trust that God knows what is best.

9. Take note again, who is to obey this command in verse 19?

Everyone. Yep, that's what it says. Not only is it for everyone, but there's also a "must be" attached to it.

10. What motivation for this three-fold command is given in verse 20? Explain what that means in your own words.

The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Man's anger, or even more personally, my anger, doesn't attain to God's righteousness. My anger is not righteous. If I want to attain to the righteousness of God, then I cannot give into my own anger.

11. When we desire to live for God's glory, then verse 20 really is a death knell to our fleshly desires. Why is that?

If we really do want to be holy, righteous, like God in every way, then we cannot give into our sins, our sinful desires, and the lusts of the flesh. The two are antithetical to each other.

12. As a result of understanding verse 20, what are we to do in verse 21?

We are to put aside all filthiness. We are to put aside all that remains of wickedness. We are to humbly receive the Word that has been implanted in our souls because that Word is able to save us.



13. The Greek word translated *filthiness* [Strong's #4507 (NIV *moral filth*)] only occurs here in verse 21, however a similar adjective can be found in James 2:2 and in 1 Peter 3:21. What do you learn about the word and James' instructions here in verse 21?
- 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in *dirty* clothes,  
 21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,  
 in James 2:2 it's about something that is dirty—not clean. Peter uses it as when we are dirty and need a bath. Talking about something that's dirty, filthy, that needs to be cleansed.
14. What are we supposed to do with filthiness and wickedness (verse 21)? Look up the following verses to gain a clearer picture of what our actions might look like: Isaiah 2:20; Romans 13:12-13; Colossians 3:5-8; Hebrews 12:1.
- Put them aside. In fact, wickedness carries with it the idea of scouring the area and looking for anything that even resembles wickedness.
- 20 In that day men will *cast away* to the moles and the bats *Their idols of silver and their idols of gold*, Which they made for themselves to worship,  
 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us *lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light*. 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.  
 5 Therefore *consider the members of your earthly body as dead* to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you also, *put them all aside*: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.  
 1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also *lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run* with endurance the race that is set before us,

*“All Filthiness”*—This term often means “a wax build-up in the ear.” It may refer to unholy living which impairs a believer’s hearing of God’s word. However, its primary usage was “dirty,” as in dirty clothing (cf. James 2:2) which would relate to a believer’s lifestyle.<sup>2</sup>

15. Before moving on to the next question, take some time to examine your life and heart. Are there any areas of filthiness or wickedness you need to lay aside? The verb tense indicates this is an action we continuously do because sin, just like the sea, laps back up on the beach it previously vacated.
- Put aside ALL filthiness. To whatever degree. All.  
 Put aside ALL that remains of wickedness. Anything left, put it aside.  
 The time is gone for that kind of thing. It is no longer.

<sup>2</sup> Robert James Dr. Utley, *Jesus' Half-Brothers Speak: James and Jude*, vol. Volume 11, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 23.

“We wonder why a certain church-member is so lax in his devotions and loose in his practices. The reason is that, while his trunk and his branches are over on the *church side* of the wall, his roots run under the wall and dwell in the bad soil on the *otherside*.”<sup>3</sup> T. L. Cuyler

16. And while we’re putting those things aside we’re told how to do something, what to do, and why we’re to do it. First Thessalonians 2:13 helps explain the concept of receiving the Word. What do you learn?

13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

You receive the Word. You accept it as coming from God. It is that Word that performs its work in you.

In reference to above: how to do something—just lay it aside. Get rid of anything left, any residue.

What are we to do? Receive the Word in humility, in humbleness.

Why? Because that Word is able to save our souls.

17. What are some specific ways you can humbly receive God’s Word today? And again, why would you do that (verse 21)? See Psalm 23:3; 147:3; 1 Peter 2:24.

Why? Because it’s able to save my soul.

3 He *restores* my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.

3 He *heals* the brokenhearted And binds up their wounds.

24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, *so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness*; for by His wounds you were healed.

18. Explain the connection in thought between verse 21 and verse 22 when it comes to the Word.

If we don’t apply verse 21 then we are merely the hearers of the Word from verse 22. Whoa!!! That’s a powerful right hook to the jaw!!!! That gets us where we live. Must. Go. Back. Up. To. Question15!

Be a doer, not a forgetful hearer.

19. After receiving that Word what should we take care to do according to verse 22?

Prove ourselves doers of the Word, not deluded hearers.

20. What do you learn about a doer compared with a forgetful hearer from verses 22-25?

A doer is not deluded. A doer does the Word—obeys it. A doer is not forgetful. A doer looks intently at God’s Word and abides by it. A doer is effective in his doing. A doer is blessed by God.

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<sup>3</sup> T. L. Cuyler, ed. Josiah H. Gilbert, *Dictionary of Burning Words of Brilliant Writers* (New York: Wilbur B. Ketchum, 1895), 622.

21. What is the perfect law, the law of liberty? See Romans 8:15; 2 Corinthians 3:15-18; Galatians 5:1.

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; 16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

The perfect law of liberty is seen in our adoption as sons. The spirit of God removes the veil of blindness and unbelief so that we can be transformed. It is the law of freedom—Christ has set us free.

22. Verses 26-27 provide a test to see if we are actually a doer of the Law of Liberty. What should we check according to those verses?

Check your tongue. It needs to be bridled and controlled.

Check to see if you look out for the defenseless and needy like widows and orphans.

Check to see if you remain unstained by the world.

23. James doesn't hold back in verses 19-27. He is calling us to examine our hearts and lives to see if we truly are the transformed people we say we are. What truths have challenged and encouraged you the most from this lesson?

"But think also, what encouragement there is here for every honest and true-hearted believer. To you also, Jesus says, "I know thy works." You see no beauty in any action that you do. All seems imperfect, blemished, and defiled. You are often sick at heart of your own short-comings. You often feel that your whole life is one great arrear, and that every day is either a blank or a blot. But know now, that Jesus can see some beauty in every thing that you do from a conscientious desire to please Him. His eye can discern excellence in the least thing which is a fruit of His own Spirit. He can pick out the grains of gold from amidst the dross of your performances, and sift the wheat from amidst the chaff, in all your doings. Your tears are all put into His bottle. Your endeavours to do good to others, however feeble, are written in His book of remembrance. The least cup of cold water given in His name, shall not lose its reward. He does not forget your work and labour of love, however little the world may regard it.

It is very wonderful; but so it is. Jesus loves to honour the work of His Spirit in His people, and to pass over their frailties. He dwells on the faith of Rahab, but not on her lie. He commends His Apostles for continuing with Him in His temptations, and passes over their ignorance and want of faith. (Luke 22:28.) "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." (Ps.

103:13.) And as a father finds a pleasure in the least acts of his children, of which a stranger knows nothing, so I suppose the Lord finds a pleasure in our poor feeble efforts to serve Him.”<sup>4</sup> J. C. Ryle

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<sup>4</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties and Roots* (London: William Hunt and Company, 1889), 331–332.

## James Lesson #6, Chapter 2 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 2 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 2. Now, *summarize* the contents of Chapter 2. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4<sup>th</sup> grader the contents of the chapter.

a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-7).

James tells the believers to make sure their faith isn't characterized by favoritism, specifically honoring the rich—because they are rich—and dishonoring the poor, simply because they are poor.

b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 8-13).

We obey God when we love our neighbor and sin when we show partiality, for it isn't loving to show partiality. In fact, James says, that the sin of showing partiality is just as big of a deal as committing adultery or murder. How we live reveals the genuineness of our faith, so we're called to live lovingly and mercifully toward our brethren.

c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 14-17).

James embarks on his famous faith and works section. If someone says he has faith without works, James says that faith isn't saving faith.

d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 18-26).

James continues his imagined dialogue with someone saying, "I will show you my faith by my works" as opposed to the one who says they have faith and don't need works to show its genuineness. Abraham and Rahab's faith are seen in their "works." They already believed and trusted in God to save them, and then their faith was worked out, or revealed to be genuine, in their deeds.

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.

James desires believers to understand that if we're truly saved, we're going to live differently. There will be "works" that will attest to the genuine repentance and trust in Jesus for salvation.

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.

Verse 14, What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?  
OR

Verse 20 is a hoot! But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

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.

Deeds Reveal Genuine Faith

5. List the things you observe about *God* and the *Lord Jesus* in this chapter. Look for things they *do*, their attributes, or truths about them. Be sure to list the verse reference with your answer.

Verse 1 faith in the our Lord Jesus Christ, who is glorious

Verse 5 God chose the poor of this world to be rich in faith

Verse 5 God chose the poor of this world to be heirs of the kingdom

Verse 5 God promised the kingdom to those who love Him

Verse 23 Abraham believed God

Verse 23 IMPLIED...that because Abraham believed God, put his trust in God, God saved him—made him righteous.

Verse 23 Abraham was called the friend of God

6. What do you learn about the *rich* and the *poor* in this chapter?

RICH

Verse 6 the rich oppress you (the believers)

Verse 6 the rich drag believers into court

POOR

Verse 2 the poor man came to church in dirty clothes

Verse 3 dishonor shown to poor man by saying, "You stand over here..."

Verse 5 God chose the poor to be rich in faith

Verse 6 you have dishonored the poor man [note who he's saying this to—it's to the believers!]

Verse 15 poor isn't used but is described...if a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food

7. What do you learn about *faith* in this chapter? Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Verse 1 your faith shouldn't be characterized by or filled with personal favoritism

Verse 5 God intended the poor to be rich in faith

Verse 14 some say they have faith but no works

Verse 14 James questions whether that faith can save him

Verse 17 faith, if it has no works, is dead. It's by itself.

Verse 18 some argue, You have faith but I have works. If that's the case, then show me your faith without any works.

Verse 18 however, I will show you my faith in, through, by my works.

Verse 20 faith without works (being lived out) is useless

Verse 22 Abraham's faith was working (being shown to be genuine) in his works.

Verse 22 in fact, Abraham's faith was perfected, matured, made whole and complete, through his works

Verse 24 it's revealed that we are justified (that the work of grace has taken part in our lives) by our works

Verse 26 compared to body without spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.

8. Now make a list of any examples of *faith with works* that you see in this chapter along with the verse references.

Abraham offered up Isaac as an example of faith with works.

Rahab received the messengers and sent them out by another way as an example of faith with works.

9. Now, make a list of any examples of *faith without works* that you see in this chapter. Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Faith without works says, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled."

Faith without works believes God is one, just like the demons do.

10. What do you learn about *works* in this chapter? Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Verse 14 faith without works doesn't save

Verse 17 faith without works is dead

Verse 18 I have faith that is seen in my works

Verse 20 faith without works is useless

Verse 21 Abraham justified by works

Verse 22 Abraham's faith seen in his works—and his faith perfected

Verse 24 a man is justified by works because faith alone, that is, faith that isn't lived out

Verse 25 Rahab was justified by her works

Verse 26 faith without works is dead

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 2

1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,

3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,"

4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?

7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

**14** What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

**18** But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God.

24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

## James

### Lesson #7, Chapter 2:1-7

Ask the Lord for His grace as you sit and study His Word. We always need His help in coming to the Word.

1. How does James 1:26-27 fit with the subject theme of Chapter 2 verses 1-7?

James 1:26-27 is the practical way we reveal a life that is transformed through Jesus. And continuing with that theme, James addresses partiality in the church, which also cannot happen if we are living transformed lives.

2. The NASB tells us in James 2:1, "My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism." What James wants us to do might seem a bit difficult to mentally grasp so it's helpful to look at other translations. The ESV lends some understanding when it says, "My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." While the NIV translates verse 1 as, "My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism." So, what is it that James is concerned about according to verse 1?

James wants to make sure that they don't engage in favoritism in the church, like the kind he talks about there, being rich or poor, but also position, title, accomplishments, family connections.

3. What is *personal favoritism* [Strong's #4382 (ESV, NKJV *partiality*)]?

the fault of one who when called on to give judgment has respect of the outward circumstances of man and not to their intrinsic merits, and so prefers, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high born, or powerful, to another who does not have these qualities

James Strong, [\*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon\*](#) (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995).

It means to pay attention to someone above another for some reason based on outward stuff that is destined to perish and has no value in the kingdom of God. It's just preferential treatment that is unjustified. There are people we should show preference to though, all the while recognizing they are just men.

4. How was that attitude of partiality or favoritism showing up in the early church according to verses 2-4?

Paying attention to clothing, giving a better seat, disdaining the poor. All motivated by evil motives. That's the issue. It's the wicked motive underlying the actions.

5. Brainstorm for a minute about how partiality or favoritism might show up in our church. Now consider, how it might show up in you personally.

In our church, paying attention to someone "famous" like a professor from SBTS, even paying more attention to the students than to the people to stay around all year long.

I tend to focus on the active servers and pass by the fringers who aren't involved or only attend. Part of that is biblical though, but I need to make sure I'm not doing it with a wrong heart. Still need to welcome others and go after them.

6. When we show partiality or favoritism like the kind mentioned in verses 2-4, how are we described in verse 4?

Judges with evil motives

7. What is at the heart of God's objection to this kind of favoritism or partiality among believers? See Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 10:17; Proverbs 14:20-21; James 2:4; Jude 16. 15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. DON'T BE OVERLY PARTIAL TO THE POOR EITHER. GOOD BALANCE SINCE WE SEE THAT HAPPENING IN OUR CULTURE TODAY.

17 "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. GOD DOES NOT SHOW PARTIALITY AND WE NEED TO BE LIKE HIM.

20 The poor is hated even by his neighbor, But those who love the rich are many. 21 He who despises his neighbor sins, But happy is he who is gracious to the poor. THE POOR ARE DISDAINED FOR BEING POOR.

4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? BEING A JUDGE WITH EVIL MOTIVES

16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. IT'S WICKED TO FLATTER PEOPLE FOR THE SAKE OF GAINING AN ADVANTAGE. AGAIN, THE MOTIVES HAVE TO BE WEIGHED.

8. How can we combat these attitudes? See Romans 12:16; 13:8-9; 1 Corinthians 13:3; Galatians 3:28; James 2:8.

16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. THE WHOLE VERSE.

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." LOVE 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. LOVE

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. UNDERSTAND GOOD DOCTRINE.

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well.

9. All partiality isn't forbidden however. We are to show honor, which naturally means singling someone out for favor. What instances are we to do that? See Romans 12:10; Ephesians 6:2; 1 Timothy 5:1-3, 17-18; 1 Peter 2:17.

10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; WE ARE TO SINGLE OUT ALL OUR BRETHREN AND SHOW THEM HONOR. ;)

2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), PARENTS

1 Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, 2 the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity. 3 Honor widows who are widows indeed; THOSE WHO ARE OLDER. WIDOWS.

17 The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." FAITHFUL ELDERS.

17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. THE KING AND THOSE OVER US.

10. Neither is God saying all judging is bad. In what situations is it right and good to judge? See Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 5:19-25; Hebrews 5:14.

15 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. 17 "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. 19 "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. 20 "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." IN JUDGING AND DEALING WITH SIN.

9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES. IN JUDGING AND DEALING WITH SIN IN THE CHURCH.

1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? 2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? 4 So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, 6 but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? JUDGE DISPUTES AMONG THE BROTHERS.

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. 20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. 21 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. 22 Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. 23 No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. 24 The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. 25 Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed. DON'T SHOW PARTIALITY EVEN WHEN DEALING WITH ELDERS.

14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. LEARN TO DISCERN BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.

11. So again, if some kinds of judging and honoring aren't bad, then what's wrong with the kind of partiality being addressed here in James 2:1-4?

It's making distinctions based on money, prestige. It's done with evil motives to gain something from the rich.

12. What do we learn about the poor from verse 5?

The poor are rich in faith. The poor are also heirs of the kingdom. The poor also receive God's promises. The poor are loved by God Himself.

13. How should the information from verse 5 be a death knell to the distinctions taking place between the rich and the poor described in verses 2-4?

It should sound the death knell because it reveals the truths of the kingdom—we are all one in Jesus Christ. To seek to honor someone based on worldly criteria dishonors the Lord who died for them.

14. What honor and dignity the Lord gives to His children, even though they are disdained in the world's eyes! Look up the following verses about being poor as a believer. See Proverbs 22:22; Matthew 11:5; Mark 12:42-44; 2 Corinthians 6:10; 8:1-5.

22 Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Or crush the afflicted at the gate; GOD PROTECTS AND PROVIDES FOR THE POOR.

5 the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. THE POOR ARE NOT OVERLOOKED IN GOD'S KINGDOM.

42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which amount to a cent. 43 Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their surplus, but she, out of her poverty, put in all she owned, all she had to live on." THE POOR CAN BE AN EXAMPLE TO US.

10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things. EVEN WHEN POOR IN THIS WORLD, WE CAN MAKE OTHERS RICH THROUGH OUR FAITH AND LOVE.

1 Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, 5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. THE POOR CAN EVEN BE CHEERFUL GIVERS, AN EXAMPLE TO ALL. THE POOR DON'T ONLY HAVE TO RECEIVE.

15. What is the true spiritual state of many who are rich? See Proverbs 11:28; Matthew 13:22; 19:23-26; Luke 12:15-21; 1 Timothy 6:9-10; Revelation 3:17-18.

28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like the green leaf. THEY TRUST IN THEIR RICHES.

22 "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. WEALTH CAN GET A STRANGLEHOLD ON OUR HEARTS. IT MAKES US TRUST IN OURSELVES NOT THE LORD.

23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" 26 And looking at them Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." RICHES INOCULATE US TO OUR SPIRITUAL NEED. YET GOD IS FAITHFUL TO WORK IN ALL OUR HEARTS.

15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." 16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to

store my crops?' 18 "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry." ' 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." **GUARD AGAINST GREEDINESS. OUR LIVES ARE NOT OUR STUFF.**  
 9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. **WANTING TO GET RICH FOR RICHES SAKE LEADS TO A TEMPTATION AND A SNARE AND FOOLISH AND HARMFUL DESIRES THAT CAN LEAD TO RUIN AND DESTRUCTION OF OUR FAITH.**

17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. **HUMBLE OURSELVES AND SEE OUR NEED FOR SPIRITUAL HEALING.**

16. Whether rich or poor, noticed or unnoticed, favored or not, what must be our guide no matter who we are or what we have or don't have? See 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; 12:9-10; Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 4:10-13.

14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; 15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. 16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. 17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. **LIVE FOR JESUS, NOT SELF. NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST. LIVE AS A NEW CREATURE.**

9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. **BE CONTENT, LIVING UPON GOD'S ALL SUFFICIENT GRACE.**

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. **WALK IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE LORD. BE HUMBLE AND PATIENT.**

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. **BE CONTENT THROUGH THE LORD'S STRENGTH.**

17. It's easy to think of this section in more abstract terms, that these kinds of attitudes are embodied in *others* rather than ourselves. So, let's bring the mirror of the Word in a little closer to examine our own heart attitudes. What kinds of favoritism or partiality attitudes do you find yourself battling at times?

I find myself wanting to cultivate an acquaintance with people who can help the church in some way. I also find myself holding back until I know they are "committed" to the church instead of reaching out anyway.

18. Have you ever been one of the "poor" in the eyes of another and been passed over or ignored? What truths from God's Word did you need to tell yourself so you wouldn't sin in response?

Yes. Remind myself that God sees, that my "honor" or lack of it also comes from the Lord, that it's good for me to be humbled. To still do what's right no matter what.

19. Have you ever been one of the "rich" in the eyes of another and been fawned over or exalted to the point of being uncomfortable? What truths from God's Word did you need to tell yourself so you wouldn't sin in response?

Yes. It's awful and upsetting and embarrassing. I had to remind myself any honor is only because of Jesus, remind self not to get puffed up and believe anything they are saying because it comes from a wrong judgment.

20. Most of us are rich in the world's goods compared with most of the rest of the world, so what truths from God's Word do we need to impress upon our hearts so we don't sin against our brothers and sisters in Christ who live in more humble circumstances? What attitudes do we need to cultivate so we won't fall into the trap of wrong thinking James addresses in this passage?

We need to remember that riches mean nothing in the kingdom of God. They have nothing to do with our spiritual "standing" though they can be a means of drawing our hearts away from the Lord. Cultivate a "global" view of the fellowship of believers—all one in Christ, neither Greek or Jew, neither slave nor master, etc.

21. What do we learn about God Himself and His desire for His children from James 2:1-7? See also Acts 10:34-35.

God wants us to live transformed, "this is what Jesus did for me" kinds of lives in how we deal with one another.

34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

"The doctrine of God's grace, if we really believe it, forces us to relate to people on the basis of God's plan and not on the basis of human merit or social status. A "class church" is not a church that magnifies the grace of God. When He died, Jesus broke down the wall that separated Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-22). But in His birth and life, Jesus broke down the walls between rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated. It is



wrong for us to build those walls again; we cannot rebuild them if we believe in the grace of God.”<sup>1</sup> Warren Wiersbe

“We should do well to measure all men by God’s standard,—to measure them not by the amount of their income, but by the condition of their souls. When the Lord God looks down from heaven and sees the children of men, He takes no account of many things which are highly esteemed by the world. He looks not at men’s money, or lands, or titles. He looks only at the state of their souls, and reckons them accordingly. Oh, that you would strive to do likewise! Oh, that you would value grace above titles, or intellect, or gold! Often, far too often, the only question asked about a man is, “How much is he worth?”

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 352.

## James

### Lesson #8, Chapter 2:8-17

Take a moment and ask the Lord's help in studying His Word, and for the Holy Spirit's aid in applying it.

1. Summarize the contents of James 2:1-7. Now choose one or two words to describe the main point James makes in this paragraph.

James deals with favoritism or partiality in the church, among the brethren, that is displeasing to the Lord and incompatible with "true religion." We are not to make distinctions among ourselves as to outward status kinds of things.

Distinctions; evil; favoritism; heirs, kingdom; attention

2. How can you tell in verse 8 that James intends to continue discussing the same topic he addressed in verses 1-7?

He begins by contrasting that behavior with a right kind of behavior and commending it. James loves contrasts and he uses it effectively here.

3. What is the "royal law" as described in verse 8?

You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

4. What else do you learn about the Royal Law from the following verses? See Luke 10:25-37; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; 1 John 3:13-18.

25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" 27 And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 28 And He said to him, "You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE." 29 But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. 31 "And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 "Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 "On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' 36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" 37 And he said, "The one who showed mercy toward him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. HE WHO HAS LOVED HIS NEIGHBOR

HAS FULFILLED THE LAW. LOVE DOESN'T DO WRONG TO A NEIGHBOR. LOVE SEEKS WHAT IS BEST FOR THEM.

14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

13 Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. WE KNOW WE ARE SAVED BY OUR LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN. IT'S SHOWN IN LAYING DOWN OUR LIVES FOR THE BRETHREN, SEEKING TO MINISTER TO THEM. DON'T LOVE IN WORD ONLY, BUT ALSO IN DEED AND TRUTH.

5. What commendation in verse 8 is given for keeping this law?  
You are doing well if/when you are loving your neighbor as yourself.

6. How is love for the brethren *the* answer when partiality and favoritism are at work?  
If we love someone, we see past the surface to the heart and soul below. We seek their good, no matter who they are or what their circumstances.

7. What contrast to verse 8 is given in verse 9 that would *not* be good for us to do?  
It is not good for us to commit partiality. To do so is to commit sin. And the law of God convicts us, effectively brands us, as transgressors of God's royal law.

8. What sweeping statement from verse 10 levels the playing field so that everyone is included? Be sure that your comment shows the connection between verses 9 and 10.  
James says if you say you are keeping all of God's commandments, but are showing favoritism and partiality, you are just as guilty of breaking God's law as if you were a murderer or adulterer.

"The command against favoritism, or positively, the imperative of neighbor love, especially toward the poor, so embodied the spirit of the law that to stumble on this point was to offend the law at its heart. It must never be forgotten that wisdom, the law, and love are all inseparably bound together. Any separation of these three is the result of calculated self-deception that looks for man's favor rather than God's and withholds the love that is due one's neighbor."<sup>1</sup> Kurt Richardson

9. James further illustrates his point in verse 11. What is he trying to get people, like us, to understand and take to heart in this paragraph? Why is this important to understand when we're dealing with less obvious sins like partiality or favoritism?

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<sup>1</sup> Kurt A. Richardson, *James*, vol. 36, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 122.

He's trying to remind us that sin is sin. All are alike to God in that they transgress His perfect and righteous standard. That means that whether we are committing the sin of partiality or committing murder, both land us in the dock before the righteous Judge.

10. Sometimes those less obvious sins can really get a foothold in our lives, especially in how we deal with one another. Try listing some of those more “respectable sins”<sup>2</sup> and see if James’ admonitions apply to them as well. Here’s a couple to get you started: defensiveness, a competitive spirit in places where there shouldn’t be competition. Can you think of more?

Pouting, grumbling, grieving excessively, not trusting God, not loving others, exaggerating to cover over sin, minimizing sin instead of calling it what it is.

Jerry Bridges list of “respectable sins” lists: ungodliness; anxiety and frustration; discontentment; unthankfulness; pride; selfishness; lack of self-control; impatience and irritability; anger; judgmentalism; envy, jealousy; sins of the tongue; worldliness.

11. What is the answer to any of those type of “relationship” sins we’re prone to committing according to verse 12?

Speak and act toward each other in the name of, in accordance with “the Royal Law.”

12. What is the law of liberty that James references in verse 12? See also Galatians 5:1; James 1:25; 2:8.

1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

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.

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” you are doing well.

The law of liberty is the freedom that comes from salvation by grace through faith in Christ. It is the perfect law and one that we are to abide by—actually growing in our effectiveness in obeying it. One of the primary ways we live out the Royal Law is by loving each other.

13. Based on what you just learned, describe what our lives should look like, especially in speaking and acting, when we are submitted to the *Law of Liberty*?

When I am submitted to the Law of Liberty, I joyfully obey understanding I am set free from sin and death through Christ’s magnificent gift. That then makes me want to be gracious to others and to treat fellow believers on that same level playing field.

14. What do we learn about the judgment that comes by the *Law of Liberty* in verse 13? See also Matthew 6:14-15 and 18:21-35.

Judgment will not be merciful to the one who shows no mercy.

14 “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

<sup>2</sup> For further study on this, read Jerry Bridges’ excellent and convicting book, *Respectable Sins*.

21 Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 "When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 25 "But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. 26 "So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' 27 "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. 28 "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' 29 "So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' 30 "But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. 31 "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. 32 "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' 34 "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

15. If you didn't already say so, what do we learn about mercy from verse 13? Mercy triumphs over judgment. Mercy, love, kindness, and so on all win over judgment. It's the grand theme of Les Miserable'. And even better the grand theme of this world. Everything shows how God's mercy overcomes judgment through Jesus Christ.

16. What interesting things do you learn about the word *triumphs* [Strong's #2620] from verse 13? Please define.  
To boast over, to rejoice over, to glory against.

While judgment threatens condemnation, mercy interposes and prevails over judgment. "Mercy is clothed with the divine glory, and stands by the throne of God. When we are in danger of being condemned, she rises up and pleads for us, and covers us with her defence, and enfolds us with her wings" (Chrysostom, cited by Gloag).

Marvin Richardson Vincent, [\*Word Studies in the New Testament\*](#), vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), 743.

17. James continues to hammer away at some wrong attitudes showing up in the believers. What new "argument" does he introduce in verse 14? He says, What use is it if you say I have faith, but there are no deeds of faith backing that up in your life?

James is reminding them that a faith that saves, transforms us. We will live differently because we have been rescued and redeemed by Jesus.

18. Explain what verse 14 has to do with verses 8-13. It's a continuation of the thought, and a new angle to hit at to get them to think about how they are living. This is for every one of us. No one is exempt in this time of assessment.

19. How does James illustrate his verse 14 comments in verses 15-16? How is that illustration an appropriate one for the subject he introduced in verses 1-13?

He gives the example of a poor brother or sister in need of food or clothing and yet we don't seek to meet their need, then again, it's an example of a useless, dead faith. It follows perfectly with living in a transformed way, unilaterally, among believers.

20. What challenging statement does James give in verse 17 as he pulls his thoughts together for this paragraph?

If our so-called faith isn't lived out then it really isn't true faith. It's a dead, hollow faith that relies upon works and not the grace and power of Jesus to redeem us.

21. How would you summarize James' *underlying assumption* about what our lives should look like, as well as what "having faith" really means?

James' underlying assumption is that every true believer is going to live differently than they did before, different from the world, different from those who just profess to be believers. Having faith is not just an intellectual assent to facts but a life-transforming, new creature creating event that leaves us forever changed and desiring to live differently because of it.

"We only believe as much of the Bible as we practice."<sup>3</sup> Warren Wiersbe

"There is one obvious message to this section: our beliefs should control our behavior. If we really believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that God is gracious, His Word is true, and one day He will judge us, then our conduct will reveal our convictions. Before we attack those who do not have orthodox doctrine, we must be sure that we practice the doctrines we defend. Jonah had wonderful theology, but he hated people and was angry with God (Jonah 4). One of the tests of the reality of our faith is how we treat other people. Can we pass the test?" Warren Wiersbe<sup>4</sup>

"Oh! may we all tonight go to Christ to be our complete Savior in very deed and truth. Then we will be saved; and then, being saved, we will seek to serve Christ with heart and soul and strength."<sup>5</sup> Charles Spurgeon

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<sup>3</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 352.

<sup>4</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 353.

<sup>5</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, [\*A Collection of Sermons\*](#), electronic ed., Logos Library Systems (Simpsonville, SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1996), 261.

## James

### Lesson #9, Chapter 2:18-26

As you come to your lesson today, be sure to ask the Lord for insight and help as you study this rather technical and theologically dense section.

1. Briefly summarize James' train of thought in Chapter 2, paying special attention to his thought processes coming into verse 18.

James reveals another way true faith lives—in not showing partiality or favoritism based on someone's wealth or lack or position in society. He reminds us that if we fulfill the Royal Law of loving our neighbor as ourselves, there will be no need for the exhortation to not show favoritism. James hits the nail a bit harder when he compares the sin of partiality with murder and adultery—it is not something that can be swept under the rug. Our faith is seen in our love toward others—in fact, our good deeds are the seal of the Holy Spirit's residence in us. If there are no deeds of love exhibited in our lives, it really doesn't matter what we say, the evidence declares that our faith is dead. Verse 18 opens up with a rebuttal to that statement.

2. What does James mean when he says in verse 17, "Faith without *works* is dead?" Consider James 1:22-26 and 2:14-17.

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.*

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? *Can that faith save him?* 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Salvation shows up in a transformed life. True faith simply does not stay the same. True faith results in deeds of love and devotion to the Lord, and one way is by loving the brethren.

3. What are some synonyms or phrases you could use in place of "works" that might provide clarity as you look at verses 2:14-26? Try inserting your substitute words in the text (either mentally or by writing it out here) to see if they give more insight into James' meaning *while maintaining doctrinal precision.*

How about "transformed life" or "deeds of love" or "faith lived out"

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.<sup>14</sup> What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? <sup>17</sup> Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

4. Verse 18 begins with an illustration that further explains James' comment in verse 17.

What does the "someone" say about their own faith in verse 18?

Someone's own faith is described as "I have works...I will show you my faith by my works."

a. What does that same "someone" say about "your" faith in verse 18?

"You [say you] have faith...show me your faith without works."

b. Does that "someone" line up with what James is saying or do they oppose his reasoning? Consider your answer in light of verse 17 as well.

The "someone" is speaking rightly and lining up with what James says in verse 17. They are arguing for "faith being revealed in our deeds."

c. What is the point of faith *with works*?

Faith with works shows that Jesus has transformed us. ***It is the outward evidence of the inward transformation.***

5. What do those who say, "faith without works is enough" believe according to verse 19? Is this a good thing according to James (verse 19)?

They believe that God is one. Yep, to believe that is a good thing; James commends it.

6. Who else believes that very same thing from verse 19? What does that point have to do with the whole "I have faith without works" argument?

The demons believe that very thing. The demons aren't saved—everyone gets that, yet they believe in God, in fact, their doctrine is even better than ours, but just knowing those truths about God isn't enough to save us. Oy! Dear Lord, may you save the many who are in this camp! May You open their eyes to their lost state. Help them to see that their faith is no better than what the demons possess.

7. Eager beaver: Consider what verse 19 reveals about what the demons know and believe about God. What do the demons know about God? See James 2:19; Matthew 8:28-29; Mark 1:24; 5:7; Acts 16:16-17; 19:15. Isn't it interesting that the demons sometimes have a greater faith than even those who claim to be Christians?

The demons know there is only one true God. The demons know that Jesus is also God and will judge them. The demons know that Jesus is the Holy One—God Himself. The demons also know that Jesus, as man on earth, was also God incarnate. *The demons know the way of salvation.* The demons know those who belong to the Lord.

<sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

<sup>28</sup> When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. <sup>29</sup> And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"



24 saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

7 and shouting with a loud voice, he said, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God, do not torment me!"

16 It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation."

15 And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

8. The Scriptures *never, never, never* argue among themselves. They always agree with each other, though sometimes it may look like there are discrepancies, there aren't. It's our job then, to solve any apparent mysteries through study and observing the context. First, what point is James making about *faith that works* in this section?

Just saying you have faith, doesn't prove anything. Salvation is tested and revealed by the works we do because we have been transformed and are new creatures in Christ.

- a. Next, look at Romans 3:21-4:25. What wrong thinking was Paul trying to correct as he discussed *faith and works*?

21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. 31 Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law. 1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, 6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. 8 "BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT." 9 Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "FAITH WAS CREDITED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 10 How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; 11 and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised. 13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the Law brings about

wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. 16 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. 18 In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “SO SHALL YOUR DESCENDANTS BE.” 19 Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. 22 Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 23 Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

Paul is dealing with a completely different aspect. He is dealing with those who think you need to do works in order to gain God’s approval for salvation. They are adding works to salvation.

- b. How is Paul’s use of *faith* and *works* different than James’ use of *faith* and *works*?

Paul is saying it is faith alone in the perfect work of Christ that saves us, not works. James is saying that our faith/salvation is shown as authentic when it “works,” when it is lived out. For James, works are the result of faith. For Paul, no works can ever be added to our salvation; it is faith alone. They aren’t opposing each other at all since they are dealing with two separate issues.

- c. What hermeneutical (Bible study) principle provides us with the simplest answer for explaining the so-called discrepancy between Romans 3 and James 2?<sup>1</sup> Isn’t it a wonderful comfort to know that this *one* hermeneutical principle solves most of the Scripture “problems” we come to in studying the Bible?

Context! It is encouraging! We can trust the Lord and we can trust His Word to lead us into truth, if we will only keep our eyes stuck to the text.

“Of the other writers in the NT we must notice James, for he has often been held to be in opposition to Paul in this matter. Where Paul insists that a man is justified by faith and not by works James maintains ‘that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone’ (Jas. 2:24). There is no more than a verbal contradiction, however. The kind of ‘faith’ that James is opposing is not that warm personal trust in a living Savior of which Paul speaks. It is a faith which James himself describes: ‘You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder’ (Jas. 2:19). He has in mind an intellectual assent to certain truths, an assent which is not backed up by a life lived in accordance with those truths (Jas. 2:15f.). So far is James from opposing faith in the full sense that he everywhere presupposes it. Right at the beginning of his Epistle he speaks naturally of ‘the testing of your faith’ (Jas. 1:3), and he exhorts his readers, ‘show no partiality as you hold the faith of

<sup>1</sup> *Context*. Context is our “fall back” hermeneutical principle that solves most all Bible study conundrums.

our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory' (Jas. 2:1). He criticizes a wrong faith but assumes that everyone will recognize the need for a right faith. Moreover, by 'works' James does not mean what Paul means by that term. Paul thinks of obedience to the commands of the law regarded as a system whereby a man may merit salvation. For James the law is 'the law of liberty' (Jas. 2:12). His 'works' look uncommonly like 'the fruit of the Spirit' of which Paul speaks. They are warm deeds of love springing from a right attitude to God. They are the fruits of faith. What James objects to is the claim that faith is there when there is no fruit to attest it."<sup>2</sup>

9. What does Paul [oops! James] desire his "faith without works" imaginary friend to understand in verse 20?

That faith without works is useless. Notice the language he uses here: are you willing, are you willing to recognize, foolish fellow.

10. What does faith without works reveal about our salvation?  
It is useless. False. It won't save us. It isn't enough for salvation.

11. Finish this thought: Dead (verse 17), useless (verse 20) faith is faith \_\_\_\_\_.  
Dead, useless faith is faith that is will never save. It is an empty hope.

**"Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in the garage makes you a car." Unknown**

12. Based on all James has said in this section, is it possible to say we're believers, walk in newness of life, be new creatures in Christ, and yet not walk in obedience or have evidence of a transformed life? Is it possible to live a life of faith without there being some evidence of faith, hope, and love in it?

Based on all James has said here? Nope. It's just not possible. Saving faith is a transforming faith. If we're new creatures then we will act differently.

13. Look up the following verses. What do each of these sections of Scripture attest to when it comes to a life of faith in Jesus Christ? See Matthew 7:15-23; John 15:1-4, 8; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 1:10; Titus 2:11-14.

15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits. 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE

<sup>2</sup> *The New Bible Dictionary*, Logos Bible Software under "faith."

LAWLESSNESS.' BELIEVERS ARE GOOD TREES, THEREFORE BELIEVERS BEAR FRUIT. FALSE BELIEF WILL SHOW UP AS BAD FRUIT IN A "PROFESSING" CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. EVERY BRANCH OF GOD'S TREE WILL BEAR FRUIT. THAT'S JUST THE WAY IT IS. ALL NON-FRUIT BEARING BRANCHING WILL EVENTUALLY REVEALED TO BE JUST THAT—FRUITLESS AND TIED TO A FALSE FAITH.

8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. WE PROVE WE BELONG TO GOD BY THE FRUIT SHOWING UP IN OUR LIVES.

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. NEW CREATURE. OLD WAYS ARE GONE. WE ARE NEW!

10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; IT IS THE MANNER OF BELIEVERS TO BEAR FRUIT.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. GOD'S GRACE TELLS US TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY! OH, WHY IS THIS SO OFTEN MISSED?! HE CAME TO REDEEM US SO WE COULD LIVE DIFFERENTLY.

14. James then uses another example to hammer home his point that our faith must be a transforming faith, a faith that reveals itself in how it lives. What did Abraham's already life-transforming faith prompt him to do according to verse 21?  
He offered up his son Isaac to the Lord.

15. To keep our thinking in this passage precise and accurate, let's remind ourselves of Hebrews 11:6, 17-19; Romans 4:1-4. How does that information work with *James' purpose in challenging the thinking* that faith that without life-transformation is saving faith?

6 And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. NO WORKS ARE PLEASING TO GOD IF THEY ARE NOT ACCOMPANIED BY FAITH.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." 19 He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type. WHEN ABRAHAM OFFERED UP ISAAC, HE WAS ALREADY SAVED. THIS WAS A DEED OF HIS TRANSFORMED LIFE.

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS." 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, THEN DID "WORKS."

True faith acts, is transformed, lives out its love.

16. According to verse 22, what were the results of Abraham's works?

His faith was perfected, completed, made more mature. It was the perfecting of something that was already there before he did the works.

17. What does this teach you about how faith grows?

Faith grows through testing. Faith does grow however. To stay the same is to make God a liar. Faith is active, not passive or indifferent. Faith loves God's ways, God's Word, and God's people; faith delights in giving God glory.

18. Look at verse 23 and note the progression. First, Abraham did what? Then what happened as a result? And that resulted in what happening for Abraham?

First, Abraham believed God.

Then, righteousness was granted to him—that is, salvation.

It was then that Abraham was called God's friend. Prior to his believing, he was God's enemy—just like us prior to our salvation.

19. It's good to remember as you read verse 24 that when James is using works here, it means "faith that is lived out" or "faith that shows up in a transformed life" or "faith in God can't help but live it out." And as that faith is "living out" what is God doing in us (verse 24)?

Our faith is justified, declared righteous. Our faith is accepted by God and given His stamp of approval that it is real and genuine—not because we earned it, but because we put our faith in Jesus Christ alone to redeem us.

20. James just can't help himself, so he gives another example of someone whose new-found faith was revealed in how they lived. What example is given [in verse 25]?

Rahab's hiding of the two spies when they entered the land.

21. And just to make sure we get it, what comparison does James cite to drive home his point in verse 26?

A body without the spirit is dead. Faith, just like a body, is dead without works, the spirit.

22. There's just no way we can leave this impassioned instruction without considering our own lives. Consider if your faith does have works. What does that look like in your life?

Remember, faith accompanied by deeds is *not the means* of salvation, but the *fruit* of salvation.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 is my life verse for this very reason. A transformed life was what I was looking for in my salvation and is a huge part of my testimony.

23. Now, brainstorm a bit and consider some of the ways, big and small, in which you live out your faith, that is, do works or deeds in your salvation. Now, narrow it down to today. How are you living out your faith, accompanied by deeds, today? These questions are not meant to [lead us to] self-congratulation, but rather for assessing the state of your soul.

Choosing to believe the promises of God. Waiting, hoping, putting my eyes on the Lord alone.

24. Apply this statement to your daily life, “Faith without works is dead. Saying I believe God and love Him without putting faith, hope, obedience, service, and trust into practice is like those times when I... .”

Is like those times when I sin and live basically as an unbeliever, not believing the promises of God’s Word.

“In any and every case suitable works attend upon saving faith, and it is idle to claim to be saved by faith, unless our lives are holy.”<sup>3</sup> Charles Spurgeon

“Faith is the root, good works are the fruits, and we must see to it that we have both. We must not think that either, without the other, will justify and save us. This is the grace of God wherein we stand, and we should stand to it.”<sup>4</sup> Matthew Henry

*“His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.”*  
—Isaiah 33:16

Do you doubt, O Christian, do you doubt as to whether God will fulfil his promise? Shall the munitions of rock be carried by storm? Shall the storehouses of heaven fail? Do you think that your heavenly Father, though he knoweth that you have need of food and raiment, will yet forget you? When not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father, and the very hairs of your head are all numbered, will you mistrust and doubt him? Perhaps your affliction will continue upon you till you dare to trust your God, and then it shall end. Full many there be who have been tried and sore vexed till at last they have been driven in sheer desperation to exercise faith in God, and the moment of their faith has been the instant of their deliverance; they have seen whether God would keep his promise or not. Oh, I pray you, doubt him no longer! Please not Satan, and vex not yourself by indulging any more those hard thoughts of God. Think it not a light matter to doubt Jehovah. Remember, it is a *sin*; and not a little sin either, but in the highest degree criminal. The angels never doubted him, nor the devils either: we alone, out of all the beings that God has fashioned, dishonour him by unbelief, and tarnish his honour by mistrust. Shame upon us for this! Our God does not deserve to be so basely suspected; in our past life we have proved him to be true and faithful to his word, and with so many instances of his love and of his kindness as we have received, and are daily receiving, at his hands, it is base and inexcusable that we suffer a doubt to sojourn within our heart. May we henceforth wage constant war against doubts of our God—enemies to our peace and to his honour; and with an unstagging faith believe that what he has promised he will also perform. “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.”

C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896).

<sup>3</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, *The Interpreter: Spurgeon’s Devotional Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1964), 742.

<sup>4</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2414.

## James Lesson #10, Chapter 3 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 3 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 3. Now, *summarize* the contents of Chapter 3. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4<sup>th</sup> grader the contents of the chapter.

a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-12).

James continues his discussion that our faith should result in an outward display—and a primary way that is revealed is in how we speak. The idea that the same person could speak both blessing and cursing is an anomaly to James.

b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 13-18).

James continues discussing the issues of the tongue and a transformed life, but from a different angle. Now he contrasts godly versus earthly wisdom as a means of showing that faith must transform us.

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.

Verses 10 and 15 both summarize the main point, which is that there's a clear distinction about what a life of "faith" truly looks like. It certainly doesn't include unbridled speech or earthly wisdom.

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.

Verse 10, the last part: My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

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.

Speech and Wisdom Reveal Transformed Life  
This Just Ain't Right!

5. List your observations about the *tongue* in this chapter. Be sure to note the verse references as well.

Verse 5 the tongue is a small part of the body

Verse 5 it [the tongue] boasts of great things [note the contrast being made]

Verse 5 also note the illustration referring to the tongue

Verse 6 the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity

Verse 6 the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the whole body

Verse 8 no one can tame the tongue

Verse 8 it [the tongue] is a restless evil, full of deadly poison

Verse 9 with it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father

Verse 9 with it [the tongue] we curse men

Verse 10 [from the same mouth=tongue] come both blessing and cursing.

6. The word *tame/tamed* is used a bit in this chapter. List what you observe and where you found it.

Verse 7 every species of beasts and birds, reptiles and sea creatures are tamed

Verse 7 and have been tamed by man

Verse 8 but no one can tame the tongue

7. What do you learn about *wisdom* in this chapter? Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Verse 13 who is wise and understanding?

Verse 13 wisdom shown by deeds in the gentleness of wisdom

Verse 14 [implied] don't be arrogant and lie against the truth...or wisdom

Verse 15 [bitter jealousy and selfish ambition] is not wisdom that comes from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

Verse 17 the wisdom from above is first pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy, good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

8. Now make a list of any things that *control other things* like a "bridle." Be sure to cite where you found them.

A mature man is able to bridle (control) his whole body—verse 2

Bits in horse's mouths make them obey—verse 3

Bits direct a horse's entire body—verse 3

Ships' rudder directs a whole ship—verse 4

Tongue is small but wreaks great havoc—verse 5

Tongue controls our life—verse 6

Man has controlled or tamed all animal species—verse 7



9. Now, make a list of the kinds of illustrations James uses. You don't have to write down the whole illustration; just note what he uses to illustrate a point, like *horses*, for example. Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Verse 2 body; verse 3 horses; verse 4 ships; verse 5 fire; verse 7 species; verse 11 fountain; verse 12 fig tree; verse 18 seed.

10. List what you learn about *earthly wisdom* in this chapter. Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Earthly wisdom is characterized by bitter jealousy, selfish ambition, arrogance, lying against the truth, natural, demonic, disorder, every evil thing. Verse 14-16.

11. Now, list what you learn about *God's wisdom*, along with where you found it.

Good behavior reveals the deeds of gentle wisdom—verse 13; pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy—verse 17.

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*

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

I just love the wisdom presented in this chapter. So easy to identify—we are known by our fruit. Verse 8 no one can tame the tongue and the implied answer is that God can when we place our faith and hope in him. It's the only way to ever have control of our tongues.

### James Chapter 3

- 1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.
- 2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.
- 3 Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.
- 4 Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires.
- 5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!
- 6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.
- 7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race.
- 8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.
- 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;
- 10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.
- 11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water?
- 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.
- 13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.
- 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.
- 15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.
- 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.
- 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.
- 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

## James

### Lesson #11, Chapter 3:1-12

As you come to your lesson today, be sure to ask the Lord for insight and help as you study this life changing section of Scripture.

1. Explain the ribbon of thought that connects Chapter 3 verse 1 with James' previous comments at the end of Chapter 2.

James' comments that faith without works is dead sets the stage for his next comment that they shouldn't vie to be a teacher unless called—and truly saved. Their lives need to show the fruit of their inward transformation. *His subsequent discussion on the tongue and its fruit just continues the discussion that faith transforms us.*

2. What command is given in 3:1? What reason is given for that command?

Let not many of you become teachers.

Teachers will incur a stricter judgment.

3. Why do you think the church needed to be admonished to “not let *many* of them become teachers” based on what you've learned about the church in Chapters 1 and 2?

They were vying for position, fame. They were defaulting to worldly mindsets of ambition, position, money, reputation. James reminds them that being a leader comes with a thorn.

4. What does James mean when he says that teachers will be judged more strictly? See 1 Corinthians 9:17; 1 Timothy 1:11-12; 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:15; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 13:17.

17 For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a *stewardship entrusted* to me.

11 according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been *entrusted*. 12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service,

16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will *ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you*.

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does *not need to be ashamed*, accurately handling the word of truth.

9 *holding fast the faithful word* which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, *for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account*. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

Teachers have been given a stewardship from God. All stewards are to report and give an account to the Master.

Again, there is that word entrusted in 1 Timothy 1:11-12. There is a weight to that. *Entrusted*—God trusts the teachers to be faithful and teach His Word, His way. Being a faithful teacher is so important! The salvation of their own souls and their hearers is at stake. There is shame attached to an unfaithful shepherd/teacher. Teachers are to accurately handle the Word of truth; hold it fast so he can be adept at shepherding. Leaders will give an account to the Lord for the shepherding of the sheep. They keep watch over the sheep.

“James's point is that no believer should begin any form of teaching God's Word without a deep sense of the seriousness of this responsibility. To sin with the tongue when alone or

with one or two other persons is bad enough; but to sin with the tongue in public, especially while acting as a speaker for God, is immeasurably worse. Speaking for God carries with it great implications, both for good and ill.”<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur

“There is no special honor in preaching. There is only special pain. The pulpit calls those anointed to it as the sea calls its sailors; and like the sea, it batters and bruises and does not rest. ... To preach, to really preach, is to die naked a little at a time and to know each time you do it that you must do it again.”<sup>2</sup> Unknown

5. How does verse 2 explain the reasoning behind the command of verse 1? There’s strict judgment for teachers—who constantly use their tongues. But oh, how often we stumble in what we say! In fact, James sets the bar impossibly high and says if we don’t stumble then we are perfect or really mature people. But for the rest of us, we’re just going to stumble.

6. See if you can come up with at least 5 observations about verse 2.

We all stumble.

We all stumble in many ways, not just one.

No one is exempt from stumbling.

If you don’t stumble then you are mature in your faith.

You’re able to bridle or control your whole body if you can bridle your tongue.

Self-control in speech means self-control in body. They are closely aligned.

Self-control in speech is a good indicator of spiritual maturity.

Self-control in speech is a good indicator of spiritual growth.

Bridling our tongues shows we can bridle our passions as well because bridling the tongue is the hardest thing to control.

7. Define *perfect* [Strong’s #5046] as James uses it here in verse 2. Notice how James uses the same word in 1:4, 17, 25. Paul speaks similarly in 1 Corinthians 9:27. Explain how the two passages are similar.

Fully equipped, full grown, complete.

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

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.

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.

1 Corinthians 9:27: *but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

<sup>1</sup>John F. MacArthur Jr., *James*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), 148.

<sup>2</sup>Unknown author quoted by John F. MacArthur Jr., *James*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), 150.

Paul is talking about the bridling or controlling or directing of his desires for the purpose of giving God glory. James shows that the bridling of our tongues reveals that our faith is real and full of good works for the purpose of giving God glory.

8. What term(s) would you use to describe the mature believer in verse 2?  
Mature. Self-controlled. Not rash. Reasoned. Sensible. Thoughtful. Full of faith. Living by the Spirit.  
All areas of his life are under control of the Holy Spirit. He is living out 1 Corinthians 9:27 for sure.

9. In verse 2 we learn that a believer who is controlled in their speech will *generally* exercise self-control in other areas of their life. Why is that? See also 2 Corinthians 4:14-15; Philippians 1:21; 3:7-11; Titus 2:11-14. What is it about those motivations that guides and directs how we live?

14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

A person whose tongue is under control is a person whose heart is given completely to the Savior—to live is Christ. That person counts all things to be loss in view of knowing Christ. They understand that the whole of the Christian life is connected and reflects our true heart sensibilities.

10. From verses 3-7 list James' examples of small things that control larger things.  
Bits in horse's mouths. Ships directed by rudders. Small flame of fire can set a whole forest on fire. Every created species is tamed by man.

11. What is James' point in giving all those illustrations in verses 3-7? What does James want to make sure we *get*?

Our very little tongues have great power. They are strong and stubborn. They want their own way. They must be governed, guided, and held in check at all times. Danger is near if our tongues are not curbed.

12. What specific things do we learn about the tongue in verses 5-6?  
Tongue is a small part of the body. The tongue boasts of great things. [!!!] Illustration of a forest being set on fire by such a small flame. Implied that the tongue is that small flame that sets fire to the forest causing destruction and

mayhem. The tongue is a fire. The tongue is a world of iniquity—sin. The tongue is among our members of our body and defiles the body. The tongue sets the course of our life on fire. The course of our life is set on fire by hell itself!!!! Whoa!

13. What dire warnings in verses 5-6 do we need to take to heart as we consider our own speech?

The destruction, the sin, the chaos that is contained in that one member, which is so very small. Yet, it can wallop a big punch!

14. According to verses 7-8, what kinds of things are tamed? And yet, what one thing remains untamed?

Beasts, birds, reptiles, creatures of the sea are all tamed by the human race. Yet, the one thing that is not tamed is the human tongue.

15. What further information do we learn about our tongues from verses 8-10?

No one can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil. It is full of deadly poison. Our tongue can equally bless God and curse men (who have been made in God's image, therefore, a reprehensible deed). It's inconceivable that from the same mouth can come both blessing and cursing.

My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

16. It's at this point that we need to look again at verse 2, which contains a "wonder" to consider, as well as an "encouragement." List the "wonder" and "encouragement" you see in verse 2, in light of all we've just observed about our speech.

The wonder—if anyone doesn't stumble in what he says, well then, wonder of wonders, he is a perfect man. The encouragement—we all stumble in many ways. We all will fall to the sins of the tongue, but it is possible to gain mastery over it.

17. James concludes verse 10 by saying, "My brethren, these things ought not to be this way." Here is hope! That simple statement indicates there's a way out, that we are *not bound* to destructive speech. He lays the groundwork for that hope by asking two rhetorical questions. Please explain what James wants us to understand from his questions in verses 11-12.

Does a fountain send out both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree produce olives or a vine produce figs? Neither can salt water produce fresh water.

AND neither should a believer be given to untamed, unbridled speech that doesn't reflect their inner heart transformation through their faith in Jesus Christ to be their Savior.

18. Summarize what you learn from the following verses as it relates to what we're discovering here. See Romans 8:1, 5-10; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10; 1 John 1:9.

1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. THERE IS HOPE, EVEN WHEN WE FAIL.

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. THE BELIEVER IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WHILE THE UNBELIEVER CANNOT EVEN UNDERSTAND OR APPROACH OBEDIENCE OR LOVE TOWARD THE LORD.

13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. THERE IS A WAY OF ESCAPE. WE MAY NOT USE IT, BUT GOD HAS PROVIDED IT.

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. WE ARE NEW CREATURES, NO LONGER BOUND TO OUR OLD WAYS AND OLD PATTERNS.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. GOD MADE US TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. HE FORGIVES US. "MY BRETHREN, THESE THINGS OUGHT NOT TO BE THIS WAY."

19. What truths about the Christian life underscore James' comments at the end of verse 10 and in verses 11-12?

There are ways a believer is to act—because of their redeemed life—and there are ways that aren't acceptable. In fact, it's incomprehensible to James that a believer would act in such a manner.

20. Read verses 9 and 10 again. Here we find ample room for *application* as we consider *our own speech*. What issues are brought up in these verses? When do we find ourselves most susceptible to engaging in these speech sins?

Verses 9 and 10 point out how easily we can switch from praising the Lord to saying unkind things about others or being uncontrolled in our speech, so that we are actually cursing men (that's pretty out there and blatant!). I think we are often blind to these sins. I think we can be prideful or fool ourselves into thinking we are not acting in this wicked way. But God sees it all.

21. It goes without saying that we're *all* guilty of the sins of the tongue. The key then is not to high-five each other in recognition of that fact, but rather, to consider *how we can honor* the Lord *and* our brothers and sisters in Christ. What can we learn and apply from the following Scriptures to aid us in giving God glory in our speech? See Psalm 19:12-14; 139:23-24; Colossians 3:1-3, 5, 8-10, 12-17; 1 Peter 1:14-16, 22-23.

12 Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. 13 Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer. OUR SINS CAN BE HIDDEN FROM US.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way. WE CAN MISS THE SINS WE ARE COMMITTING, SO NEED TO ASK THE LORD FOR HIS HELP.

1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. THE PLAN FOR OVERCOMING OUR SPEECH.

5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. DON'T HAVE TO GIVE IN TO WICKED SPEECH.

8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— SAME. THERE ARE CHOICES NOW THAT WE ARE BELIEVERS.

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. OH, THE LOVELINESS OF LIVING AS THE LORD WOULD HAVE US LIVE.

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." BE HOLY. DON'T BE CONFORMED TO FORMER LUSTS.

22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, 23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. BORN AGAIN!!! NEW CREATURE.

22. If you find you are continually losing the battle in taming your tongue what does verse 12 indicate you need to consider about your spiritual condition? See also 2 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Peter 1:2-11. Why is this spiritual self-assessment so important and something *every one* of us should undertake?

I must consider that I may not be saved. We can easily be blind to the sin that is running amuck in our lives.

5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. 4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.



My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. James 3:10

“The implied application to the tongue is the point that it will produce according to its *nature* and not otherwise, and that it can have only *one* nature and not two or more. If it then blesses and curses out of the same mouth, something is wrong. It cannot be possible that its cursing is untrue; thus it follows that its blessing must be untrue, be nothing but formality and hypocrisy. It is, indeed, water out of the cleft, but brackish, undrinkable water to God. Even a tree and a vine yield only the one kind of fruit.”<sup>3</sup> R. C. H. Lenski

“Back to the principle at hand, those who truly praise God do not curse their brothers. James did not refer to a thoroughly new constitution of the person but to true faith that does what is natural to it, both toward God and toward other human beings. Such faith praises and blesses.”<sup>4</sup> Kurt Richardson

“To a large extent, we are known by the way we talk. Over the long haul, what we say gives others a pretty good idea of who and what we really are. That principle applies to good things as well as sinful, but James’s emphasis here is entirely on the negative aspects of our speaking—such as gossip, slander, false accusations, lying, filthy language and stories, and other sins of the tongue—that can destroy individual lives, families, schools, churches, and communities.”<sup>5</sup> John MacArthur

For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says,  
he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.  
James 3:2

<sup>3</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, [\*The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James\*](#) (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), 613.

<sup>4</sup>Kurt A. Richardson, [\*James\*](#), vol. 36, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 160.

<sup>5</sup>John F. MacArthur Jr., [\*James\*](#), *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1998), 156.

## James

### Lesson #12, Chapter 3:13-18

Ask the Lord to help you gain His wisdom as you study this section of James. There are riches here to apply and learn!

1. James isn't introducing a new topic here in Chapter 3 verse 13, so let's take a look at how verse 13 is a continuation of James' discussion in Chapter 3, especially of verses 9-12. What do you see?

In verses 9-12 we see the dual use of the tongue and the surprising ways we use it to dishonor God in opposition to our new nature in Christ. It's no wonder then that James shifts and tries dealing with the issue from a different tack. Now he discusses the incompatibility of earthly wisdom and godly wisdom. The two don't intersect at all and believers shouldn't engage in earthly wisdom, just like believers shouldn't engage in destructive, worldly speech.

2. In verse 13 James continues his pattern of using rhetorical questions. What challenge does he raise by asking the question he does in verse 13 and then giving its subsequent instruction?

He asks the question—anyone think he is wise or understanding? That's the challenge. And then he lays out the real playing ground—if you are wise and understanding then it will show up in your behavior which showcases wisdom in gentleness.

3. Eager Beaver: Speaking of questions: James loves them! Look through each chapter of James and note each time he asks a question. Be sure to list the verse reference. See if you can figure out what point he's trying to make each time he asks a question.

2:4 asks a question to get them to see if they are making distinctions among themselves that are displeasing to the Lord.

2:5 addresses the rich faith of the poor

2:6 and reminds them that the rich drag them into court

2:7 and blaspheme Jesus' name

2:14 what use is faith that has no works? It isn't saving faith.

2:16 saying good things but not acting out Christian love and faith isn't really faith

2:20 are you willing to recognize the importance of having faith that is lived out.

2:21 even Abraham the father of faith lived out his faith

2:25 and Rahab too!

3:11 illustration of fresh and bitter water

3:12 and illustration of fig tree producing vine or olives—all to make a point that the tongue of a believer shouldn't be capable of wicked speech.

3:13 who is wise and understanding? Again, a way to get people to look at the disparity that should not be there.

4:1 source of quarrels? Answered by another question—isn't it because of your lusts/pleasures?

4:5 don't you believe God's Word that says God is jealous for our affections?

5:13 helps them figure out what to do when suffering under trials and afflictions—pray or praise.

5:14 if sick/weak, ask for the elder to pray when faith is small and weak.

4. List at least 5 observations of verse 13.

Wisdom and understanding can be seen by our behavior.

Wisdom and understanding shows up as good behavior.

Wisdom and understanding isn't academic. It's lived out.

Good behavior shows up in deeds, not just words.

Wisdom is gentle.

Wisdom is gentle in behavior.

Gentleness guides our wisdom.

Wisdom and understanding go together. Wisdom without understanding isn't godly wisdom.

We are urged to show forth our wisdom and understanding rather than keep it hidden.

5. What do the Scriptures teach us about being *wise and understanding*? See Exodus 31:3; Deuteronomy 4:5-6; Psalm 107:43; 111:10; Proverbs 1:5, 7; 23:23; Daniel 2:21; Hosea 4:9 [DELETE THIS ONE]; Matthew 7:24.

3 "I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, GOD'S WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING COMES FROM HIM, IMPARTED BY HIS SPIRIT AND CAN BE GIVEN FOR ANY AREA OF SERVICE

5 "See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. 6 "So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING COMES FROM APPLYING, KNOWING, AND OBEYING GOD'S WORD.

43 Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things, And consider the lovingkindnesses of the LORD. WISDOM PAYS ATTENTION TO GOD'S KINDNESS.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever. WISDOM BEGINS THE MOMENT WE BEGIN TO FEAR AND LOVE AND OBEY THE LORD. WE GAIN UNDERSTANDING AT THAT MOMENT TOO.

5 A wise man will hear and increase in learning, And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel, WISDOM GROWS AND INCREASES AND THOSE WHO ARE WISE CONTINUE TO SEEK WISDOM.

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction. A FOOL DESPISES WISDOM WHICH ALSO MEANS HE DOESN'T FEAR THE LORD.

23 Buy truth, and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding. WISDOM IS A PRECIOUS COMMODITY.

21 "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding. THE LORD GIVES US WISDOM.

9 And it will be, like people, like priest; So I will punish them for their ways And repay them for their deeds. UHHHH DELETE THIS ONE.

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. WISE MEN BUILD WISELY AND ON A SOLID FOUNDATION AND ONE WAY IS TO HEAR AND OBEY GOD'S WORD.

6. What do we learn about *living out* wisdom and understanding from the following Scriptures? See Matthew 11:19; Philippians 1:27; Colossians 1:9-12; 1 Peter 2:12; 3:1-2, 16.

19 “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.” WISDOM IS ABLE TO LOOK PAST THE “FORM” OR THE OBVIOUS TO “WHY” SOMEONE IS DOING SOMETHING. WISDOM IS UNDERGIRD BY LOVE AND LOVE VINDICATES THE DEEDS THAT THE LEGALISTS OR HYPOCRITES WOULD NEVER DO.

27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; WISDOM CONDUCTS ITSELF IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL. WISDOM HELPS US STAND FIRM AND STRIVE FOR THE GOSPEL.

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. THE LORD LOVES TO GIVE WISDOM TO HIS CHILDREN. IT IS WISDOM THAT GIVES LEGS TO GOD’S WILL APPLIED IN OUR LIVES. IT IS WISDOM THAT HELPS US WALK IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE LORD AND HELPS US PLEASE HIM IN ALL RESPECTS, ETC.

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation. WISDOM GUIDES OUR BEHAVIOR AND GIVES GOD GLORY.

1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. A WIFE’S CHASTE AND RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR STEMS FROM WISELY JUDGING HER HUSBAND’S HEART AND THE NEEDS IN HER HOME.

16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. WISDOM APPLIED DOESN’T MEAN WE ARE EXEMPT FROM CRITICISM. BUT OVER TIME, THE LORD WILL BRING IT TO LIGHT.

7. Define *gentleness* [Strong’s #4240 (ESV, NKJV *meekness*; NIV *humility*)].

Meekness, humility. Mildness of disposition. Meekness—the inwrought grace of the soul. Meekness or gentleness here does not in any way suggest weakness.

“It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting.” [W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), 401.]

“This Christian meekness involves a healthy understanding of our own unworthiness before God and a corresponding humility and lack of pride in our dealings with our fellow-men.”<sup>1</sup> Douglas Moo

8. Why is *gentleness* such a valued component to wise living? See Matthew 11:29; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:12-13; 1 Timothy 6:11; James 1:21; 3:17.

<sup>1</sup>Douglas J. Moo, [\*James: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#), vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 136.

29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. JESUS IS GENTLE AND WE ARE TO BE LIKE HIM. WE ARE TO LEARN FROM HIM. REST COMES IN FOLLOWING HIS EXAMPLE AND HIS WAYS.

1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. GENTLENESS COMES IN HOW WE DEAL WITH EACH OTHER WHEN WE REMEMBER OUR OWN TEMPTATIONS AND FAILURES.

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ONE OF THE WAYS WE WALK IN A MANNER WORTHY OF OUR CALLING IS TO LIVE OUT GENTLENESS.

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. THOSE CHOSEN OF GOD EXHIBIT AND PUT ON GENTLENESS.

11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. GENTLENESS IS SOMETHING WE ARE TO PURSUE.

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. HUMILITY/GENTLENESS IS HOW WE'RE TO RECEIVE GOD'S WORD.

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. GOD'S WISDOM IS GENTLE, PURE AND SIMPLE.

9. What are some challenges you face in applying the *wisdom of gentleness in your behavior*? What encouragements have you gained from our lesson so far that will help you apply this precious characteristic?

I love it that we're to pursue gentleness. We're to make it a priority. It's also a quality that every believer gains at the moment of salvation and new life in Jesus.

10. In contrast to the lovely picture painted in verse 13 about living our lives in the gentleness of wisdom, what character qualities are presented in verse 14? Where do those qualities reside?

Bitter jealousy and selfish ambition reside in the heart. Along with arrogance and lying.

11. *If* those qualities were to *somehow* show up in our lives, what's the first thing we need to do according to verse 14? Why is that so important?

Not be arrogant in saying we don't have them. We're not to lie against the truth that bitter jealousy and selfish ambition are present.

Until we own our sin, we can't turn away from it. We also need to see our sin for what it is, so that we'll acknowledge it. [SPEND TIME TALKING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ACKNOWLEDGING OUR SIN.]

12. What do we know about our hearts if we see the characteristics from verse 14 coming out in our lives? See John 8:44-47; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Ephesians 4:25-32.

We're sinners. Still. And still in great need of our Savior.

44 “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 “But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 “Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 “He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.” WE’RE ACTING MORE LIKE OUR FIRST FATHER, THAN OUR REAL FATHER. SATAN LIES AND HATES GOD. SO IF WE BELONG TO GOD THEN WE’LL WANT TO TURN FROM OUR SIN.

1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? WE’RE ACTING IN A FLESHLY, UNREDEEMED MANNER, NOT GROWING IN MATURITY, IN CHRIST.

25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. 26 BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. GIVING THE DEVIL AN OPPORTUNITY. NOT LAYING ASIDE THE OLD SELF. GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

13. At this point James connects his comments to the theme of wisdom he began in verse 13. What does he have to say in verse 15 about the so-called “wisdom” illustrated in verse 14? Earthly wisdom does not come from heaven. It is rather—earthly, natural, demonic.

14. What are the products of the world’s wisdom (verse 16)? Why are those qualities antithetical to godly wisdom? See Isaiah 9:16 (in speaking about false teachers); 1 Corinthians 14:33; Galatians 5:19-21.

Jealousy, selfish ambition, disorder, every evil thing.

16 For those who guide this people are leading them astray; And those who are guided by them are brought to confusion. EARTHLY WISDOM OR FALSE TEACHING LEADS TO CONFUSION, NOT CLARITY OR PEACE. 33 for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. GOD’S CHARACTER IS ANTITHETICAL TO CONFUSION. HE BRINGS ORDER.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. THE DEEDS OF THE FLESH, NOT THE SPIRIT, BRING ALL KINDS OF OUTBURSTS AND SIN.

15. Say you were a young believer desiring to line up every area of your life in obedience to the Word of God, but you weren’t sure how to do this, how could you start if you only used verses 14-16 as your basis for examining your heart, your words, your choices, your

philosophies, your practical application? How would those verses give you wisdom about the true state of your life and what to do about it?

If I see bitterness, jealousy, selfishness and selfish ambition (as opposed to Godly zeal) in my life, then I need to confess that as sin. The truth is opposite of that. It's a quick test to see if I am walking in the light. If I find more chaos in my life over time, not less, I need to seriously examine what I am thinking, believing, retaining when it comes to living rightly before the Lord. Those qualities are immensely valuable in assessing the trends of the day.

“We are creatures of a great master Designer, and His ordering of our lives is sure and certain, yet many people live without any visible order or peace or serenity. The way we live ought to manifest the truth of what we believe. A messy life speaks of a messy—an incoherent—faith.” Elisabeth Elliot<sup>2</sup>

[[[[[DISCUSS this quote in light of some of the current trends today, where a “messy” life is equated with what is “real” and also with living by “grace.” What are the dangers inherent in that thought? Is E. E. condemning “authentic” Christianity?]]]]]

16. Verse 17 contains a wonderful description of God’s wisdom. James indicates that even the *listing order* of these qualities is significant for us. What is the very first element found in all godly wisdom? John reveals why this quality would show up in godly wisdom in 1 John 3:3. What do you learn?

The first quality of God’s wisdom is purity.

God Himself is pure. It is His nature, so it’s no wonder that His wisdom would also begin with purity. What an incredible way to test if something comes from Him or not! 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

17. Following on heels of purity, we learn that God’s wisdom is *peaceable*. What do we learn about godly, *peaceable* wisdom from Proverbs 3:17; Hebrews 12:11; James 3:18?

17 Her ways are pleasant ways And all her paths are peace. ALL WISDOM’S PATHS ARE PEACE-FULL, PEACE-FILLED, PEACE-MAKING.

11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS PEACEFUL. DISCIPLINE, THE TRAINING OF THE LORD, YIELDS PEACE.

18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. WISDOM SHOWS UP IN PEACE MAKING AND SPREADS PEACE.

- a. If you’re eager for a little more study, read Psalm 34:11-14 and consider how the fear of the Lord leads you to peaceable wisdom.

11 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12 Who is the man who desires life And loves length of days that he may see good? 13 Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit. 14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.

The fear of the Lord seeks peace and pursues it along with all over kinds of good and godly responses.

<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth Elliot, *Let Me Be a Woman* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1976), 34.

“God’s wisdom leads to peace. It is a peace based on holiness, not on compromise. God never has “peace at any price.” The peace of the church is not more important than the purity of the church. If the church is pure, devoted to God, then there will be peace.”<sup>3</sup>

Warren Wiersbe

[[[that is one great quote!]]] good for discussion as well because this is something our churches don’t seem to understand anymore.

18. Don’t you just love that godly wisdom is *gentle*? Why would that be essential for every believer to understand and seek from the Lord? See Matthew 11:29; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 5:22-23.

29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Jesus Himself is gentle and He wants us to learn this quality from Him. Paul urged his followers to imitate his example of meekness as well. Gentleness is also the fruit of having the Holy Spirit in your life.

19. Define our next quality of wisdom—*reasonable* [Strong’s #2138 (NIV *submissive*; NKJV *willing to yield*; ESV *open to reason*)]. What would that look like lived out in our lives? See 1 Samuel 25:17 and 2 Kings 5:13 for how *not* to act; then see Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3; 1 Peter 5:5.

How not to act: 17 “Now therefore, know and consider what you should do, for evil is plotted against our master and against all his household; and he is such a worthless man that no one can speak to him.” WORTHLESS IS ALSO TRANSLATED UNREASONABLE. HE WAS SO UNREASONABLE THAT NO ONE COULD EVEN TALK TO HIM.

13 Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, “My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean’?” STUBBORNNESS IS NOT REASONABLE.

Being reasonable does mean: 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

“The Lord is easy to be entreated; for he is slow unto wrath, but ready to show mercy. S. James saith that the wisdom which is from above is “gentle, peaceable, easy to be entreated.” If his grace in his children make them gentle and easy to be entreated, what shall we think of himself? Since he will have such pity in us poor creatures, that seventy

<sup>3</sup>Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 364.



times seven times in the day he will have us to forgive the offences of our brethren; Oh, what pity and compassion abound in himself! Thus we see our comfort is increased; that as his mercies are great, so are they tender; easily obtained, where they are earnestly craved.”<sup>4</sup> William Cowper

20. Wisdom shows up in really tangible ways too—by being *full of mercy and good fruit*. Why are those qualities a perfect component in godly wisdom? See Luke 6:36; Titus 2:14.

36 “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

God, our Father who we want to be like, is merciful. One of the qualities Jesus desires in His brethren is that we be zealous for good deeds.

21. The last two qualities of godly wisdom listed here link arms in life application. They can be translated as *impartial* or *unwavering* and *sincere* or *without hypocrisy*. Why is it necessary to remind the people James is writing to that godly wisdom doesn’t show partiality and is sincere in its efforts to love others?

Because they have been struggling with these qualities all along. It’s so great to remind them that the wisdom that God gives builds a love that is sincere and impartial to all, rather than a so-called love like the world gives.

22. What does the last verse in Chapter 3 remind us about the results of living out God’s wisdom? How is that a fitting epitaph to the chapter? And how does it provide a bridge into James’ opening comments in Chapter 4 verse 1?

Wisdom produces peace. It produces peace in relationships because it’s not seeking its own desires. It is so perfect because it really showcases how a transformed life and heart will live.

It bridges chapter 3 and moves into chapter 4 by showing the antithesis—godly wisdom results in harmony, peace while choosing our own desires results in conflict and quarrels.

23. This practical chapter closes with concrete instruction about what our lives should look like. And James leaves no doubt as to what that looks like. How were you encouraged or challenged by this study of James 3:13-18? What are some specific ways you can assess whether you are applying godly wisdom or worldly wisdom to how you live each day?

I just love the practical nature of this section. It is such a blessing to have it so I can look at my life and see what is being produced. Assessment comes in looking at the fallout or the results of my “wisdom.”

24. The Christian life isn’t static. Just because we show wisdom and understanding at one point, doesn’t mean it’s guaranteed that we will show that same godly wisdom at another point. What checkpoints and guides have you gained from Chapter 3 that will help you apply wisdom each and every day of your life?

<sup>4</sup>William Cowper, quoted by C. H. Spurgeon, [\*The Treasury of David: Psalms 111-119\*](#), vol. 5 (London; Edinburgh; New York: Marshall Brothers, n.d.), 419–420.

The reminder to always check my tongue and to be on guard against using it for my own desires. To accept the loving challenge from James to look at the “wisdom” that might be showing up in my life.

“True wisdom, like real faith, is a vital, practical quality that has as much (or more) to do with the way we live as with what we think or say.”<sup>5</sup> Douglas Moo

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<sup>5</sup>Douglas J. Moo, [\*James: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#), vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 136.

## James Lesson #13, Chapter 4 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 4 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 4. Now, *summarize* the contents of Chapter 4. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4<sup>th</sup> grader the contents of the chapter.

- a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-10).

James addresses quarrels and conflicts in the church that stem from selfishness and worldliness. He reminds them that God desires their whole hearts and the way to turn from this sinfulness is to humble themselves before the Lord.

- b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 11-12).

James urges them not to speak against each other because the Lord is listening. They will experience consequences for this.

- c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 13-17).

James urges them not to boast about their own plans but to submit them to the Lord, so that they won't sin in pride of their own plans.

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.

James tackles 3 areas of selfishness and pride in their lives, explains why it's sin, and provides practical steps to turn away from that sin.

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.

Verse 17 could definitely fit the theme: 17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Verse 6 or verses 5-6 might be a good fit as well: 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”? 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

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.

Submit to God  
Humble Yourselves  
Do the Right Thing

5. Words that refer to *fighting* or *violence* occur frequently in verses 1-4. List what you find along with the verse references.

Verse 1—quarrels, conflicts, wage war  
Verse 2—commit murder, you fight and quarrel  
Verse 4—hostility toward God, enemy of God

6. James addresses his readers in various ways. List the terms he uses along with the verse reference.

You adulteresses—verse 4  
You sinners; you double-minded—verse 8  
Brethren—verse 11

7. Make a list of what you learn about *adulteresses* from verses 1-5.

Adulteresses are friends with the world (verse 4). In fact, their allegiance is stronger to the world than it is to the Lord. Adulteresses are actually hostile toward God in their love for the world. Adulteresses seek their own pleasure and ask selfish things of the Lord (verse 3). Those who love the world are more concerned about getting what they want, rather than serving their brethren or pleasing the Lord (verses 1-2). God jealously desires our spirit, since we are betrothed to Him, so our adultery is hurtful and grievous to Him (verse 5).

8. Now make a list of any *commands* that are given in this chapter. Be sure to cite where you found them.

Verse 7—submit to God. Verse 7—resist the devil.  
Verse 8—draw near to God. Verse 8—cleanse your hands. Verse 8—purify your heart.  
Verse 9—be miserable, mourn, and weep. Verse 9—let your laughter be turned into mourning. Verse 9—let your joy be turned into gloom.  
Verse 10—humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord.  
Verse 11—do not speak against one another.

Verse 15—you ought to say, “If the Lord wills”

9. Words like *speak* or *say* are used frequently. Record what you find along with the verse references.

Verse 5—do you think the Scriptures speak to no purpose?

Verse 6—He gives a greater grace, therefore it says, “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Verse 11—do not speak against one another.

Verse 11—he who speaks against a brother, judges his brother, and speaks against the law.

Verse 13—come now, you who say, “tomorrow...”

Verse 15—instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills...”

10. List any references to *time* from this chapter. Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Verse 13, today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and make a profit

Verse 13, we'll spend a year there and engage in business

Verse 14, you don't know what your life will be like a year from now

Verse 14, you are a vapor

Verse 15, if the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that

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.

I think verses 11-12 are really fascinating. It's really a big deal to God about not speaking ill of one another. Verse 5 is also a good reminder that God jealously desires our spirit. He doesn't want us distracted by other loves.

## James Chapter 4

1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?

2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?

6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

**13** Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.”

14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

15 Instead, you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”

16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

## James

### Lesson #14, Chapter 4:1-10

Read Chapter 4 before beginning this lesson. And as you do so, ask the Lord for His help in studying and applying His precious Word in your life.

1. What line of thought does James pick up in Chapter 4 verse 1? Explain how it connects with the end of Chapter 3.

At the end of chapter 3 after explaining the godly attributes of wisdom—and that God’s wisdom gives peace, promotes peace, and looks for peace, James then explains that their quarrels and conflicts are a direct result of not applying godly wisdom and seeking their own desire.

2. What *is* the *source* of the quarrels and conflicts among us according to verse 1? The sources are their pleasures which wage war against the spirit within them.

3. Both the NASB and NKJV translate the end of verse 1 with the word *members*, while both the ESV and NIV chose *within you*. Why would our pleasures or desires wage war *within us*? See Romans 7:21-25; Galatians 5:16-17; Colossians 3:5-7; James 3:14-18; 1 Peter 1:14; 2:11.

21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. **THOUGH WE ARE REDEEMED, WE STILL POSSESS A SIN NATURE. SIN IS VANQUISHED, BUT CAN STILL DO BATTLE. ONLY NOT THAT WE ARE REDEEMED CAN WE ACTUALLY WIN AGAINST THE FLESH.**

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. **LIVING BY THE SPIRIT, WALKING BY THE SPIRIT, SUBMITTING MYSELF TO THE SPIRIT MEANS I CANNOT SUBMIT TO THE FLESH FOR THE FLESH IS IN OPPOSITION TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD.**

5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. **THE FLESHLY DEEDS ARE ANTITHETICAL TO OUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST.**

14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. 18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. **THE FLESH AND ITS DESIRES COME FROM THIS EARTH, WHILE THE DEEDS OF THE SPIRIT POSSESS GODLY WISDOM.**

14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, **THEY WIN THE BATTLE BECAUSE WE ARE IGNORANT OF THEIR POWER AND PURPOSE.**



11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. OUR LUSTS ARE ALWAYS WAGING WAR AGAINST THE SPIRIT.

4. [In verse 2] James gives two examples of what the war raging within us might look like. What two examples does he cite?

You lust and don't have so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel.

5. What solution does James propose at the end of verse 2?

You don't have because you don't ask. He suggests this as the answer for their lusting for something to the point that they commit murder. He suggests, "Why not ask God for it?" He suggests this as an answer for their envy to the point that they fight and quarrel. He suggests, "Why not ask God to supply what you desire?"

At this point at the end of verse 2 James is not addressing their wrong attitudes or the ungodly grasping for something that will not please the Lord. Right now, he's trying to see, why not just ask the Lord for it instead of giving way to and resorting in these wicked and extreme responses.

6. James often appears to "hear" a rebuttal from those he's instructing. The white space in between verses 2 and 3 is one such spot where it seems that James anticipated a response to his "You don't have because you haven't asked" comment in verse 2. What possible objection was he anticipating? You can figure that out by looking at verse 3.

James appears to think they would have responded with, "But I did ask! I did ask the Lord, but He didn't give it to me!"

7. There is a presupposition floating around here that isn't directly addressed, so let's take the time to bring it to the forefront. Look up the following verses and then explain how they undergird James' comments in verse 2-3. See Psalm 66:18-19; Isaiah 59:1-2; Matthew 6:31-32; Luke 11:9-13; 1 John 5:14-15.

18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear; 19 But certainly God has heard; He has given heed to the voice of my prayer. SIN STOPS ANSWERS TO OUR PRAYERS. SIN MAKES IT SO WE DON'T RECEIVE WHAT WE'VE ASKED FROM THE LORD.

1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. 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. OUR SINS HAVE MADE A SEPARATIONS BETWEEN US AND GOD. IT'S NO WONDER THEN THAT WE DON'T EXPERIENCE GREATER ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

31 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' 32 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. THE LORD KNOWS WHAT WE NEED. HE DELIGHTS TO ANSWER SO IF HE DOESN'T, THEN WE NEED TO SEARCH TO SEE IF WE ARE ASKING WITH WRONG MOTIVES. WE ALSO NEED TO BE CONTENT TO LET GOD ANSWER IN HIS PERFECT TIME AND HIS PERFECT WAY.

9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. 11 "Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? 12 "Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? 13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

GOD ANSWERS THE PRAYERS OF HIS CHILDREN, BUT HE WON'T GIVE US THINGS THAT ARE BAD FOR US.

14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. IT IS GOD'S NATURE TO ANSWER THE PRAYERS OF HIS CHILDREN. BUT HE WILL NOT ANSWER IF OUR PRAYERS ARE NOT IN LINE WITH HIS WILL.

The presupposition is that we don't receive the things we ask from the Lord because we ask with wrong motives. We ask with sinful hearts. We ask for things that won't give God glory, not considering or submitting ourselves to His will for us. The presupposition is also that if we did ask in accordance with God's will, we would receive all that we ask for (though experience teaches us it may not be exactly as we thought it would be or in the time or way we expected).

8. There are other reasons for unanswered prayer than what we've discovered here, yet for now, please summarize what you've learned from verses 2-3 about prayer.

If we don't receive the things we've asked of the Lord it's because we have sin in our lives or have asked with sinful motives. We know God only gives good gifts so if we are not receiving what we've asked of Him, it could be because it wouldn't be good for us.

I find this so encouraging! It really helps me in continuing in prayer for things or to wait when I know I am praying according to the Lord's will. It helps to purify our prayers!

9. We can't leave verses 1-3 without taking some time to examine the desires of our hearts. I doubt you've committed murder, but most likely there have been times when you've been angry or envious or selfish. According to verses 1-3, if we want God to hear and answer our prayers what do we need to recognize?

That we are asking with wrong motives. I ask because I want something for my own pleasures instead of desiring to honor the Lord.

a. Where do we go from there? See Psalm 32:5; 1 John 1:9-10.

5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

b. What comfort do we find in these Scriptures? See Psalm 130:1-4; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 4:14-16.

1 Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD. 2 Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive To the voice of my supplications. 3 If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.

13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Lord, you are faithful, accessible, forgiving, merciful, always doing good to Your children. How kind You are!

10. What were James' hearers doing in verse 4 that prompted him to call them *adulteresses*? They were lusting for the things of the world or worldly attainments which is why James rebukes them for how they were praying in the earlier verses. They truly were playing the field and not seeking the Lord. They had given their hearts to another lover.

11. From verses 1-4, explain why being a friend of the world would cause us to commit spiritual adultery against God.

The world and all that is in it is under the dominion of Satan and men who love him. Drawing near to the world and appropriating its ways cannot help but make us unfaithful to the Lord. When our hearts become enamored with the world they turn away from the Lord. If we flirt with other men and become enamored with them, we're not being faithful to honor and love our husbands.

12. What does friendship with the world look like? See Matthew 6:24; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; James 1:27; 5:5; 1 John 2:15-17.

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

14 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

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.

5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Friendship with the world means I am trying to serve two masters. Money is a worldly master by the way. Friendship with the world means living in darkness. We are to be separate from the world. We're definitely not to be stained by the world's sin, taint, darkness. We are to be distinct. Living luxuriously and in wanton pleasure is not pleasing to the Lord and points to a love for the world. We're commanded not to love the world or the things of the world. If we

do love the world, it's an indicator that we're not really saved in the first place. The world is passing away, but the one who does God's will lives forever.

13. What do you learn about God's heart for His children from verse 5? Why would friendship with the world jeopardize that relationship?

God is jealous for our love. He gave us His spirit and desires that we would be faithful to Him. He pledged Himself to us (the Holy Spirit shows that) and desires us to respond in like faithfulness.

14. Is there ever a time when God is *not* jealous for our affections? See also Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:23-24; and consider 2 Corinthians 11:2 that speaks of a similar jealousy. How does that knowledge, that the Lord longs for you to love Him with a whole heart, motivate and encourage you to spend time with Him each day?

14 —for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—

23 “So watch yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the LORD your God has commanded you.

24 “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

If we are His, He is jealous for our love for He is a faithful lover. He always desires us to love Him back. Also important to note, that His faithfulness is what leads to that attribute of loving jealousy for our affections.

He is so faithful. He has done so much. It does make me want to draw near to Him.

“Our Lord hunts for our love.” Samuel Rutherford<sup>1</sup>

15. Be sure to look up Proverbs 3:34 which James quotes in verse 6. Now consider and explain how that Old Testament quote supports James' exhortation to his hearers.

34 Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted.

God's giving grace to the humble is part of His commitment to those who call Him father. He will always do what is good to His children. The greater grace given to us by God compensates for turning away from the world and its pleasures. He is the greater grace and He gives a greater grace to His children in loving Him above all else.

“My counsel is that ye come out and leave the multitude, and let Christ have your company. Let them take clay and this present world who love it: Christ is a more worthy and noble portion. Blessed are those who get Him.” ~ Samuel Rutherford

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Rutherford, *The Loveliness of Christ* (Edinburgh, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1909, reprinted 2008), 26.

16. Verses 7-10 provide us with the steps we need for becoming the *humble who receive God's gracious help*. What's the first step to humbling our hearts from verse 7? What does that look like in our lives? See Psalm 131; Proverbs 3:5-8; Isaiah 45:9; Daniel 4:34-37. The first step to humbling our hearts is submitting to God.

A Song of Ascents, of David. 1 O Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too difficult for me. 2 Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned child rests against his mother, My soul is like a weaned child within me. 3 O Israel, hope in the Lord From this time forth and forever. KEEP HEART HUMBLE. NOT SEEKING OUT THINGS BEYOND MY STATION OR DESIRING MORE THAN GOD HAS GIVEN FOR ME TO DO AT THIS TIME. TO SEE MYSELF AS A CHILD WHO IS DEPENDENT UPON ITS MOTHER, TRAINED AND AT REST IN HEART.

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones. LEANING, ACKNOWLEDGING, NOT SEEKING MY OWN WISDOM—ONLY GOD'S.

9 "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker— An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making say, 'He has no hands'? RECOGNIZE I AM CLAY IN THE HANDS OF THE POTTER.

34 "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' 36 "At that time my reason returned to me. And my majesty and splendor were restored to me for the glory of my kingdom, and my counselors and my nobles began seeking me out; so I was reestablished in my sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me. 37 "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride." HE IS MIGHTY AND IS ABLE TO HUMBLE THOSE WHO WALK IN PRIDE. HE ALWAYS GETS EVERYONE TO THE PLACE HE DESIRES.

17. What's the second step to humbling our hearts according to verse 7? What else do we learn about this process? See Matthew 4:3-11; Ephesians 6:10-17; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 5:18. Resist the devil. When we resist him, he will flee.

3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" 5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning You'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" 11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him. THE WORD OF GOD HELPS US BATTLE SATAN—AND WIN. THE WORD OF GOD IS ENOUGH.

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **BE STRONG, STAND FIRM AGAINST SATAN'S SCHEMES. GIRD SELF WITH THE WORD.**

8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. **BE FIRM IN THE FAITH. RESIST SATAN. BELIEVERS CAN RESIST SATAN WITH THEIR FAITH AND THE WORD.**

18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. **THE EVIL ONE IS SUBJECT TO THE LORD.**

Pilgrim, burdened with thy sin,  
Come the way to Zion's gate;  
There, till mercy speaks within,  
Knock, and weep, and watch, and wait.  
Knock—He knows the sinner's cry;  
Weep—He loves the mourner's tears;  
Watch—for saving grace is nigh;  
Wait—till heavenly grace appears.<sup>2</sup>

18. What promise is given at the beginning of verse 8 that encourages and aids as we engage in this heart-work of humbling ourselves before the Lord?

When we draw near to God, He draws near to us.

19. As we draw near to God, what must we make sure we do according to the second half of verse 8? How does that fly in the face of the current “just come as you are” Christian climate that never seeks to turn sinners from their sin?

Repent of our sins. Take steps toward holiness in ridding ourselves of anything sinful or leading to sin.

The current climate is just wrong! God takes us as we are, but that means we come seeking Him, not seeking our own agenda. He is the goal, not our own pleasures.

<sup>2</sup>J. C. Ryle, *Hymns for the Church on Earth* (London: William Hunt and Company, 1876), 12.

20. Verse 9 explains part of the process of repentance in humbling our hearts before the Lord. What are we to do? What does being miserable, mourning, and weeping in repentance reveal to the Lord? See also 2 Corinthians 7:9-10.

Be miserable, mourn, and weep, which reveals to the Lord the sincerity of our hearts in seeking Him. That we are willing to part with our sin for His sake. That we desire to walk in holiness because of all that He has done for us. And that desire only comes as a result of the work of His spirit.

9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Repentance is more than just being sorry for our sin. Repentance is a turning away from sin and being willing to walk away from it. Repentance leads to salvation. Just being sorry without changing, without repentance is false and will not result in true salvation.

21. As we humble our hearts before the Lord, what assurance do we have from verse 10? What other encouragements do we gain from the following Scriptures? See Psalm 10:17; Isaiah 57:15; 1 Peter 5:5-6.

When we humble ourselves before Him, He will exalt us. What?! Crazy!

17 O Lord, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear  
15 For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, And also with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite.

5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

*"A garrison is not free from danger while it hath an enemy lodged within."*

You may bolt all your doors, and fasten all your windows, but if the thieves have placed even a little child within doors, who can draw the bolts for them, the house is still unprotected. All the sea outside a ship cannot do it damage till the water enters within and fills the hold. Hence, it is clear, our greatest danger is from within. All the devils in hell and tempters on earth could do us no injury if there were no corruption in our nature. Alas, our heart is our greatest enemy; this is the little home-born thief.<sup>3</sup>

"Holy Lord, I have sinned times without number, and been guilty of pride and unbelief, of failure to find Your mind in Your Word, of neglect to seek You in my daily life. My transgressions and short-comings present me with a list of accusations, but I bless You that they will not stand against me, for all have been laid on Christ.

<sup>3</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [Daily Help](#) (Baltimore: R. H. Woodward & Company, 1892), 165.

Go on to subdue my corruptions and grant me grace to live above them. Let not the passions of the flesh nor lustings of the mind bring my spirit into subjection, but rule over me in liberty and power.

I thank You that many of my prayers have been refused. I have asked amiss and do not have, I have prayed from lusts and been rejected, I have longed for Egypt and been given a wilderness.

Go on with Your patient work, answering 'no' to my wrongful prayers, and fitting me to accept it. Purge me from every false desire, every base aspiration, everything contrary to Your rule.

I thank You for Your wisdom and Your love, for all the acts of discipline to which I am subject, for sometimes putting me into the furnace to refine my gold and remove my dross.

No trial is so hard to bear as a sense of sin. If You would give me choice to live in pleasure and keep my sins, or to have them burnt away with trial, give me sanctified affliction.

Deliver me from every evil habit, every accretion of former sins, everything that dims the brightness of Your grace in me, everything that prevents me taking delight in You. Then I shall bless You, God of Jeshurun, for helping me to be upright.”  
Valley of Vision, "Confession and Petition"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Arthur Bennett, editor, *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions* (Edinburgh, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975, reprinted 1999), 77.



## James

### Lesson #15, Chapter 4:11-17

Please read all of Chapter 4 before beginning this lesson. And as you do so, ask the Lord for His help in studying and applying this life-transforming Word to your life.

1. As we've discovered in previous lessons, at times James appears to make rather large subject leaps only to observe that the "leaps" really do follow with all he's been saying. Our lesson today begins in that same way. How does the command in verse 11 fall in line with verses 1-10?

James has been addressing their pride issues which has led to lusting for things they cannot have, quarrels, conflicts, friendship with the world—and though he shows how to deal with the ungodliness in our hearts in verses 5-10, James now picks up the thread of their discontent and addresses another area of conflict—that of speaking against their brothers.

2. What command is given in verse 11? What are some specific ways we put this sin into practice?

The command: don't speak against one another. Period. Stop. That's it. Not even acceptable. Ahem.

We put this into practice when we're grumbling about something we don't like that they're doing. When we have a beef with them about something (which definitely fits the context); when they stand in our way or oppose us from doing what we want or getting what we want. Sometimes we just speak against others because our sinful nature craves just being mean, saying ugly things, and putting others in a bad light.

3. To whom is the command addressed? Why is this important to remember?  
To "brethren." Oy!

It's important to remember because it shows that even unbelievers will commit this sin. And that it's not okay with God that we engage in it.

4. It's easy to see the Scriptures have much to say on this subject, so let's start by summarizing what you learn about engaging in this sin from the following verses. See Exodus 23:1; Psalm 50:20; 101:5; Proverbs 10:18; Romans 1:30; Ephesians 4:31; 1 Timothy 3:11; James 5:9; 1 Peter 2:1.

1 "You shall not bear a false report; do not join your hand with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.

20 "You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother's son.

5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.

18 He who conceals hatred has lying lips, And he who spreads slander is a fool.

30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,

We're not to lie or create malicious stories about others. When we speak against others, especially our brothers in Christ, we're slandering our own family. Even secret slander is offensive to the Lord (interesting to note that a haughty and arrogant spirit accompanies slander). Hatred is revealed by the lies we spread. And it's actually foolish to spread slander. Slander is an attribute of the unsaved and is something we should put far away from us. Godly women are not to be characterized by malicious gossip. We're not even to complain against each other for God sees and judges. We're commanded to put that away from our hearts.

5. Let's get back to looking at the rest of James' comments. What argument in verses 11 and 12 does James present for speaking well of each other?

He says we become a judge of the law of God by deciding that we know better than God's good plan for us in complaining against others. Becoming a doer and judge of that very same law is a heavy thing. Only God can be/should be the judge of the law, yet we insert ourselves into His rightful place all the time! "But who are you to judge your neighbor!"

6. How does James tie in previous instruction with what he says here in verses 11 and 12? See James 1:22-23; 2:8-12; 3:10.

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;

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.

10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

7. What do you learn in verses 11 and 12 that show how serious this sin is to God? Also explain *why* it's offensive to Him.

It's offensive because when we speak out against someone else, we become their judge. We move ourselves into God's place when we do this. We are not to take His position as He is the only One who has the right to be in this position.

8. Matthew Henry eloquently reminds us, "Our lips must be guided by the law of kindness, as well as truth and justice. This, which Solomon makes a necessary part of the character of his virtuous woman, *that she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness* (Prov. 31:26), must needs be a part of the character of every true Christian."<sup>1</sup> How

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<sup>1</sup>Matthew Henry, [\*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume\*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2417.

would a firm commitment to not to speak evil of anyone change our interactions with each other?

Sometimes it would mean super short conversations! Sometimes it would mean awkward, pregnant pauses in the conversation. Sometimes it would mean just switching subjects. But in every instance, it would be pleasing to the Lord.

a. How should we respond if someone reminds us not to defame someone?

Thank them! Be humble. Be chastened. Be glad we were pulled back from sinning.

b. What are some ways we can lovingly help someone else not to speak badly of someone else?

Stop them. Change the subject. Quote this verse. Lovingly pull them aside and remind them of these truths. Talk to them later. Pray with them and for them for that person.

“This is a much-needed warning. People are slow to realize that there are few sins which the Bible so unsparingly condemns as the sin of irresponsible and malicious gossip. There are few activities in which the average person finds more delight than this; to tell and to listen to the slanderous story—especially about some famous person—is for most people a fascinating activity. We do well to remember what God thinks of it.” William Barclay<sup>2</sup>

“*Speak not evil one of another*, because you are brethren. The compellation, as used by the apostle here, carries an argument along with it. Since Christians are brethren, they should not defile nor defame one another. It is required of us that we be tender of the good name of our brethren; where we cannot speak well, we had better say nothing than speak evil; we must not take pleasure in making known the faults of others, divulging things that are secret, merely to expose them, nor in making more of their known faults than really they deserve, and, least of all, in making false stories, and spreading things concerning them of which they are altogether innocent.” Matthew Henry<sup>3</sup>

9. What situation does James address in verse 13?

Those who make plans but don't wait on the Lord for it.

10. We know God doesn't condemn planning or working hard (see Proverbs 20:18; 31:10-21; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12), so what attitudes and motivations is James going after in verse 14? See also Proverbs 27:1; Isaiah 56:12; Luke 12:17-21.

18 Prepare plans by consultation, And make war by wise guidance.

10 An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil All the days of her life. 13 She looks for wool

<sup>2</sup>William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated., The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 128–129.

<sup>3</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2417.

and flax And works with her hands in delight. 14 She is like merchant ships; She brings her food from afar. 15 She rises also while it is still night And gives food to her household And portions to her maidens. 16 She considers a field and buys it; From her earnings she plants a vineyard. 17 She girds herself with strength And makes her arms strong. 18 She senses that her gain is good; Her lamp does not go out at night. 19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hands grasp the spindle. 20 She extends her hand to the poor, And she stretches out her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household, For all her household are clothed with scarlet. 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

*James is going after the pride and boastful spirit of not leaning on the Lord, of planning our ways without seeking Him and His wisdom first. We need to remind ourselves that God is the author of our days.*

1 Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.

12 “Come,” they say, “let us get wine, and let us drink heavily of strong drink; And tomorrow will be like today, only more so.”

17 “And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 ‘And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” ’ 20 “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ 21 “So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

11. What attitudes does God desire to see His children possess when it comes to living out their lives? Consider our text, along with Psalm 39:4-5; 90:10, 12, 14-17; Matthew 6:34; Luke 12:22-34.

4 “LORD, make me to know my end And what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am. 5 “Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Selah.

10 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away. 12 So teach us to number our days, That we may present to You a heart of wisdom.

14 O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, That we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. 15 Make us glad according to the days You have afflicted us, And the years we have seen evil. 16 Let Your work appear to Your servants And Your majesty to their children. 17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; And confirm for us the work of our hands; Yes, confirm the work of our hands.

34 “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. 22 And He said to His disciples, “For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. 23 “For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 “Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds! 25 “And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life’s span? 26 “If then you cannot do even a very little thing, why do you worry about other matters? 27 “Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; but I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 28 “But if God so clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the

furnace, how much more will He clothe you? You men of little faith! 29 “And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 “For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 “But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. 33 “Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

God desires that we remember life is short and uncertain. God desires that we live each day for Him. God desires that we satisfy our hearts in Him and not in seeking our own desire. God desires that we trust Him and not worry, that we seek Him and His kingdom first. That we make Him our highest treasure.

12. According to verse 15, what is the antidote to the thinking found in verses 13-14?  
We need to remember that things happen only as the Lord wills it to happen.

13. Describe what our daily lives look like when we live like verse 15.  
We don't rush or force things. If something changes, then it's still good because the Lord is in control. There is submission to the Lord. A sweetness of spirit that lets God be God.

- a. What are our *thoughts* or *motivations* like when we live the *James 4:15* way? See also Proverbs 3:5-8; 19:21; Matthew 6:9-10, 33; John 3:30; Romans 1:10; Hebrews 6:3.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.

21 Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand.

9 “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

30 “He must increase, but I must decrease.

10 always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you.

3 And this we will do, if God permits.

Trust. Humility. Leaning. Leaning. Leaning on the Lord. God's ways last, while ours come and go. Desiring to see God first. Him lifted up. Him put on display. Seek Him first. Him first, me last. Even in my prayer, seeking God's will and direction. Checking myself to see what God may want first.

- b. What word or phrase would you use to describe this kind of life?

Submission. Humility. A life completely given over to putting God first.

- c. How much would you say that word or phrase characterized you this week?

Oh my. Well, thankfully for me, this week was the kind of week that kept me near the Lord and seeking His will. But there's still more that needs to be given over to Him. May the Lord grant me grace to live more for Him, more, more, more!

“The true Christian way is not to be terrorized into fear and paralyzed into inaction by the uncertainty of the future, but to commit the future and all our plans into the hands of God, always remembering that these plans may not be within God’s purpose.” William Barclay<sup>4</sup>

14. How does God view our independence according to verse 16?

It is boasting and arrogant and evil in God’s sight. Wow. Talk about calling sin what it is.

15. List the Scripture verses or passages *you* go to that encourage and remind you *to live dependently upon the Lord*. Be sure to explain why that particular passage strengthens your heart.

Proverbs 3:5-8 is definitely my go to. It is a tangible step by step in how to lean on the Lord.

Matthew 6:25-34 in seeking first His kingdom.

Psalms 27—all of it.

Job 42:2: 2 “I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

Proverbs 16:1 The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.

16. Explain how if we don’t live the James 4:15 way, it will result in the sins of verse 16.

We’ll persist in our own plans. We’ll want God to bend to our will. He will play second fiddle to our wonderfulness.

Oh my... all too easy to fall into this trap. The Lord is so kind to forgive us. He is certainly more than patient!

17. What else do we learn about boasting from the following verses? See Isaiah 10:15; 47:7-8, 10; Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 Corinthians 4:6-7; 13:4; 1 John 2:16.

15 Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it?

That would be like a club wielding those who lift it, Or like a rod lifting him who is not wood. IT’S SILLY TO THINK WE WOULD BOAST IN LIGHT OF WHO GOD IS AND ALL HE’S DONE.

7 “Yet you said, ‘I will be a queen forever.’ These things you did not consider Nor remember the outcome of them. 8

“Now, then, hear this, you sensual one, Who dwells securely, Who says in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me. I will not sit as a widow, Nor know loss of children.’ IT’S FOOLISH TO THINK WE STAND SECURE OR THAT THINGS WILL ALWAYS STAY THE SAME.

10 “You felt secure in your wickedness and said, ‘No one sees me,’ Your wisdom and your knowledge, they have deluded you; For you have said in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me.’ GOD SEES OUR SIN. THERE IS NO SECURITY IN CONTINUING TO SIN.

23 Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the LORD. GOD DESIRES THAT WE “BOAST” IN HIM AND NOT REST IN OUR OWN WISDOM, RICHES, MIGHT.

6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. 7 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you

<sup>4</sup>William Barclay, *The Letters of James and Peter*, 3rd ed. fully rev. and updated., The New Daily Study Bible (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 132.

boast as if you had not received it? WE BOAST LIKE WE DID SOMETHING, WHEN THE REALITY IS EVERYTHING WE HAVE IS FROM THE LORD.

4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, LOVE JUST DOES NOT BRAG.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. THE WORLD BOASTS. IT'S NOT FROM THE FATHER.

NO WONDER GOD COMMANDS US NOT TO BOAST!

18. Douglas Moo, in his commentary on James writes, “Phillips<sup>5</sup> perfectly captures the resultant meaning, ‘you get a certain pride in yourself in planning your future with such confidence’. It is this ‘pride of life’, this arrogant sense of self-sufficiency and self-importance, that John deplores as characteristic of the world (1 John 2:16; see also Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:4). People not only leave God out of account in planning their lives; it is the essence of sin that they brag about it as well—‘I’ takes centre stage in place of God. This kind of boasting is *evil*, then, not because of the arrogant manner in which it is done; it is evil because the objects of the boasting are instances of arrogant disregard for God.”<sup>6</sup> Douglas Moo reveals how subtly our sins of independence and self-sufficiency can lead us to think they aren’t really being noticed. What are some specific ways you can train your heart to live more dependently upon the Lord, knowing He does see them [our sins]?

To check my heart, to see if there be any hurtful way in me (Psalm 139:24), to not lean on my own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-8). To be in the Word daily for it is the mirror to show me my heart (James 1:23-24).

19. How does James wrap up his counseling session that has focused on practical ways to live dependently upon the Lord? See verse 17.

He reminds us that if we know the right thing to do and we don’t do it, we are sinning. Period. End of story. No wiggle room here.

But then when the gracious Spirit of God convicts us and we turn away from our sin, God is faithful and perfect in His judgment in forgiving us and cleansing us from our sin (1 John 1:9).

20. Explain how the seeds of self-sufficiency and independence wend their way through verses 11-17.

Independence and self-sufficiency in thinking we know the hearts of our brothers and so move into the place of judge, which is God’s role solely. We exhibit self-sufficiency and independence when purpose and plan without seeking the Lord or laying our plans before Him to consecrate and bless, knowing He may have a different plan for us. Independence and self-sufficiency have pride at their core, which makes those qualities evil and abhorrent to the Lord.

21. What choice does the straightforward counsel from verse 17 force us to make?

<sup>5</sup>J. B. Phillips translator of *The New Testament in Modern English*, 1958.

<sup>6</sup>Douglas J. Moo, *James: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 16, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 162.

I am forced to decide whether I'm going to do what's right or continue to sin. Very straightforward.

22. What does our "choice," either of dependence or self-sufficiency, proclaim to the Lord?

Review what we've seen in verses 11-17.

It reveals our true heart to Him. It reveals whether we want to submit to Him in all things. It reveals how much we long to "have a part" in things instead of letting Him be all.



## James Lesson #16, Chapter 5 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, yet 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 5 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 5. Now, *summarize* the contents of Chapter 5. This is not the time to be super detailed; instead, think of trying to tell a 4<sup>th</sup> grader the contents of the chapter.
  - a. Summarize paragraph 1 (verses 1-6).  
James addresses the rich specifically in their treatment of the poor and especially the poor believers. Their wicked persecution and selfishness toward their poorer brothers is condemned in strong language.
  - b. Summarize paragraph 2 (verses 7-11).  
James then switches his comments to the poor who have been oppressed and encourages them to rest and wait and trust in the Lord's rescue.
  - c. Summarize paragraph 3 (verses 12).  
James admonishes all to not swear, that is, to make a vow, but rather to be people of their word. Breaking our promises leaves us open to judgment.
  - d. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 13-18).  
James provides a solution to weary saints and tells them to pray and praise and confess their sins. God hears the prayers of His children. James goes on to encourage us to pray with full faith, just like Elijah did.
  - e. Summarize paragraph 4 (verses 19-20).  
Our commitment to each other includes turning each other away from sin. It's commendable and pleasing in the Lord's sight.
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.

James continues as he has in the rest of the book, where he calls out sin and wrong attitudes and reminds every believer that it's just not okay to continue in sin. And he ends the book on that same note.

- 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.

Verses 19-20. My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

- 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.  
Turn Him Back

- Words that refer to *riches* occur frequently in verses 1-6. List what you find along with the verse references.

Verse 1 come now, you *rich*, weep and howl

Verse 2 your *riches* have rotted

Verse 3 your *gold* and your *silver* have rusted

Verse 3 you have stored up your *treasure* in the last days!

Verse 4 behold, the *pay* of the laborers who mowed your fields and has been withheld...

Verse 5 you have lived *luxuriously* on the earth

Verse 5 you have led a life of wanton *pleasure*

- Look for any lists you can find in the chapter about *riches* or the *rich* and observations you may have discovered.

#### Your Riches Have Failed You

- They have rotted
- They have become moth-eaten
- They have rusted
- Their rust is a witness against you
- Their rust will consume your flesh like fire

#### What the Rich Have Done

- Withheld pay
- Lived luxuriously
- Lived in wanton pleasure
- Fattened their hearts

5. Condemned the righteous man
6. Put to death the righteous man

7. Make a list of what you learn about *patient/patience/endurance/waiting*. Be sure to include the verse references.

Verse 7 commanded to be patient until the coming of the Lord (duration)

Verse 7 the farmer is an example of waiting

Verse 7 the farmer doesn't rush his waiting

Verse 8 commanded again to be patient and to strengthen our hearts to wait well

Verse 10 the prophets are examples of suffering and patience

Verse 11 those who endured are blessed

Verse 11 Job is an example of endurance

#### When Waiting for Rescue and Judgment

1. Be patient until the coming of the Lord
2. Be patient for God's perfectly timed rescue
3. Strengthen your hearts to continue being patient
4. Don't complain in the process because God hears it all
5. Remember the example of the patient ones before you.
6. Remember there is blessing for those who endure.
7. Remember and be strengthened by those who endured before you.

8. Now make a list of any *commands* that are given in this chapter. Be sure to cite where you found them.

Verse 1 you rich, weep and howl

Verse 7 you brethren be patient until the coming of the Lord

Verse 8 you be patient

Verse 8 you strengthen your hearts

Verse 9 do not complain

Verse 12 do not swear

Verse 12 [but your yes is to be yes and your no, no]

Verse 13 He must pray

Verse 13 he is to sing praises

Verse 14 he must call for the elders of the church

Verse 16 confess your sins to one another

Verse 16 pray for one another

9. The word *sin/sinner* and descriptions of those terms are key words in this chapter. List them along with any observations and their verse references.

Verse 15 and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him

Verse 16 confess your sins to one another

Verse 19 [if any among you strays from the truth]

Verse 19 [and one turns him back]

Verse 20 he who turns a sinner from [the error of his way] will save his soul from [death]

Verse 20 and will cover a multitude of sins

Ways to Describe Sin

Verse 19 strays from truth

Verse 19 turns him back

Verse 20 the error of his ways

Verse 20 death

10. List any references to *time* from this chapter. Be sure to include the verse references with your answer.

Verse 3 it is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure

Verse 7 be patient until the coming of the Lord

Verse 7 the early *and* late rains

Verse 8 the coming of the Lord is near

Verse 17 it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months

11. List what you learn about *judge/judgment* from this chapter and the verse references.

Verse 9 don't complain so you won't be judged

Verse 9 don't complain because the Judge is standing right at the door!!!! Yikes!

Verse 12 keep your word, so that you may not fall under judgment

12. What do you see about the word *pray/prayer* in this chapter? Be sure to include the verse references.

Verse 13 if you're suffering, pray

Verse 13 if you're cheerful, sing praises

Verse 14 if you're weak, then call for the elders who will come pray over you

Verse 15 their prayer of faith will restore/strengthen the one who has grown weary.

Verse 16 confess your sins to one another and pray for one another for spiritual healing

Verse 17 Elijah prayed earnestly that it wouldn't rain and it didn't

Verse 18 he prayed again, and it did rain

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*

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

Though James writes to believers, and we know there is no longer condemnation for those who are in Christ, he still uses judgment type language because though there is forgiveness for our sins, often we will experience consequences (kind of like natural consequences) for the sinful things we do. For example, a wife commits adultery and though she repents, she still experiences the consequences of her sin like lack of trust, broken marriage, etc.

I love that 5:1 is connected to 4:17.

I love that the essence of the whole book can be summed up in verses 19-20.

## James Chapter 5

**1** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you.

**2** Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten.

**3** Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

**4** Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

**5** You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

**6** You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you.

**7** Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

**8** You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

**9** Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

**10** As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

**11** We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

**12** But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

**13** Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

14 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

**19** My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back,  
20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

## James

### Lesson #17, Chapter 5:1-11

Please read all of Chapter 5 before beginning this lesson. And as you do so, ask the Lord for His help in studying and applying this life-transforming Word to your life.

1. James begins Chapter 5 with “Come now (NIV *Now listen*);” a phrase he used to good effect in 4:13. Who was he addressing in 4:13? And who is he addressing in 5:1?

In 4:13 he was addressing those who make plans without seeking the Lord or submitting their plans to Him. In 5:1 he’s addressing the rich and calling them to repentance.

- a. Now consider to whom James has been addressing his comments throughout this book. What do you see from James 1:2, 16; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10; 4:11?

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

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved *brethren*.

1 My *brethren*, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

5 Listen, my beloved *brethren*: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

14 What use is it, my *brethren*, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

1 Let not many of you become teachers, my *brethren*, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My *brethren*, these things ought not to be this way.

11 Do not speak against one another, *brethren*. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

I think he’s been talking to the brethren... ☺

2. And also, throughout this book, James forthrightly deals with different sin issues to help his beloved brethren grow in their faith. In essence, the letter is a perfect example of his final words to them, “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins (James 5:19-20).” Review the *previous* chapters and list the different sins of the heart James confronts in this book.

Chapter 1: lack of faith, not trusting God in the midst of trial, thinking wrongly of the Lord when dealing with our own sin and blaming God for our failures to do what’s right, anger, forgetting what the Word says, speaking without self-control.

Chapter 2: showing partiality and favoritism toward the rich or influential, not loving neighbor and thereby not fulfilling the Royal Law, living a hypocritical, powerless life without deeds of love and service and obedience.

Chapter 3: not bridling our tongues, speaking without care is just not right for a believer, engaging in earthly wisdom.

Chapter 4: quarreling, pleasures, lusts, envy, friendship with the world, speaking against one another, making our own plans in our own wisdom instead of going to the Lord, boasting.



3. Look for key verses in the book that show what kind of faith James desires to build in believers and list them here.

1:12, 22, 26; 2:14, 26; 3:9-10, 13-14; 4:4, 17; 5:19-20.

4. As James has been tackling sin issues in his beloved brethren, it's also helpful to see some of the other names that he uses for them in order to reveal the sin in their lives. What are some of the other ways James addresses the believers in this book?

Besides brethren and beloved brethren, he calls them twelve tribes who are dispersed. When they are doubting, he calls them double-minded. Foolish fellow in 2:20 in the discussion about faith and works; you adulteresses 4:4; 4:8 sinners and double-minded; 5:1 you rich.

5. Many think James 5:1 introduces a new topic to a new group of people, yet that doesn't fit with the flow of the book, the way James has confronted his fellow believers, or the near context of 4:13-17, which also spoke to the believers. So, though James 5:1 *appears* to change audiences, it really doesn't; it is simply James' way of bringing to light holdover sins from their former way of life as unbelievers. Take a quick glance at 5:1-6, and consider what sin issue does James desire to root out in these precious believers?

Putting hope in riches and actually oppressing and seeking to harm those who are defenseless or don't have enough. At the very least, they are just selfishly withholding good to their neighbor; at the worst, they are actively seeking to do harm.

6. Eager Beaver: How does James' forthrightness and willingness to "call-out" his brethren about sin in their lives indicate his motives? What is James more concerned about? Their holiness or their comfort? What's the purpose in calling sinners to repentance? See Luke 5:31-32; 2 Corinthians 12:19-22.

James is so concerned about their holiness. His big thing is "If you say you're a Christian, then act like it. Live like the transformed person you are." Everyone needs to live lives of repentance for there isn't one of us who is good in and of themselves. Believers lives should change. They should look different than they did previously.

31 And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. 32 "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

19 All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved. 20 For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; 21 I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

7. What specific sins have the "rich" committed that are no longer appropriate now that they have come to faith in Jesus Christ (verses 1-6)? You can almost hear James repeating, "My brethren, these things ought not to be this way (James 3:10)."

They have trusted in their riches and made their wealth their trust and hope (verses 1-3); they have been withholding the pay of the laborers, all the while living a life of luxury and wantonness; they have also condemned and put to death the righteous man (*for what reason, James doesn't say. Notice that this is a generic observation of*

*all the rich James is writing to. It could be a reference to them withholding the pay of the laborers which would have condemned them to starvation and death).*

8. What foundation of right thinking needs to be built in the rich now that they are believers? See James 1:9-11, 27; 2:1; 4:4-6, 11-12. Also see Luke 12:21, 29-34; Galatians 3:26-28; 1 Timothy 6:7-11; 1 Peter 1:22.

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.

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.

1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

First, that they recognize the brevity of life and that riches fly away. Pure religion and godliness is seen in caring for the defenseless and being pure. Not to show favoritism or to be a friend with the world. Definitely not to speak against one another or be condescending to each other.

21 "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

29 "And do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek His kingdom, and these things will be added to you. 32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. 33 "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. 34 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

As new creatures in Christ, we need to store up our treasures in heaven, not on the earth by seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness. The love of money causes all sorts of problems and we are to pursue godliness, not worldliness. We are to love each other.

What an admonition! Pursue godliness, not worldliness! How often do we do just the opposite?!!! We fill our minds and hearts with the world and wonder why we start acting like the world. Oy!!

9. What does James mean when he tells the “rich” to “weep and howl?” See James 4:8-10 for your answer. Why is that an important first step in bringing to light the sins that are now plaguing them?

It’s about repenting. It’s about grieving over our sin that brings such sorrow to the Lord Jesus who died on the cross for those very sins—and yet, we continue to do them! *Repenting and humbling ourselves is the necessary first step in overcoming our sins.*

10. Why do the riches of the rich *rot* and *moths* eat their fine garments (verse 2)? And why does the gold and silver of the rich *rust* (verse 3)? What else does the gold and silver do according to verse 3? How does that give you insight into the motivations and focus of those who sought to amass those riches?

The riches rot and the garments fall apart (that is, these things don’t last) because they are earthly, worldly. They are the things that will burn up and fade away.

Their rust is a witness against you in that things that are perishable rust while things that last forever, well...they last forever. The fact that they rust or rot or get eaten reveals their true foundation. The rich have been so focused on things that don’t last that they don’t realize their days are almost over (it is the last days!). they were motivated to store up worldly treasure not heavenly treasure.

11. At the end of verse 3 James says, “You have laid up, hoarded, stored your treasure in the last days.” Why is that reference to “the last days” significant? See Luke 12:13-21; 2 Timothy 3:1-2; 1 John 2:15-18.

13 Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” 14 But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?” 15 Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” 16 And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 “And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ 18 “Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 ‘And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” ’ 20 “*But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’* 21 “*So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*”

*1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,*

*15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from*

the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. 18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

The last days are literal for the Lord is returning soon and we will be soon standing before Him. It's also a reminder generally that the world and its ways will pass away. And with each passing day, that time is sooner than it was yesterday.

*Time is short, people! Get with it and live for Jesus!*

12. Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; and James 4:4-5 provide the focus for all our endeavors, no matter who we are, how much “treasure” we have, or at what point in history we live. What are we supposed to do? Why?

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”?

God desires that we live for Him! We're to store up heavenly treasure that lasts for eternity and when we do so, we will love God and heaven even more! We are told to FIX our hearts on God who supplies us with all things richly to enjoy, as we do this we will take hold of that which is true life indeed. God is jealous for our love and longs for our hearts to be solely given to Him.

13. What two things witness or cry against the rich in verses 3-4? Who sees all that has gone on (verse 4)?

Your gold and silver have rusted. This is a witness against you. And the cries of the laborers whose pay you have withheld cries out against you. The Lord of Sabaoth hears it all. He knows; He sees. He is quietly taking notice, but there will be a day of accounting.

Sabaoth—Lord of the armies of Israel, as those who are under the leadership and protection of Jehovah maintain his cause in war.<sup>1</sup>

Sabaoth is the transliteration of a Hebrew word which denotes “hosts” or “armies,” Rom. 9:29; Jas. 5:4.¶ While the word “hosts” probably had special reference to angels, the title “the LORD of hosts” became used to designate Him as the One who is supreme over all the innumerable hosts of spiritual

<sup>1</sup> James Strong, [Enhanced Strong's Lexicon](#) (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995).

agencies, or of what are described as “the armies of heaven.” Eventually it was used as equivalent to “the LORD all-sovereign.”<sup>2</sup>

14. What picture is painted of the rich in verses 5-6? And while the rich were living that way, how were those in poorer circumstances living? (The answer isn’t given, but is understood nonetheless.)

The rich were living luxuriously. They were living a life of wanton pleasure (wanton means unrestrained, heedless, reckless, full of selfish desire). They were making their hearts fat in worldliness. They were unloving toward the poor and didn’t consider their plight.

The poor on the other hand were suffering, being neglected, and were even dying because the rich weren’t paying them for their work.

- a. James brings these things up to get the believers to leave behind these sins. Peter urges much the same thing in 1 Peter 4:1-6. What do you learn there?

1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. 4 In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you; 5 but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to the will of God.

The time is past for all that worldly, fleshly living. It’s time to live as a new creature in Christ. Live now for Jesus and be an example to those who are still caught up in the same sins that you have now left behind.

15. What counsel does James give to all believers, especially those who may be suffering? See verse 7. How is his illustration intended to help them obey this counsel?

He tells them (and us) to be patient. To be patient for a time—until the Lord returns. He used the illustration of the farmer who waits through all the early rains, but does not harvest, and then he waits through all the later rains, but still does not harvest. He doesn’t rush ahead or try to force things. He waits until the fullness of time to reap the harvest. In the same way, we’re to be patient, not trying to force things or try to fix the situation. In the fullness of time, God will take care of the situation and we can rest and trust in Him.

- a. Define *patient* as used in verses 7 and 8 [Strong’s #3114].

The word *patient* here literally means to be long tempered while enduring trying circumstances—as opposed to short tempered, as opposed to being rash or hasty or nasty. Be patient in the face of difficulty.

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<sup>2</sup> W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., [\*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words\*](#) (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), 542.

To be patient here means to be of a long spirit, one that doesn't come to an end or lose heart. It means to persevere patiently and bravely, to bear the injuries and offenses of others, to be mild and slow in avenging wrongs, to be slow to anger and slow to punish.

"The idea is to set the timer of one's temper for a long run. Think long. Focus on the final lap in the race of life. Have a long fuse." [J. Ronald Blue, "[James](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 833.]

16. The coming of the Lord, and with it His judgment, is mentioned in verses 7, 8, and 9. How is that an encouragement for anyone who suffering?

When suffering unjustly it is a huge encouragement to know there will be an accounting of the wrongs we've suffered. Our souls cry out for it. [Can you imagine how much God's Spirit cries out for an accounting of the sins committed against Him unjustly? Oh, praise be to Jesus who took the wrath I deserve to satisfy God's righteous judgment!] It's also an encouragement because it reminds us that there is an end in sight. God has a plan and He will put an end to our suffering.

"Relief will come. Release will come. Right now I need refinement." P. D. Tripp

a. Second Thessalonians 1:6-10 and 2 Peter 3:9-15 both address similar circumstances. What do those authors counsel believers who are suffering trials?

6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

Paul reminds the believers that God will bring judgment on those who are treating them unjustly. Peter reminds them that God sees and isn't slow in coming to the rescue. He has a plan and it involves the salvation of others. But there will come a day when God's patience comes to an end. Both men urge us to persevere and take courage that our God fights for us.

17. Even while suffering, what does God desire from us according to verse 9? And again, what added motivation do we have for living out this command?

That we wouldn't complain. That would remember God is watching. He will judge and bring all things into the light. Basically, James reminds them not to complain so their sins won't be brought to the light and judgment.

“Christian waiting is not waiting for something, but for someone.”<sup>3</sup>

18. Why do we all need to be reminded not to complain about each other in light of what we’ve studied in this chapter and the rest of the book?

The Lord hears. He’s watching His children. It’s odious to Him that one of His children would be hardhearted and sinful against His other children. There are consequences for our sins, even though we’re saved. Condemnation is taken away in Jesus, but when we sin, we often still experience the natural consequences like broken relationships if we sin against someone or whatever.

19. Who are examples for us according to verse 10? Generally, what were their situations (cite specific ones if you would like) that reveal their *suffering and patience*?

The prophets are examples of patience and endurance in suffering.

Jeremiah kept preaching and ministering to the nation even when he was thrown in the cistern, even when they dragged him against his will to Egypt (when God commanded Israel to stay in the land). See Hebrews 11 and the by faith chapter. Think of Hosea, Elijah, Ezekiel...all suffered reproach and persecution for their faith.

20. Why do we count those *blessed* who endured? See verse 11. Also look back at James 1:3-4, 12 and see what we learn.

They are blessed because they did endure. And no one endures who isn’t saved. They are blessed because they are saved. And no matter what they had to endure, they held fast to the promises of God.

Job endured and saw God bring things full circle in his life. He also experienced the compassion and mercy of God in all this. The testing of our faith produces endurance. The result of that tested, enduring faith shows up in a matured character that is perfect, complete, lacking in nothing. The one who perseveres, who endures, will receive the crown of life because he is with Jesus, because he loves Jesus.

- a. As usual, James barely dips his quill into this bottomless inkwell, so we’ll try to plumb some of those untapped depths. Look up the following verses that add their written testimony to the one given here in James 5:11. See Psalm 86:15; Lamentations 3:22-23, 31-33; Joel 2:25-27.

*15 But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.*

*22 The LORD’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*

*31 For the Lord will not reject forever, 32 For if He causes grief, Then He will have compassion According to His abundant lovingkindness. 33 For He does not afflict willingly Or grieve the sons of men.*

*25 “Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you. 26 “You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied And praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; Then My people will never be put to shame. 27 “Thus you will know that I am in the midst of Israel, And that I am the LORD your God, And there is no other; And My people will never be put to shame.*

<sup>3</sup>Peter H. Davids, “[James](#),” in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1366.

Oh, my heart is full at the kindness of our God. I love you, Lord.

21. James hasn't held back in bringing to light the sins of our heart in this section. What are some of "the rich man's sins" you've identified as being resident *in your own heart* at times? What counsel has been the most helpful in putting those sins to death?

I think just loving the world and not prizing the Lord above all things. Putting my treasure or hopes into the world rather than on God. I think recognizing that the Lord Jesus will soon return and I will give an account to my Master for how I stewarded His gifts to me.

22. Words like *patient, wait, strengthen, suffering, and endure* permeate James' repeated encouragement in verses 7-11. How does the knowledge that the Lord's return is near, or knowing that others have endured great sufferings too, or remembering the Lord's immeasurable kindness to His children help you persevere when life presses in upon you? Just knowing it won't last forever and that the Lord sees really helps and encourages me.

## Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

by Henry F. Lyte

Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee.  
Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou from hence my all shall be.  
Perish every fond ambition, all I've sought or hoped or known.  
Yet how rich is my condition! God and heaven are still mine own.

Let the world despise and leave me, they have left my Savior, too.  
Human hearts and looks deceive me; Thou art not, like them, untrue.  
And while Thou shalt smile upon me, God of wisdom, love and might,  
Foes may hate and friends disown me, show Thy face and all is bright.

Go, then, earthly fame and treasure! Come, disaster, scorn and pain!  
In Thy service, pain is pleasure; with Thy favor, loss is gain.  
I have called Thee, "Abba, Father"; I have set my heart on Thee:  
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather, all must work for good to me.

Man may trouble and distress me, 'twill but drive me to Thy breast.  
Life with trials hard may press me; heaven will bring me sweeter rest.  
Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me while Thy love is left to me,  
Oh, 'twere not in joy to charm me, were that joy unmixed with Thee.



Take, my soul, thy full salvation; rise o'er sin, and fear, and care;  
Joy to find in every station something still to do or bear:  
Think what Spirit dwells within thee; what a Father's smile is thine;  
What a Savior died to win thee, child of heaven, shouldst thou repine?

Haste then on from grace to glory, armed by faith, and winged by prayer,  
Heaven's eternal days before thee, God's own hand shall guide thee there.  
Soon shall close thy earthly mission, swift shall pass thy pilgrim days;  
Hope soon change to glad fruition, faith to sight, and prayer to praise.

## James Lesson #18, Chapter 5:12-20

As we come to our last lesson in James, please read Chapter 5 before beginning this lesson. Be sure to ask the Lord for His help in your study because there's so much to learn and understand in this section!

1. Summarize the flow of thought in verses 1-11.

James addresses the sins of rich toward their poorer brothers and then shores up the poor to endure suffering well, following the examples of the farmers and Job and the prophets.

2. Verse 12 starts with a contrast that clearly links it with the previous instruction. What command is given in verse 12? Why is obedience to that command so important (verse 12)?

But above all, clearly is a summarizing statement pulling everything he has said together and now being funneled into the command of verse 12.

Do not swear by heaven or by earth or any other oath.

So they won't fall under judgment.

3. How does verse 12 line up with what we've studied in verses 1-11?

Suffering and being sinned against are not excuses to make oaths. Just need to make sure we keep our word and continue in a steady, faith-filled way.

4. Explain what kind of "swearing" we're dealing with in verse 12. See also Matthew 5:33-37; 23:16-22; 2 Corinthians 1:17-20.

The swearing of oaths to show we're really serious about obeying the Lord.

33 "Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.' 34 "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 "Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil. 16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' WE ARE TO FULFILL OUR VOWS TO THE LORD. BE A KEEPER OF OUR WORD, RATHER THAN USING OATHS AS A MEANS OF GETTING OUT OF OBEDIENCE.

17 "You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? 18 "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.' 19 "You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? 20 "Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. 21 "And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the temple and by Him who dwells within it. 22 "And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it. SAME AS ABOVE.

17 Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no at the same time? 18 But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. 19 For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and

Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. 20 For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. BE FAITHFUL TO DO WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO, WHETHER THAT'S SHOWING UP OR FOLLOWING THROUGH OR OBEYING THE LORD. WE HAVE THE LORD AS OUR MODEL.

5. Living under trial and suffering can wear down the spiritual robustness of even the most mature believer. What oaths or vows might we be tempted to make when life is hard, and our hearts are weighed down in trial? See also James 1:13-17.

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.

We can be tempted to blame God for our sins and wrong responses. But we need to remember that every trial and hardship is ultimately given to us by God for our good and growth and His glory.

We might be tempted to break out in complaining and grumbling. Blaming others, even ourselves. We might be tempted to not really obey the Lord, though we might say we will.

6. Continuing with the theme of patient endurance while suffering (5:7-11), James then gives what advice in verse 13? How are both responses wise counsel when we're in the midst of affliction? See also James 1:2-5.

We're to pray. So not only are we not to blame others or God for our trials, but we're also to pray when we're hurting.

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. WE'RE TO CONSIDER OUR TRIALS WITH JOY KNOWING THAT GOD INTENDS GOOD TO COME FROM THEM. AND IF WE'RE NOT SURE HOW TO RESPOND, WE'RE TO PRAY AND ASK GOD FOR WISDOM IN RESPONDING WELL.

7. Verses 14 and 15 give us the opportunity to do some amateur sleuthing and apply important Bible study principles in the process. Words usually have a range of meanings, which is why it's important to remember *the context determines a word's meaning*. In verse 14 we have, "Is anyone among you *sick*?" Another way that word has been translated is "*weak*." Then in verse 15 we read, "and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is *sick*." The word translated "sick" in verse 15 is a different Greek word than the one in verse 14. Another way the word "sick" in verse 15 can be translated is "*grown weary*." Write out verses 14-15 and insert "*weak*" instead of "*sick*" in verse 14 and insert "*has grown weary*" in place of "*sick*" in verse 15.

14 Is anyone among you WEARY? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is GROWN WEARY, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

8. How does translating those Greek words as *weak* and *grown weary*, rather than “sick,” change the meaning of verses 14-15? And how does that alternate translation fit the context of the passage better?

Weak and grown weary fit the context perfectly! This is why it makes more sense to translate those words as weak and grown weary rather than sick. It changes it from a pray and you'll get healed kind of passage to one that understands the context, that these believers were suffering and enduring hardship and were growing weary in the trials, their faith was weakening. The admonition to pray and even to ask the elders to come pray for you is so wise! There have been times when I'm so burdened and hurting that my faith is small and I need to rely on the faith of others to pray for me. I find this passage so encouraging when translated properly!

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*Take the time to read the sections below as Ron Blue, and then John MacArthur, provide helpful insights into our passage:*

Ron Blue writes, “James asked a third question and then answered it fully. **Is any one of you sick?** A great deal of misunderstanding has resulted from these verses. Some seem to teach from this passage that full physical health is always just a prayer away. Others have found in this passage justification for “extreme unction” (a practice begun in the eighth century). Still others have tried to relate the process outlined by James to the modern practice of invoking God (“pray over him”) and using medicine (“anoint him with oil”)—prayer plus a physician.

The heart of the problem lies in just what James meant when he referred to the “sick.” Actually there is no reason to consider “sick” as referring exclusively to physical illness. The word *asthenei* literally means “to be weak.” Though it is used in the Gospels for physical maladies, it is generally used in Acts and the Epistles to refer to a weak faith or a weak conscience (cf. Acts 20:35; Rom. 6:19; 14:1; 1 Cor. 8:9–12). That it should be considered “weak” in this verse is clear in that another Greek word (*kamnonta*) in James 5:15, translated **sick person**, literally means “to be weary.” The only other use in the New Testament (Heb. 12:3) of that word clearly emphasizes this same meaning.

James was not referring to the bedfast, the diseased, or the ill. Instead he wrote to those who had grown weary, who had become weak both morally and spiritually in the midst of suffering. These are the ones who **should call** for the help of **the elders of the church**. The early church leaders were instructed (1 Thes. 5:14) to “encourage the timid” and “help the weak” (*asthenōn*).

James said that the elders should **pray over him and anoint him with oil**. It is significant that the word “anoint” is *aleipsantes* (“rub with oil”) not *chriō* (“ceremonially anoint”). The former is the “mundane” word and the latter is “the

sacred and religious word” (Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, ninth ed. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950, pp. 136–37). “Therefore James is not suggesting a ceremonial or ritual anointing as a means of divine healing; instead, he is referring to the common practice of using oil as a means of bestowing honor, refreshment, and grooming” (Daniel R. Hayden, “Calling the Elders to Pray,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138. July/September 1981: 264). The woman “poured” (*aleiphō*) perfume on Jesus’ feet (Luke 7:38). A host “put oil” (*aleiphō*) on the head of his guest (Luke 7:46). A person who is fasting should not be sad and ungroomed, but should “put oil” (*aleiphō*) on his head, and wash his face (Matt. 6:17). Thus James’ point is that the “weak” (*asthenei*) and “weary” (*kamnonta*) would be refreshed, encouraged, and uplifted by the elders who rubbed oil on the despondents’ heads and prayed for them.

For the fallen, discouraged, distressed weary believer, restoration is assured and the elders’ **prayer offered in faith will make the sick person** (lit., “weary one”) **well** (i.e., will restore him from discouragement and spiritual defeat), and **the Lord will raise him up**.

That the restoration is spiritual, not physical, is further clarified by the assurance, **if he has sinned, he will be forgiven**. Many physically ill Christians have called on elders to pray for them and to anoint them with oil, but a sizable percentage of them have remained sick. This fact suggests that the passage may have been mistakenly understood as physical restoration rather than spiritual restoration.”<sup>1</sup>

John MacArthur makes similar helpful comments for us as well: “James directs those who are “sick,” meaning weakened by their suffering to call for the elders of the church for strength, support, and prayer.

**5:14 anointing him with oil.** Lit. “rubbing him with oil”: 1) possibly this is a reference to ceremonial anointing (*See note on Lev. 14:18; Mark 6:13*); 2) on the other hand, James may have had in mind medical treatment of believers physically bruised and battered by persecution. Perhaps it is better to understand the anointing in a metaphorical sense of the elders’ encouraging, comforting, and strengthening the believer.

**5:15 prayer of faith.** The prayer offered on their behalf by the elders. **save the sick**. Deliver them from their suffering because they have been weakened by their infirmity, not from their sin, which was confessed. **committed sins ... be forgiven**. Not by the elders, since God alone can forgive sins (Is. 43:25; Dan. 9:9; Mark 2:7). That those who are suffering called for the elders implies they had a

<sup>1</sup>J. Ronald Blue, “[James](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 834–835.

contrite, repentant heart, and that part of their time with the overseers would involve confessing their sins to God.”<sup>2</sup>

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9. What other insights did you gain from those two commentators that helped you understand verses 14-15 better?

It shows the immense value of the body of Christ ministering to one another. There are times when we are so tired from the fight that we just need to be supported and lifted up. It's also in those times that we may need to confess our sins of looking to others rather than the Lord, placing our hope in worldly means of getting comfort, of responding in ungodly ways, of not being patient, etc. We sin against each other when heat is turned up, so it's also important to confess those sins and make things right with our brethren. And our brothers and sisters in Christ, graciously forgive us and help us to do what's right.

This is the ultimate of one anothering. So helpful to understand the wounded spirit of those in prolonged or intense trials. They need shoring up and prayer. They need comfort and strengthening from the Scriptures so they can respond well and do what's right.

10. What contributes to our feeling spiritually weak or weary? See Matthew 26:41; 1 Corinthians 11:27-30; 2 Thessalonians 3:7; Revelation 2:2-6.

41 “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”  
 TEMPTED TO GIVE IN TO SIN. CONTINUAL BATTLING CAN LEAVE US FEELING WEAK AND WORN OUT, OR MORE LIKELY, FALLING PREY TO SIN, REPENTING, FALLING AGAIN TO SIN. THAT IS MORE LIKELY TO WEAR US DOWN SPIRITUALLY.

27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. TAKING COMMUNION WITH UNCONFESED, UNREPENTANT SIN WILL WEAR US DOWN SPIRITUALLY.

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, LIVING AN UNDISCIPLINED LIFE WEARS US DOWN SPIRITUALLY BECAUSE WE'RE NOT LIVING THE WAY WE KNOW WE SHOULD. WE'RE NOT BEING FAITHFUL TO THE LORD, AND THAT HARMS OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. THE BREAK MAKES US WEAK AND WEARY SPIRITUALLY.

2 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. 4 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 'Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent. 6 'Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. LOSING OUR FIRST LOVE WEARS US DOWN SPIRITUALLY. WHEN WE DO THINGS OUT OF DUTY, NOT LOVE FOR THE LORD, THEN WE GROW SPIRITUALLY WEAK AND TWISTED. THE ANSWER IS REPENTANCE.

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<sup>2</sup>John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1934.

- a. Describe what it's like when you're feeling spiritually *weak* and *weary* due to difficulties, persecutions, temptations, suffering, or trials.

When I'm feeling spiritually weak because of the onslaught of trials, I will be sad or worn out, but I will still draw near to the Lord and His people. When I am weak because of some sin or sinful response in my heart, then I shy away from the Lord and shy away from real, genuine, honest interaction with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Either way, eventually, every believer will get to the point of realizing, "I need help!" and this might be the time when we ask the elders to pray for us and to help us grow strong in faith again.

11. Why would it be helpful to have the elders, the spiritual leaders of your church, come and pray for you when you're feeling weak and weary?

Need to lean on their faith. Need the shepherding they can provide through wise counsel and possibly wisdom on how to fix an issue due to a sinful response. Need them to know, so they can continue to pray for me.

12. Notice that if we are feeling *weak* spiritually, we're told we're to call the elders to come pray for us. Have you ever put that into practice or seen it done? What things might tempt us not to follow through on this instruction? What is the intended benefit of asking the elders to pray for us? See verse 15.

Yes, to both questions. It makes me feel so shepherded and very humble and small to admit that I need their help, but also know that if I'm going to "get better" I must rely on them.

Pride, embarrassment, fear or anxiety can tempt us to not rely on others for their faith and help in prayer. It's just so wrong, not to allow ourselves to be ministered to by the body of believers. They have spiritually blessings that we need.

The goal is restoration, spiritual health, strengthening, and vitality. The goal is a right relationship with the Lord and my fellow believers.

13. What is the hoped-for result of anointing a spiritually weak and weary person with oil? See Ezekiel 16:8-10; 2 Chronicles 28:15; Luke 7:44-46; 10:33-34 for some examples.

Comfort. It's a way to give comfort to the suffering. Kind of like offering to take someone for a pedicure. Those physical ways of ministering bring great comfort to the suffering and wounded spirit because they don't expect kindness. It's a way of binding up their spiritual wounds in a very tangible, loving way.

8 "Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine," declares the Lord God. 9 "Then I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. 10 "I also clothed you with embroidered cloth and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk. SHOWS LOVE AND CARE

15 Then the men who were designated by name arose, took the captives, and they clothed all their naked ones from the spoil; and they gave them clothes and sandals, fed them and gave them drink, anointed them with oil, led all their feeble ones on donkeys, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brothers; then they returned to Samaria. SUSTAINING CARE IN A WARM MEAL, SOMETHING TO DRINK AND A WAY TO MAKE THEM COMFORTABLE PHYSICALLY.

44 Turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. 46 "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. IT'S A PICTURE OF LOVING CARE TOWARD SOMEONE, WHERE YOU JUST HAVE TO DO SOMETHING FOR THEM TO RELIEVE THEIR BURDENS.

33 "But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, 34 and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. TRIED TO COMFORT AND MINISTER TO THE POOR, WOUNDED MAN.

14. When we feel spiritually weak and weary, what promises do we have from God to encourage and strengthen our souls? See Matthew 11:28; Romans 8:26; Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 12:1-3; James 5:17-18 for a few.

28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. OH, THE SWEETNESS OF THIS PROMISE!

26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; SO THANKFUL THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS WHEN I AM TOO WEAK AND BROKEN HEARTED TO EVEN UTTER ANY PRAYERS.

9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. THERE IS A PROMISE OF BLESSING, IF WE WILL JUST KEEP SLOGGING ON. THERE'S HOPE AND AN END TO THE SORROWS AND BURDENS.

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. JESUS RAN THE RACE BEFORE ME AS AN EXAMPLE, SO I CAN RUN WELL TOO. JESUS ENDURED TO HELP ME TODAY. WOW. THE KEY TO RUNNING WELL IS LAYING ASIDE ENCUMBRANCES AND SINS. RUN WELL. FIX OUR EYES ON HIM. WE RUN TOWARD HIM. HE IS MY GOAL.

17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. 18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. WE CAN PRAY WITH HOPE THAT GOD WILL ANSWER OUR PRAYERS. ELIJAH IS GIVEN AS AN EXAMPLE TO ENCOURAGE US TO PRAY. DEFINITELY NOT GIVEN TO DISCOURAGE US IN PRAYER.

15. When are we to confess our sins to one another and ask for prayer according to verses 13-16?

When we're suffering or have grown weary. Even when we have joy in the Lord, even then we might confess previous sins and then praise the Lord for His constant forgiveness.

- a. What is the intended benefit of our mutual sharing and bearing of one another's burdens from verse 16? See also Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 12:12-13.

Spiritual healing, restoration, strengthening. All for our good and growth in Christ.



1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

16. Notice the reciprocal effect of prayer in these verses. What do you see happening in verses 13-18 as we engage in prayer?

We are benefitted from our interactions from other believers. Praying for each other launches us into each other's lives. We grow dependent upon each other in the highest and most healthy way. Praying with other believers actually helps us to turn from sin.

- a. What picture is painted of the way we are to interact with each other from these verses? What do you notice about *one* of the purposes of our relationship with each other from verses 13-16?

It's very loving. It's patient. It's not allowing sin to remain, but urging are weaker brethren to do what's right and grow stronger in the Lord. One of the purposes of prayer in the body is for healing, restoration, and strengthening from the Lord.

17. What encouragement does James give us, so we'll persevere and engage in this aspect of loving one another? See the end of verse 16.

Our prayers for one another can really make a difference!!!! Our prayers for one another can really benefit the whole body or just the individual, but they are effective. What an encouragement to enter into the work of prayer for one another.

18. What example of effective prayer on behalf of others is then given in verses 17-18? Elijah praying that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't. And then he prayed that it would rain, and it did.

19. What is the point of the phrase "with a nature like ours" (verse 17) in light of this discussion on praying for one another? Consider the context of this paragraph as you answer.

Elijah wasn't some super-saint, some amazing spiritual giant with a faith that far surpassed ours. No, he was a man, just like us, with a faulty faith, imperfect, and needing strength and help, just like us. His nature like ours statement should encourage us to pray with faith and boldness, to throw our stick into the river of God's providence and watch and wait to see what God will do.

20. How is the illustration about Elijah to be an encouragement to us as we seek to minister to one another? Remembering the context here, why do we *need* this grand example of powerful prayer when it comes to encouraging our weak and weary brethren?

Even with our sins and weaknesses nipping at our heels, God still intends that we roll up our shirtsleeves and get in there and minister to one another. Without this encouragement we might think we need a different kind of faith, rather than just exercising the faith we have.

21. Explain how verses 19-20 perfectly align with the instruction in verses 13-18. See Jude 20-23.

Verses 19-20 perfectly align with verses 13-18 because James was just talking about the weary, worn out, unbelieving one who needed to be guided back to the right path. It's commendable when we steer each other away from the pitfalls and dangers of sinful responses.

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting; 23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

22. How are verses 19-20 a fitting epitaph to all James' instruction in this book?

The whole book really is a call to turn away from sin and live out our profession of faith. If we say Jesus is our Savior then our lives should reflect the new heart He has placed within us. We're also to live responsibly toward each other. We can't say that our brethren aren't our responsibility. God has made them our responsibility.

"The essence of James's letter is a call to action (works) that allows truth to triumph over sin and error. This is the essence of everything he wrote."<sup>3</sup>

23. What commands or instruction from this book do you want to keep front and center of your mind and heart?

All of chapter 1.

My brethren, these things ought not to be this way! James 3:10

James 5:13-20—what a magnificent picture of true Christian fellowship—compassion, holiness, and strengthening.

James 4:11 and 5:9 about not speaking against each other.

"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.*"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, The Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 684.

<sup>4</sup>Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983), 463.