



COMPLETE STUDY GUIDE · LETTER · 5 CHAPTERS · 4 SESSIONS

The Letter of James

Faith That Works

“But be doers of the word, and not only hearers, deluding your own selves.”

JAMES 1:22



Four sessions

Leader's guide

Answer guide

Full text of James (WEB)

SIMPLE. ACCESSIBLE. TRANSFORMATIONAL.



CLEAR PATH BIBLE STUDIES

The Letter of James

Complete Study Guide

Faith That Works

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- 1** Four sessions with every discussion, reflection, and recall question from the online study, and room to write.
- 2** Reference pages: the eight movements, major themes, key passages, key people, and all five chapters at a glance.
- 3** Leader's guide with the group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide for every discussion question, and the recall answer key.
- 4** The full text of James in the World English Bible, so nothing else is needed to do the study.

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The online study, free and with no sign-in: clearpathbiblestudies.com/studies/james

THE LETTER OF JAMES

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START HERE

How to use this guide

A complete, four-session walk through the Letter of James — built for small groups, Sunday school, and personal study. Read together, observe, interpret, and leave each session with one clear thing to live out.

EVERY SESSION FOLLOWS ONE RHYTHM

1

Read together

The session's chapters and key passages. The text is in Part Four.

2

Observe

What does the passage say? Who is there, and what happens?

3

Interpret

What does it show about Jesus? What did the author want us to see?

4

Apply this week

What will I do with it this week? One thing, lived out.

On your own

Each session gives you a daily reading rhythm, reflection questions, a memory verse, and one action step to live out.

- Write your answers. Thinking on paper is slower, and it lasts.
- Finish with the recall page: answer from memory first, then check the text.

In a group

Each session has a 60-minute leader's plan for 5–12 people — read together, discuss, and apply, with leader notes built in.

- The leader uses Part Three: leader notes, an answer guide, and the recall answer key.
- Participants need Parts One, Two, and Four.

Of Part Five, pages 52 and 55–59 are for everyone, and pages 53–54 are for leaders.

PRINTING FOR A GROUP

Participant pages (sessions and reference): pages 8–30. Leader's guide: pages 31–44. The text of James: pages 45–49. Page 50, Four verses to carry, is for everyone. Part Five: pages 51–59.

My progress
☐ 1 Trials, Wisdom, and the Word

☐ 3 The Tongue and True Wisdom

☐ 2 Faith That Acts

☐ 4 Humility, Patience, and Prayer

WHY JAMES

Why read this letter

In five short chapters James hands you wisdom for ordinary life — trials, money, words, conflict, prayer. Read it slowly and it will read you.

01 Faith you can see

James is a very practical letter. It refuses to let faith stay an idea — real faith shows up in how you speak, what you do, and how you treat the people in front of you.

02 Wisdom for ordinary life

Trials, temptation, money, words, conflict, prayer — James has often been compared to the wisdom of Proverbs. It speaks to the situations you actually face this week.

03 A servant of Christ

Written by James, “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1), traditionally identified as the brother of Jesus. His plain, urgent voice often recalls the teaching of Jesus.

04 Doers, not just hearers

A main concern of James is integrity: a faith and a life that match. The doer, James says, “will be blessed in what he does” (1:25).

“But be doers of the word, and not only hearers, deluding your own selves.”

JAMES 1:22 · WEB

ORIENTATION

Before you begin

A quick orientation to James — who wrote it, when, for whom, and the practical wisdom to watch for as you read.

AUTHOR	Background James, who calls himself “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). Tradition identifies him as the brother of Jesus and a leader of the Jerusalem church. The date is debated.
AUDIENCE	To whom “the twelve tribes which are in the Dispersion” — likely believers of Jewish background, facing trials, favoritism, and the temptations of a divided heart.
GENRE	The kind of book A letter of short, practical exhortations, often compared to wisdom writing such as Proverbs.
THEME	The heart Genuine faith works. James ties faith to action: endurance, mercy, controlled speech, humility, and care for the poor.
TO NE	The voice Direct, vivid, and unsparing — full of images (mirrors, ships, fires, mist) and blunt commands.
JESUS	The echo James names Jesus only at 1:1 and 2:1, and many readers hear echoes of Jesus’s teaching in his commands.
FAITH & WORKS	The famous tension “Faith apart from works is dead.” James writes that Abraham and Rahab were “justified by works” (2:21, 25) and that “faith worked with his works” (2:22). Readers differ on how this fits with Paul.
KEY WORD	“Doer” James uses the word at 1:22, 1:23, 1:25 and 4:11. Hearing, knowing, and saying are not enough — James calls for a faith that acts, a wisdom that works, a religion you can see.

STRUCTURE

The shape: five chapters, four sessions

Not a tight argument but a string of practical exhortations on trials, the word, favoritism, faith and works, the tongue, wisdom, worldliness, patience, and prayer.

Faith That Endures James 1–2		Wisdom That Works James 3–5		
1	2	3	4	5
S1	S2	S3	Session 4	

THE FOUR SESSIONS

Your study plan

EITHER WAY

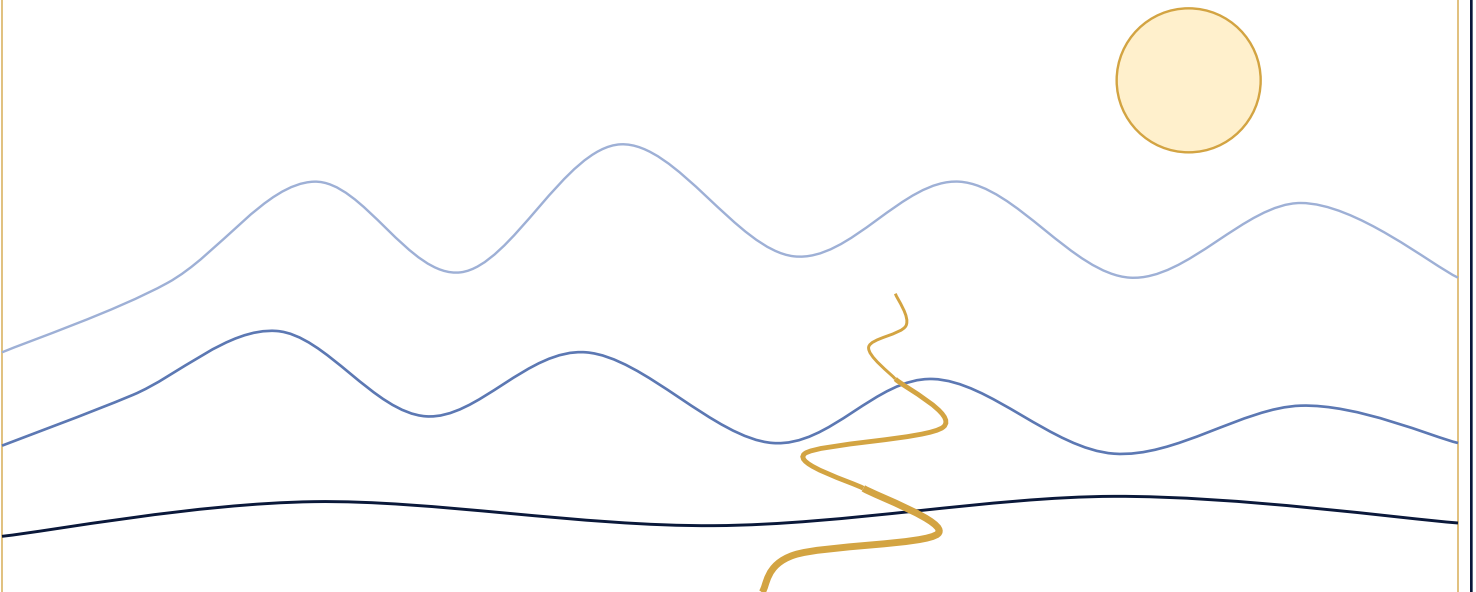
Four sessions carry you through all five chapters of James — from counting trials as joy to the prayer of faith.

	SESSION	READ	MEMORY VERSE	SESSION PAGE	LEADER PAGE	TEXT PAGE
1	Trials, Wisdom, and the Word James opens at full speed — trials as joy, wisdom for the asking, and a faith that doesn't just hear the word but does it.	James 1	James 1:22	9	33	46
2	Faith That Acts James presses on: love that plays no favorites, and a faith that proves itself alive by what it does.	James 2	James 2:17	13	36	47
3	The Tongue and True Wisdom James turns to the small member that steers a whole life — the tongue — and sets two kinds of wisdom side by side.	James 3	James 3:17	17	39	48
4	Humility, Patience, and Prayer James brings the letter home — from the fights among us and the cravings behind them, to a warning for the rich, to patience and the prayer of faith.	James 4–5	James 4:8	21	42	48

PART ONE

The Four Sessions

Read, discuss, reflect, and recall. One session a week carries you through all five chapters.



SESSION 1 OF 4

Trials, Wisdom, and the Word

Read James 1 • text on pages 46–47

1

James opens at full speed — trials as joy, wisdom for the asking, and a faith that doesn't just hear the word but does it.

James wastes no time. He tells scattered believers to count their trials as joy, because the testing of faith produces endurance, and endurance makes us mature and complete. If any of us lacks wisdom, we're to ask God, who gives generously. We ask in faith, without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. James then traces where temptation comes from: it isn't from God, but is drawn from our own desire, which bears sin, and sin, when it is full grown, produces death. By contrast, every good gift comes down from the unchanging Father of lights, who gave us new birth by the word of truth. The chapter then turns to a command: be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger — and be doers of the word, not hearers only. The hearer who forgets is like someone who looks in a mirror and walks away; the doer who acts is blessed. Pure religion, James says, is this: care for the vulnerable, and keep yourself unstained by the world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See why James tells believers to count trials as joy (1:2–4)
- ☐ Learn what James says about asking God for wisdom (1:5–8)
- ☐ Understand what it means to be a doer of the word, and not only a hearer (1:22–25)

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

James 1:2–3 Count It All Joy

James 1:5 Ask for Wisdom

James 1:22 Doers of the Word

James 1:27 Pure Religion

MEMORY VERSE

“But be doers of the word, and not only hearers, deluding your own selves.”

JAMES 1:22 • WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read James 1 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it.

- ☐ Day 1 **James 1:1–4** — Greetings to the scattered tribes — count trials as joy, for testing produces endurance.
- ☐ Day 2 **James 1:5–8** — Ask God for wisdom in faith, without doubting; the doubter is like a wave of the sea.
- ☐ Day 3 **James 1:9–15** — The lowly and the rich; temptation is born of our own desire, not of God.
- ☐ Day 4 **James 1:16–21** — Every good gift is from the Father of lights; be quick to listen, slow to anger.
- ☐ Day 5 **James 1:22–27** — Be doers, not hearers only; the mirror; pure and undefiled religion.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1** James says to count trials as joy because of what they produce. How have you seen endurance grow through a trial, in your own life or someone else's?

- 2** Where do you most need wisdom, and what does James 1:5 promise about asking?

- 3** James says we deceive ourselves by hearing the word but not doing it. What does it look like to be a doer of the word, and not only a hearer?

- 4** "Pure religion" cares for the vulnerable and stays unstained by the world. Which half of that do you find harder?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② Why does James connect trials, wisdom, and doing the word so closely in one chapter? What is he establishing about the kind of faith he's after?

③ James says the doer "will be blessed in what he does" (1:25). What have you heard that you have not yet done?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Pick one thing from James 1 to put into practice. This week, take one concrete step.

PRAYER

Father, when trials come, give me the wisdom to see what You are doing and the faith to ask without wavering. Keep me from being a hearer who forgets. Make me a doer of Your word, and let my faith show itself in visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 Why can believers “count it all joy” when they fall into various temptations? (1:2–3)

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ (A) Joy makes the trials shorter and lighter | ☐ (B) The testing of your faith produces endurance |
| ☐ (C) Trials show that God is displeased with you | ☐ (D) Joy keeps the same trials from coming back |

2 If anyone lacks wisdom, what should he do? (1:5)

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ (A) Assume he already knows the answer | ☐ (B) Wait until experience teaches him over time |
| ☐ (C) Keep studying until he works it out alone | ☐ (D) Ask God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach |

3 James 1:19 gives three speeds for the believer. What are they?

4 What self-deception does 1:22 warn against — and what picture does James paint of it (1:23–24)?

5 Without looking back, write James 1:22.

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 35.

SESSION 2 OF 4

Faith That Acts

Read James 2 • text on page 47

2

James presses on: love that plays no favorites, and a faith that proves itself alive by what it does.

James turns to partiality and then to faith that has no works. First, favoritism. If a rich visitor gets the good seat and a poor one is pushed aside, the church has judged with evil thoughts and broken the royal law: love your neighbor as yourself. God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith; James tells the church, “you have dishonored the poor man.” Then James turns to faith and works: faith without works is dead. He is blunt — if you say “Be warmed and filled” but give nothing, your words are empty, and so is a faith that produces nothing. “You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder.” Belief that stops at agreeing with the facts is shared even by the demons. He proves it from Scripture: Abraham’s faith was perfected by his works when he offered Isaac, and Rahab the prostitute was also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out another way. Readers have long asked how this fits with Paul, who says we are justified by faith apart from works of the law (Romans 3:28). Many hear them answering different questions, Paul on how a sinner is made right with God and James on what living faith looks like, and both reject a faith that is only words (Galatians 5:6). As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Notice what James says about showing favoritism (2:1–9)
- ☐ Read what James says about faith that has no works (2:14–26)
- ☐ Follow how Abraham and Rahab illustrate his point (2:21–25)

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

James 2:1	No Favoritism
James 2:8	The Royal Law
James 2:17	Faith Without Works
James 2:26	Faith and the Body

MEMORY VERSE

“Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself.”

JAMES 2:17 • WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read James 2 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it.

- ☐ Day 1 **James 2:1–7** — No favoritism — God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith.
- ☐ Day 2 **James 2:8–13** — The royal law of love; mercy triumphs over judgment.
- ☐ Day 3 **James 2:14–17** — Faith without works is dead — empty words feed no one.
- ☐ Day 4 **James 2:18–20** — “Show me your faith” — even the demons believe and shudder.
- ☐ Day 5 **James 2:21–26** — Abraham and Rahab: justified by works, and faith perfected by works.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1** James 2:2–4 describes giving the best seat to the wealthy visitor. What might that look like today in a church or group?

- 2** James says, “The demons also believe, and shudder” (2:19). What is the difference between believing that God is one and the faith James describes?

- 3** In 2:15–16, words are offered but nothing is given. What would meeting the need look like?

- 4** James says “faith worked with his works” (2:22). What does that say about the kind of faith he describes?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② Readers ask how James fits with Paul's teaching on faith and works. What does James himself say in 2:21–25, and what questions does it raise for you?

③ James pictures kind words with nothing given (2:15–16). Where might your own faith be stopping at words?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Choose one person with a need you can see.
This week, do one concrete thing for them.

PRAYER

*Lord, save me from a faith that is only words.
Keep me from favoritism that honors the
impressive and overlooks the lowly. Let my
believing become doing — a living faith that
feeds, welcomes, and acts. Amen.*

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

1 What does James call showing favoritism to the rich man with the gold ring? (2:1–4, 9)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ A Sin — being convicted by the law as transgressors | ☐ B Sensible wisdom about winning influence |
| ☐ C A harmless custom of showing respect | ☐ D Practical hospitality to an honored guest |

2 What is faith without works, according to 2:17?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ A Weak but alive | ☐ B A private matter |
| ☐ C Dead in itself | ☐ D Invisible but real |

3 What good is it to tell a poorly clothed, hungry brother “Go in peace. Be warmed and filled.”? (2:15–16)

4 Which two Old Testament people does James call as witnesses that faith works (2:21–25) — and what did each do?

5 Without looking back, write James 2:17.

Answers are in the leader’s guide, page 38.

SESSION 3 OF 4

The Tongue and True Wisdom

Read James 3 · text on page 48

3

James turns to the small member that steers a whole life — the tongue — and sets two kinds of wisdom side by side.

James warns that not many should become teachers, because teachers are judged more strictly — and because we all stumble, especially with our words. The tongue is small but mighty: a bit steers a horse, a rudder steers a ship, a small fire spreads to a large forest. The tongue is a fire, a restless evil, full of deadly poison — and nobody can tame it. James then turns to its inconsistency: with the same mouth we bless God and curse people made in God's image. James asks whether a spring sends out fresh and bitter water from the same opening (3:11). He then contrasts two wisdoms. The false wisdom is earthly, sensual, and demonic. It is marked by bitter jealousy and selfish ambition, and where those are, there is confusion and every evil deed. The wisdom from above is different in kind: first pure, then peaceful, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ See how James describes the power of the tongue (3:1–12)
- ☐ Compare the two kinds of wisdom in 3:13–18
- ☐ Identify the marks of the wisdom from above (3:17)

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

James 3:5–6	The Tongue a Fire
James 3:10	Blessing and Cursing
James 3:13	Wisdom in Gentleness
James 3:17	Wisdom from Above

MEMORY VERSE

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

JAMES 3:17 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read James 3 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it.

- ☐ Day 1 **James 3:1–2** — Not many teachers — we all stumble, especially in word.
- ☐ Day 2 **James 3:3–6** — Bits, rudders, a small fire — the small tongue steers and burns.
- ☐ Day 3 **James 3:7–12** — No one tames the tongue; blessing and cursing from one mouth.
- ☐ Day 4 **James 3:13–16** — Earthly wisdom: bitter jealousy, selfish ambition, confusion.
- ☐ Day 5 **James 3:17–18** — Wisdom from above — pure, peaceful, gentle, full of mercy.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1 James says the tongue “defiles the whole body” (3:6) and that whoever doesn’t stumble in word is able “to bridle the whole body also” (3:2). Why do you think James gives words so much weight?

- 2 James says, “Out of the same mouth comes blessing and cursing” (3:10). When have you noticed that tension in how people talk?

- 3 Which mark of the wisdom from above (3:17) would you most like to grow in when conflict comes?

- 4 James ties real wisdom to peacemaking. What would it look like to sow peace (3:18) where you’d normally want to win?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② How might the tongue (3:1–12) and the two kinds of wisdom (3:13–18) be connected?

③ James says wise deeds are done “in gentleness of wisdom” (3:13). Where do your words most need that gentleness?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Pick one relationship where you want your words to build up. This week, practice the wisdom from above — choose one gentle, peaceful, merciful response where you'd normally react.

PRAYER

Father, I cannot tame my own tongue — so I bring it to You. Guard the spark before it becomes a fire. Cleanse the spring of my heart so that blessing, not cursing, flows out. Give me the wisdom from above, and make me a peacemaker who sows in peace. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1 James compares the tongue to small things with huge effects. Which pair does he use? (3:3–5)
 - (A) A key in a lock and a door on its hinges
 - (B) A seed in the soil and a tall tree
 - (C) A coin on a scale and a heavy load
 - (D) A bit in a horse's mouth and a ship's rudder
- 2 What inconsistency does James expose in 3:9–10?
 - (A) Working hard but resting too little
 - (B) Blessing God and cursing people made in His image
 - (C) Teaching others without studying first
 - (D) Giving gifts while keeping score
- 3 List the marks of the wisdom from above (3:17) — and what harvest does 3:18 promise?

- 4 How does 3:14–16 diagnose the counterfeit wisdom — where is it from, and what does it produce?

- 5 Without looking back, write James 3:17.

Answers are in the leader's guide, page 41.

SESSION 4 OF 4

Humility, Patience, and Prayer

Read James 4–5 · text on pages 48–49

4

James brings the letter home – from the fights among us and the cravings behind them, to a warning for the rich, to patience and the prayer of faith.

Where do conflicts come from? James locates them in the desires at war within us. We covet, we don't ask, we ask wrongly – and friendship with the world is hostility toward God. The answer is not striving but surrender: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit to God, resist the devil, draw near to God and He will draw near to you; humble yourselves, and He will exalt you. James warns against judging one another and against the proud presumption that boasts about tomorrow – your life is a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away; say instead, "If the Lord wills." Chapter 5 opens with a stern warning to the rich who hoard and defraud, then pivots to the suffering church: be patient like the farmer waiting for rain and the prophets who endured – the Lord's coming is near, and the Lord is full of compassion and mercy. The letter then turns to prayer: the one who suffers prays, the cheerful sing praises, the sick call the elders, and all confess their offenses to one another and pray, for the prayer of a righteous person, like Elijah's, is powerful. And the final word is a rescue: whoever turns a wanderer back from error saves a soul and covers a multitude of sins.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ☐ Trace what James says causes conflict, and how he calls us to respond to God (4:1–10)
- ☐ Hear his words about boasting about tomorrow and his warning to the rich (4:13–5:6)
- ☐ Learn what James says about patience and prayer (5:7–18)

THIS SESSION'S KEY PASSAGES

James 4:6	Grace to the Humble
James 4:8	Draw Near to God
James 4:14	Your Life a Vapor
James 5:16	Powerful Prayer

MEMORY VERSE

"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded."

JAMES 4:8 · WEB

A 5-DAY RHYTHM

Read James 4–5 slowly across the week using the plan below. Each day, ask God to open the text to you and to change you through it.

- ☐ Day 1 **James 4:1–6** – Conflicts from within; friendship with the world; God gives grace to the humble.
- ☐ Day 2 **James 4:7–12** – Submit, resist, draw near, humble yourselves; don't speak against one another.
- ☐ Day 3 **James 4:13–17** – Don't boast about tomorrow – your life is a vapor; say, "If the Lord wills."
- ☐ Day 4 **James 5:1–12** – Warning to the rich; be patient like the farmer and the prophets.
- ☐ Day 5 **James 5:13–20** – The prayer of faith; confess and pray; turning a wanderer back.

DISCUSS

Discussion questions

- 1** James says conflicts come from “pleasures that war in your members” (4:1). How have you seen that play out, in people generally or in yourself?

- 2** “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” What would drawing near actually look like for you this week?

- 3** Your life is “a vapor that appears for a little time.” How does that change the way you hold your plans, your money, and your time?

- 4** James ends on prayer and on restoring a wanderer. Who could you pray with — or gently turn back — this week?

REFLECT

Reflection questions

① Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

② Why does James turn to humility, patience, and prayer near the end of the letter? How might these answer the "double-minded" divided heart he names in 1:8 and 4:8?

③ Of James's last words, humble yourselves (4:10), say "If the Lord wills" (4:15), and pray (5:16), which is hardest for you, and why?

ONE THING TO LIVE OUT

Choose one: a place to humble yourself before God, a plan to hold loosely with "If the Lord wills," or one person to pray with this week. Take the concrete step.

PRAYER

Father, the wars around me begin in the wants within me. I submit to You — draw near, as You promised, and lift up the heart I humble before You. Teach me to hold tomorrow loosely and to wait for You with patience. And make me faithful in prayer — for the suffering, the sick, the straying — to the very end. Amen.

RECALL

Recall practice

Answer from memory first, then check the text. Pulling an answer out of memory is what makes it stay.

- 1** What promise accompanies the command “Draw near to God”? (4:8)
 - ☐ A All your doubts will disappear
 - ☐ B Your plans will all succeed
 - ☐ C God will draw near to you
 - ☐ D Your trials will soon cease
- 2** What does James say your life is, when you boast about tomorrow? (4:14)
 - ☐ A A vapor that appears, then vanishes away
 - ☐ B A stone that stands for ages
 - ☐ C A river that runs on forever
 - ☐ D A seed that waits through the winter
- 3** Whom does James hold up as examples of suffering patience — and what did “the outcome” show about the Lord? (5:10–11)

- 4** What does 5:16 connect confession and prayer to — and which prophet proves the power of prayer (5:17–18)?

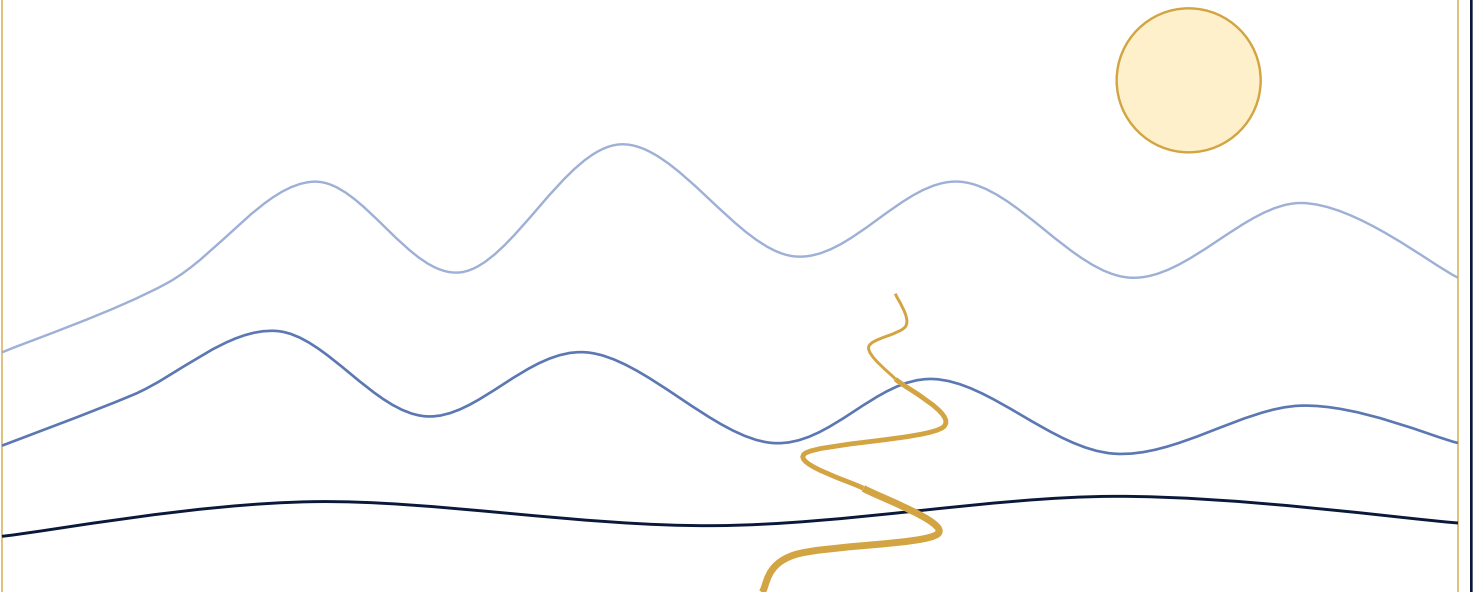
- 5** Without looking back, write James 4:8.

Answers are in the leader’s guide, page 44.

PART TWO

Reference

The movements, the themes, the passages, the people, and every chapter at a glance.



KEY MOVEMENTS · JAMES 1–5

Eight movements through the letter

James moves quickly from one practical command to the next. These eight movements carry you from counting trials as joy to the prayer of faith. Follow them in order.

1	Count It All Joy James 1:2–4	IN THE LETTER	Trials are not the enemy of faith but its proving ground — testing produces endurance, and endurance makes us complete, lacking nothing.
2	Ask for Wisdom James 1:5–8	IN THE LETTER	If anyone lacks wisdom, ask God, who gives generously — but ask in faith, without doubting; the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed.
3	Be Doers of the Word James 1:22–25	IN THE LETTER	Don't merely hear the word and deceive yourselves. The hearer who forgets is like someone who looks in a mirror and walks away; the doer is blessed.
4	Faith Without Works Is Dead James 2:14–26	IN THE LETTER	Faith that produces no works is dead. Abraham and Rahab show that living faith proves itself in action.
5	Taming the Tongue James 3:1–12	IN THE LETTER	A small fire can spread to a large forest. The tongue is a fire, and nobody can tame it — with it we bless God and curse people made in His image.
6	Wisdom from Above James 3:13–18	IN THE LETTER	Two wisdoms compete: the earthly wisdom of envy and selfish ambition, and the wisdom from above — pure, peaceful, gentle, and full of mercy.
7	Draw Near to God James 4:7–10	IN THE LETTER	Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Humble yourselves, and He will exalt you.
8	The Prayer of Faith James 5:13–18	IN THE LETTER	James turns to the power of prayer — in suffering, sickness, and confession. The prayer of a righteous person, like Elijah's, is powerful and effective.

MAJOR THEMES

The threads running through James

The ideas James returns to again and again — each a facet of a living, working faith.

01 Trials and endurance

James 1:2–4

Trials test faith and produce the steadfastness that makes a believer mature and complete — joy is possible because of what they produce.

03 Hearing and doing

James 1:22

A key test in the letter: hearing without doing is self-deception (1:22), and the doer “will be blessed in what he does” (1:25).

05 Faith and works

James 2:17

Faith and action are inseparable — “faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself” (2:17).

07 Humility vs. pride

James 4:6

“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

09 Patience

James 5:7–8

Like the farmer waiting for rain and the prophets who endured, believers wait for the Lord’s coming with patient, established hearts.

02 Wisdom from God

James 1:5

The wisdom to live well is not earned but asked for — God gives it generously to those who ask in faith, without any doubting.

04 The tongue

James 3:5–6

The small tongue can bless God or curse people, and James says, “these things ought not to be so” (3:10).

06 Favoritism and the poor

James 2:1–9

God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith; showing partiality is sin against the royal law, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” and dishonors the poor man.

08 Worldliness

James 4:4

Friendship with the world’s values is enmity with God. James calls for undivided loyalty — a heart cleansed of double-mindedness.

10 Prayer

James 5:16

Prayer threads through the letter — for wisdom, in suffering, over the sick, in confession. The righteous person’s prayer accomplishes much.

KEY PASSAGES

Passages worth knowing well

Ten texts worth knowing well. Read them, mark them, return to them.

James 1:2–3	Count It All Joy Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various temptations, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
James 1:5	Ask for Wisdom If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
James 1:17	Every Good Gift Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, nor turning shadow.
James 1:22	Doers of the Word Be doers of the word, and not only hearers, deluding your own selves.
James 1:27	Pure Religion Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.
James 2:17	Faith Without Works Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself.
James 3:17	Wisdom from Above The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.
James 4:7	Resist the Devil Be subject therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
James 4:8	Draw Near to God Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded.
James 5:16	Powerful Prayer Confess your offenses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The insistent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective.

KEY PEOPLE

The people of James

James names few individuals but draws on the great examples of faith — James, the author, and the Old Testament figures whose faith and prayer prove his point.

James

The writer, who calls himself “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). Tradition identifies him as the brother of Jesus.

The twelve tribes scattered

The original readers, addressed as “the twelve tribes which are in the Dispersion” — tested, tempted toward a divided heart, and tempted to favor the rich.

Abraham

Called “the friend of God,” whose faith was perfected by works when he offered Isaac — proof that living faith acts.

Rahab

Rahab the prostitute, justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way — a second witness that faith works.

Elijah

“a man with a nature like ours,” whose earnest prayer stopped and started the rain — James’s model of effective prayer.

The Lord Jesus

Rarely named but everywhere present — named at 1:1 and 2:1, and the Lord whose coming is at hand (5:8).

Job

Held up for “the perseverance of Job” (5:11): in the outcome the Lord showed that He “is full of compassion and mercy.”

ALL FIVE CHAPTERS · A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER JOURNEY

The Library

Each chapter is printed in full in Part Four, pages 46–49. Session pages are listed in the study plan on page 7.

FAITH THAT ENDURES

- 1 Trials and the Word
- 2 Faith and Favoritism

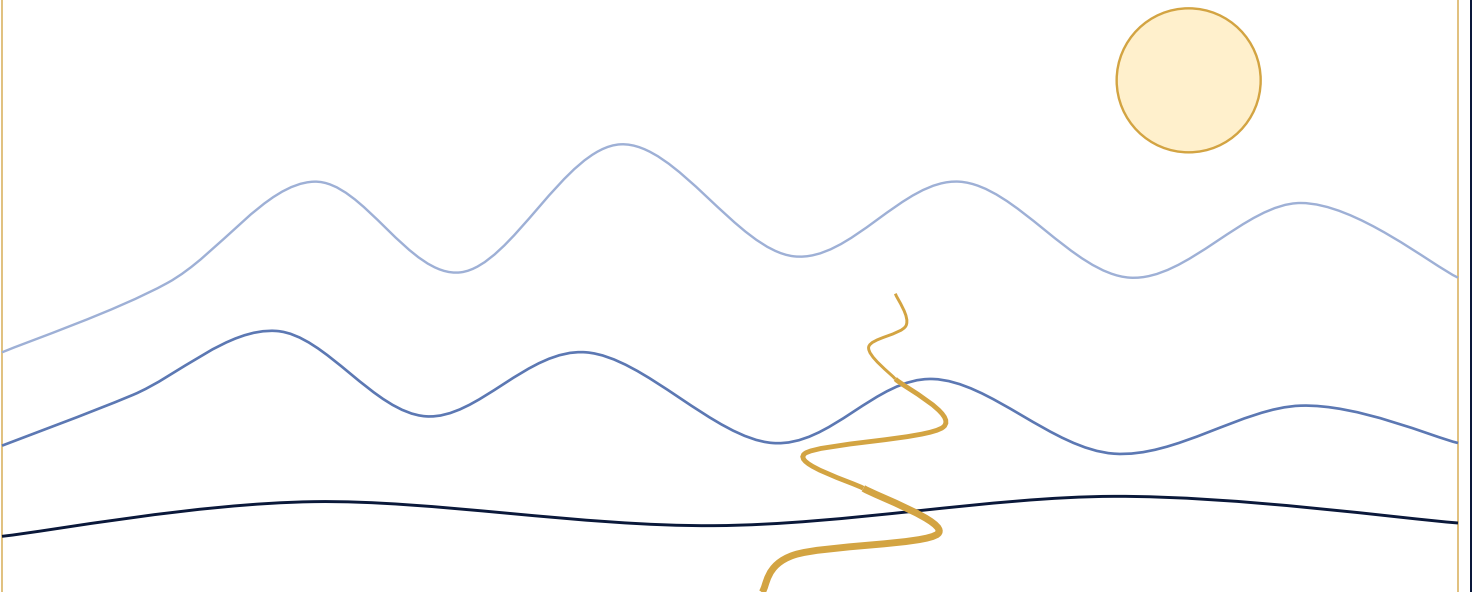
WISDOM THAT WORKS

- 3 The Tongue and True Wisdom
- 4 Friendship with the World
- 5 Patience and Prayer

PART THREE

Leader's Guide and Answer Guide

Group leader notes, a timed plan, an answer guide, and the recall answer key for every session.



LEADER'S GUIDE

Leading this study

You do not need to be a Bible teacher to lead this study. You need to have read the passage, to ask the questions, and to leave room for people to answer them.

Before you meet

- Read the session's chapters twice, once straight through and once slowly.
- Read that session's leader page. Note what the leader notes flag.
- Decide which questions matter most for your group. You will rarely finish all of them, and that is fine.
- Pray for the people who will be in the room, by name.

In the room

- Read Scripture aloud before discussing it. Let the text speak first.
- Ask the question, then wait. Silence usually means people are thinking.
- When an answer drifts, ask, "Where do you see that in the passage?"
- Keep to the time plan loosely. Protect the closing minutes for reflection and prayer.

How to read a leader page

Group leader notes How to open, where this session can go off course, and where it should land.

Timed plan A suggested use of the hour; the Observe prompt is in the leader's notes.

Answer guide What the passage supports for each discussion question, with verse references, and a follow-up question to use if the group stalls.

Reflection notes Reflection questions are personal and have no answer to check. Each has a short note on what it is for and how to lead it.

Recall answer key The answers to the recall practice page, exactly as the online study gives them.

USING THE ANSWER GUIDE

The answer guide is there so you can lead with confidence. It is not a script to read aloud. Let the group do the finding; use the guide to confirm, to fill a gap, or to bring the conversation back to the text. Questions marked **PERSONAL** have no single right answer. For those, the guide gives what the passage offers and what a good answer tends to include.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 1 OF 4

Trials, Wisdom, and the Word

James 1 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 9–12 · memory verse James 1:22

GROUP LEADER NOTES

This chapter opens the letter, so don't rush it. Two ideas anchor the discussion: trials have a purpose (1:2–4), and faith must act (1:22–25). Watch for the group treating “doers of the word” as mere busyness — James means a faith that integrates hearing and doing, not activity for its own sake. The mirror image is worth sitting in: the hearer looks, goes away, and forgets (1:23–24). Keep the tone hopeful, not crushing. At 1:5–8, keep the focus on God, who gives “liberally and without reproach” (1:5). The doubt James warns about is the divided, double-minded heart (1:8), not honest questions or a struggling faith. Do not let anyone leave thinking an unanswered prayer proves they did not believe enough.

SIXTY MINUTES

Read this before you gather. The Observe prompt is in the leader's notes on page 35.

5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1 James says to count trials as joy because of what they produce. How have you seen endurance grow through a trial, in your own life or someone else's? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. James writes, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various temptations” (1:2), because “the testing of your faith produces endurance” (1:3). He says endurance leads to being “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (1:4). Verse 12 adds, “Blessed is a person who endures temptation” (1:12). People can describe a time when endurance grew, their own or someone else's, and no one has to share more than they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:2–4. What does James say the testing of faith produces, and where does endurance lead?

2 Where do you most need wisdom, and what does James 1:5 promise about asking?

PERSONAL

James says, “if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God” (1:5). He describes God as the one “who gives to all liberally and without reproach,” and he promises, “it will be given to him.” Verse 6 says to ask “in faith, without any doubting” (1:6). The first part of the question is personal, so people can name an area of life where they want wisdom and say as little as they like.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:5–6. What does James say God gives, and how should a person ask?

3 James says we deceive ourselves by hearing the word but not doing it. What does it look like to be a doer of the word, and not only a hearer?

James says, “be doers of the word, and not only hearers” (1:22), and he names the danger, “deluding your own selves.” He gives a picture of a man “looking at his natural face in a mirror” (1:23) who then “goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was” (1:24). The person who “looks into the perfect law of freedom and continues” (1:25) is the one who “will be blessed in what he does.” Being a doer means acting on what the word says, as the mirror picture shows.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:22–25. What does the hearer do after looking in the mirror, and what is promised to the doer?

4 “Pure religion” cares for the vulnerable and stays unstained by the world. Which half of that do you find harder? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. James says pure religion is “to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (1:27) and “to keep oneself unstained by the world.” Verse 26 sets a warning beside it, that the religion of a person who “doesn’t bridle his tongue” (1:26) is “worthless.” People can say which half stretches them more, and they can share as much as they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 1:26–27. What two things does James say pure religion is?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where is God meeting you in this session’s reading?

This question asks each person to name a phrase from James 1 where God felt near. Many will point to 1:5, which promises wisdom to anyone who asks, or to 1:17, which says every good gift is from above. Share a short answer of your own first, and let others say as much or as little as they like.

2 Why does James connect trials, wisdom, and doing the word so closely in one chapter? What is he establishing about the kind of faith he’s after?

This question asks the group to find the links James makes inside chapter 1. Trials lead to endurance (1:3), a lack of wisdom is met by asking (1:5), and the chapter turns to doing the word (1:22). Let people point to the verses they see joining these parts, and accept more than one answer.

- 3** James says the doer “will be blessed in what he does” (1:25). What have you heard that you have not yet done?

This question asks each person to name one thing they have heard from God’s word but not yet acted on, in the light of 1:22–25. A short, honest answer is enough, and nobody has to say more than they choose.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- 1** Why can believers “count it all joy” when they fall into various temptations? (1:2–3)

B The testing of your faith produces endurance

“the testing of your faith produces endurance”
— and letting endurance have its perfect work leaves you lacking in nothing (1:4).

- 2** If anyone lacks wisdom, what should he do? (1:5)

D Ask God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach

“let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach” — asked in faith, without doubting (1:6).

- 3** James 1:19 gives three speeds for the believer. What are they?

Swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger
— for man’s anger doesn’t produce God’s righteousness (1:20).

- 4** What self-deception does 1:22 warn against — and what picture does James paint of it (1:23–24)?

Being a hearer of the word and not a doer — like a man who sees his face in a mirror and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

- 5** Memory verse

James 1:22, printed on page 9.

LEADER'S NOTES

Observe · the 10-minute step in the timed plan on page 33. Read James 1:2–8 and 1:22–25. What does James say trials produce, and what does he promise the one who asks for wisdom? Then notice the mirror picture: what makes the difference between the forgetful hearer and the blessed doer?

Care note · 1:2–4. James does not call pain good or ask anyone to feel happy about it. Do not use these verses to hurry someone through grief, illness, or abuse. If anyone says they want to die, stay with them and see page 58.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 2 OF 4

Faith That Acts

James 2 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 13–16 · memory verse James 2:17

GROUP LEADER NOTES

This chapter raises the Paul-and-James question, so name it openly and keep the group in the text: James 2:22 says, “faith worked with his works, and by works faith was perfected.” Don’t let “faith apart from works is dead” become a performance treadmill. Ground it in the two cases James gives: how we treat the poor, and whether our faith actually moves our hands. However the group reads 2:24, hold on to what Paul states plainly and James never denies: we are saved by God’s grace through faith, not by earning it (Ephesians 2:8–9), and the faith that saves is not idle (Ephesians 2:10).

SIXTY MINUTES

Read this before you gather. The Observe prompt is in the leader’s notes on page 38.

5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1 James 2:2–4 describes giving the best seat to the wealthy visitor. What might that look like today in a church or group? **PERSONAL**

James describes a man “with a gold ring, in fine clothing” (2:2) and a poor man “in filthy clothing” who both come in. The people pay “special attention to him who wears the fine clothing” (2:3) and tell the poor man, “Stand there.” James says this shows “partiality among yourselves” (2:4) and makes them “judges with evil thoughts.” In 2:5 he says God chose “those who are poor in this world to be rich in faith.” People can say how this might look today, and they can speak of groups in general.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:2–5. Who gets the good place, and whom does God choose?

- 2 James says, “The demons also believe, and shudder” (2:19). What is the difference between believing that God is one and the faith James describes?

In 2:14 James describes a man who “says he has faith, but has no works.” He writes, “You believe that God is one. You do well.” (2:19) He then adds, “The demons also believe, and shudder.” Believing that God is one is correct, and the demons hold that belief too. James asks for a faith that “worked with his works” (2:22), as Abraham’s did.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:19. What do the demons believe, and what do they do?

3 In 2:15–16, words are offered but nothing is given. What would meeting the need look like?

James pictures a brother or sister who is “naked and in lack of daily food” (2:15). One of you says, “Go in peace. Be warmed and filled” (2:16), yet gives none of “the things the body needs.” James asks what good that is. The text answers by showing that nothing was done for the person. Meeting the need would mean giving the clothing and food the person lacks, and people can say what that might look like in their own setting.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:15–16. What does the person lack, and what do the words give?

4 James says “faith worked with his works” (2:22). What does that say about the kind of faith he describes?

James says Abraham was “justified by works” (2:21) when he “offered up Isaac his son on the altar.” He then says, “faith worked with his works, and by works faith was perfected” (2:22). In 2:17 the same idea appears as “faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself.” James describes a faith that is active and is perfected in what it does.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 2:21–22. What did Abraham do, and what happened to his faith?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

This question asks each person to name a phrase from James 2 where God felt near. Some will point to 2:5, where God chooses the poor to be rich in faith, and some to 2:13, which says that mercy triumphs over judgment. Share a short answer of your own first, and let others say as much or as little as they like.

2 Readers ask how James fits with Paul's teaching on faith and works. What does James himself say in 2:21–25, and what questions does it raise for you?

This question asks the group to read 2:21–25 closely and say what questions it raises. James writes that a person is justified by works and not only by faith (2:24), and many readers compare this with Paul's teaching on faith and works. Faithful readers explain the relationship in different ways. Keep the group in the text of James, let people name their questions, and do not push for one resolution.

3 James pictures kind words with nothing given (2:15–16). Where might your own faith be stopping at words?

This question asks each person to look honestly at one place where good intentions have not yet become help, in the spirit of 2:15–16. Keep it gentle; the aim is a next step, not guilt. Nobody has to say more than they choose.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

1 What does James call showing favoritism to the rich man with the gold ring? (2:1–4, 9)

A Sin — being convicted by the law as transgressors

“if you show partiality, you commit sin” — the royal law is to love your neighbor as yourself (2:8).

3 What good is it to tell a poorly clothed, hungry brother “Go in peace. Be warmed and filled.”? (2:15–16)

Nothing. If you don't give the things the body needs, the words do no good. That is James's picture of faith that has no works.

5 Memory verse

James 2:17, printed on page 13.

2 What is faith without works, according to 2:17?

C Dead in itself

“if it has no works, is dead in itself” — and 2:26: as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead.

4 Which two Old Testament people does James call as witnesses that faith works (2:21–25) — and what did each do?

Abraham, who offered up Isaac — faith working with his works, fulfilling “Abraham believed God” (Genesis 15:6) — and Rahab, who received the messengers and sent them out another way.

LEADER'S NOTES

Observe · the 10-minute step in the timed plan on page 36. Read James 2:14–26. List the examples James uses to show that faith without works is dead. What do Abraham and Rahab have in common, and how does each prove James's point?

Care note · 2:1–9, 2:15–16. Speak of groups in general; never point at anyone in the room for what they wear, own, or lack. On faith and works, see the group leader notes on page 36.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 3 OF 4

The Tongue and True Wisdom

James 3 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 17–20 · memory verse James 3:17

GROUP LEADER NOTES

Two movements here: the tongue (3:1–12) and the two wisdoms (3:13–18). Keep the tongue section honest but not despairing — James says nobody can tame it (3:8), so don't let the group leave with a self-improvement project. Point them to the wisdom from above (3:17) and to God, who gives wisdom to those who ask (1:5). On wisdom, push past 'smart': James measures wisdom by character, not cleverness. The marks in 3:17 make a good self-examination — read them slowly and let people locate where they're thin.

SIXTY MINUTES

Read this before you gather. The Observe prompt is in the leader's notes on page 41.

5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1 James says the tongue “defiles the whole body” (3:6) and that whoever doesn't stumble in word is able “to bridle the whole body also” (3:2). Why do you think James gives words so much weight?

James says, “Anyone who doesn't stumble in word is a perfect person” (3:2), and that such a person is “able to bridle the whole body also.” He gives pictures of small things that direct large ones, “bits into the horses' mouths” (3:3) and “a very small rudder” (3:4). He says the tongue “boasts great things” (3:5) and that it “defiles the whole body” (3:6). James gives words weight because the small tongue has a large effect.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:2–6. What does James say the tongue does to the whole body?

- 2 James says, “Out of the same mouth comes blessing and cursing” (3:10). When have you noticed that tension in how people talk? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. James says, “With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men who are made in the image of God” (3:9). He says, “Out of the same mouth comes blessing and cursing” (3:10), and adds, “these things ought not to be so.” He then gives a spring that cannot send out “fresh and bitter water” (3:11) and a fig tree that cannot yield olives (3:12). People can describe the tension they have noticed, and they can speak of people in general.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:9–10. What two things come out of the same mouth?

3 Which mark of the wisdom from above (3:17) would you most like to grow in when conflict comes? (PERSONAL)

James describes the wisdom from above as “first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy” (3:17). The list begins with pure and peaceful and ends with the absence of partiality and hypocrisy. People can choose the mark they most want to grow in when conflict comes, and they can say why.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:17. Which marks does James name for the wisdom from above?

4 James ties real wisdom to peacemaking. What would it look like to sow peace (3:18) where you'd normally want to win? (PERSONAL)

James names “bitter jealousy and selfish ambition” (3:14), and he says that where those are, there is “confusion and every evil deed” (3:16). The wisdom from above is “peaceful” (3:17) and “gentle.” He says, “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (3:18). People can say how peace might look where they would usually want to win, and they can share as much as they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 3:16–18. What is found where jealousy and selfish ambition are, and what is sown in peace?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where is God meeting you in this session's reading?

This question asks each person to name a phrase from James 3 where God felt near. Some will point to 3:17, which describes the wisdom from above, and some to 3:18 on sowing peace. Share a short answer of your own first, and let others say as much or as little as they like.

2 How might the tongue (3:1–12) and the two kinds of wisdom (3:13–18) be connected?

This question asks the group to look for the link between 3:1–12 and 3:13–18. James moves from words to wisdom, and verse 13 asks who is wise and understanding and says to show it by good conduct. Let people offer their own connections from the text, and accept more than one answer.

3 James says wise deeds are done “in gentleness of wisdom” (3:13). Where do your words most need that gentleness?

This question asks each person to name one relationship or setting where gentler words would show the wisdom from above (3:13, 3:17). A short, specific answer is enough, and nobody has to say more than they choose.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

-
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 James compares the tongue to small things with huge effects. Which pair does he use? (3:3–5)</p> <p>D A bit in a horse's mouth and a ship's rudder</p> <p>Bits turn horses, a small rudder steers a ship driven by fierce winds — “the tongue is also a little member, and boasts great things.”</p> | <p>2 What inconsistency does James expose in 3:9–10?</p> <p>B Blessing God and cursing people made in His image</p> <p>“Out of the same mouth comes blessing and cursing” — a spring doesn't send out fresh and bitter water from the same opening (3:11).</p> |
|---|--|
-
- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>3 List the marks of the wisdom from above (3:17) — and what harvest does 3:18 promise?</p> <p>First pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy — and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.</p> | <p>4 How does 3:14–16 diagnose the counterfeit wisdom — where is it from, and what does it produce?</p> <p>It isn't from above but is earthly, sensual, and demonic; where bitter jealousy and selfish ambition are, there is confusion and every evil deed.</p> |
|--|---|
-
- 5** **Memory verse**
- James 3:17, printed on page 17.

LEADER'S NOTES

Observe · the 10-minute step in the timed plan on page 39. Read James 3:1–12, then 3:13–18. List the images James uses for the tongue. Then list the marks of “the wisdom that is from above” (3:17) and compare them with wisdom that is “earthly” (3:15). What makes the two different in kind, not just degree?

Care note · 3:1–12. Words can wound. If someone says another person's words have harmed them, believe them and talk after. James 3 is never a reason to keep quiet about abuse.

LEADER'S GUIDE · SESSION 4 OF 4

Humility, Patience, and Prayer

James 4–5 · 60 minutes · 5–12 people · participant pages 21–24 · memory verse James 4:8

GROUP LEADER NOTES

This session covers two chapters, so anchor it on the spine that runs through both: humble dependence on God. James 4:7–10 is a turning point: it calls the “double-minded” (4:8; compare 1:8) to submit to God and draw near. Don’t skip the warning to the rich (5:1–6). It names specific sins: hoarded wealth, wages kept back by fraud, and self-indulgent luxury. End where James ends — on prayer and on restoring the wanderer — and consider closing the whole study by actually praying for one another as 5:16 commands. At 5:14–16, stay in the text and stay gentle. James tells the sick to call the elders and be prayed for; he does not say that anyone who stays sick lacks faith or has hidden sin (note “if he has committed sins,” 5:15). Many faithful believers have prayed for healing and not received it. Thoughtful readers differ on whether “healed” means bodily healing, spiritual restoration, or both, so do not press for one answer. Never let this passage become a verdict on anyone’s illness.

SIXTY MINUTES

Read this before you gather. The Observe prompt is in the leader’s notes on page 44.

5	10	10	20	15
Open	Read together	Observe	Interpret	Apply and pray

ANSWER GUIDE

Discussion questions

- 1 James says conflicts come from “pleasures that war in your members” (4:1). How have you seen that play out, in people generally or in yourself? **PERSONAL**

James traces conflict to “your pleasures that war in your members” (4:1). He says, “You lust, and don’t have” (4:2), and, “You don’t have, because you don’t ask.” In 4:3 he adds that some ask “with wrong motives.” People can say how they have seen this, in people generally or in themselves, and they can share as much as they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:1–3. Where does James say the fights come from, and why do they not have?

2 “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” What would drawing near actually look like for you this week? **PERSONAL**

There is no single right answer. James says, “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” (4:8). The next lines say what that involves, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners” and “Purify your hearts, you double-minded.” He also says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you” (4:10). People can say what drawing near might look like this week, and they can share as much as they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:7–10. What does James say God does when we draw near?

3 Your life is “a vapor that appears for a little time.” How does that change the way you hold your plans, your money, and your time? **PERSONAL**

In 4:13 James describes people who plan to “spend a year there, trade, and make a profit.” He says, “you are a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away” (4:14). He says people ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will both live, and do this or that” (4:15). People can say how this changes the way they hold their plans, their money, and their time.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 4:13–15. What does James say life is, and what should a person say?

4 James ends on prayer and on restoring a wanderer. Who could you pray with — or gently turn back — this week? **PERSONAL**

James says, “Confess your offenses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed” (5:16). He adds, “The insistent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective.” The letter ends with a wanderer. James writes, “if any among you wanders from the truth and someone turns him back” (5:19), and says the one who turns a sinner back “will save a soul from death” (5:20). Readers differ on whether the death is spiritual or physical, and on how settled the wanderer’s standing is; keep to James’s point, that caring enough to turn someone back matters. People can name someone to pray with or to turn back gently, and they can share as much as they choose.

IF THE GROUP STALLS Read 5:16–20. What does James say about prayer, and what happens when a wanderer is turned back?

NOTES

Reflection questions

1 Where is God meeting you in this session’s reading?

This question asks each person to name a phrase from James 4–5 where God felt near. Some will point to 4:8, the promise that God draws near, and some to 5:11, which says the Lord is full of compassion and mercy. Share a short answer of your own first, and let others say as much or as little as they like.

- 2** Why does James turn to humility, patience, and prayer near the end of the letter? How might these answer the “double-minded” divided heart he names in 1:8 and 4:8?

This question asks the group to link humility (4:6–10), patience (5:7–11), and prayer (5:13–18) to the divided heart James names in 1:8 and 4:8. James does not state the link in one sentence. Let people point to verses that connect these themes, and accept more than one answer.

- 3** Of James's last words, humble yourselves (4:10), say “If the Lord wills” (4:15), and pray (5:16), which is hardest for you, and why?

This question asks each person to name which of the three is hardest, and why. Accept short, honest answers; the “One thing to live out” then turns the answer into a step. Nobody has to say more than they choose.

ANSWER KEY

Recall practice

- 1** What promise accompanies the command “Draw near to God”? (4:8)

C God will draw near to you

“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” — with cleansed hands and purified hearts.

- 2** What does James say your life is, when you boast about tomorrow? (4:14)

A A vapor that appears, then vanishes away

“you are a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away” — so say, “If the Lord wills” (4:15).

- 3** Whom does James hold up as examples of suffering patience — and what did “the outcome” show about the Lord? (5:10–11)

The prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord, and Job, whose outcome showed “how the Lord is full of compassion and mercy” (5:11).

- 4** What does 5:16 connect confession and prayer to — and which prophet proves the power of prayer (5:17–18)?

Confess your offenses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed — the insistent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective. Elijah, a man with a nature like ours, prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it didn't rain for three years and six months; he prayed again, and the sky gave rain.

- 5** Memory verse

James 4:8, printed on page 21.

LEADER'S NOTES

Observe · the 10-minute step in the timed plan on page 42. Read James 4:7–10 and 5:13–20. List the commands in 4:7–10: what is the path from pride to grace? Then notice every situation in 5:13–18 that calls for prayer. What does James promise about the prayer of a righteous person?

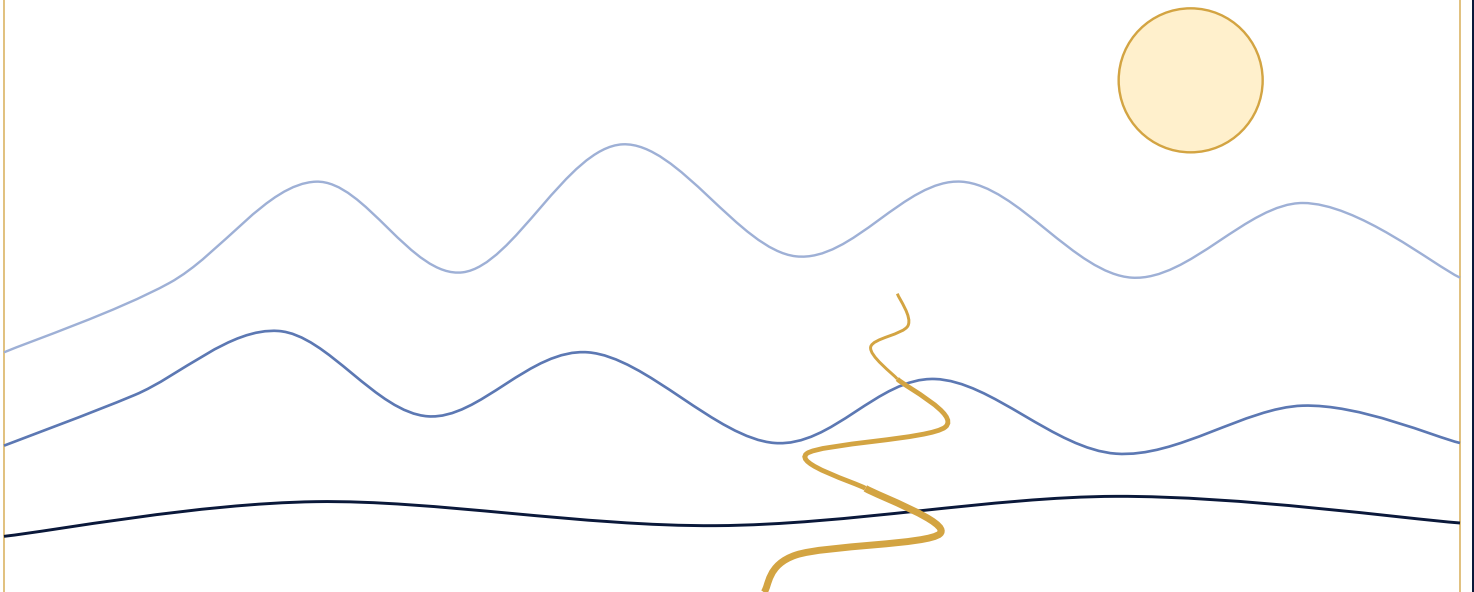
Care note · 5:16. Confession is never forced. Never ask someone who was harmed to confess to the one who harmed them. See page 58.

Care note · 5:1–6, 5:19–20. Speak of groups, as at 2:1–9. Turning a wanderer back is never shaming, and never means sending anyone back to someone unsafe.

PART FOUR

The Letter of James

The complete text in the World English Bible, arranged by session.



WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE

The Letter of James

The complete text, arranged by session. Verse numbers are small and raised; each session's reading begins with a tinted heading.

SESSION 1 READING

James 1 Trials, Wisdom, and the Word · session on page 9

JAMES 1

Trials and the Word

¹James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are in the Dispersion: Greetings.

²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various temptations, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴Let endurance have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, without any doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. ⁷For that man shouldn't think that he will receive anything from the Lord. ⁸He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹But let the brother in humble circumstances glory in his high position; ¹⁰and the rich, in that he is made humble, because like the flower in the grass, he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun arises with the scorching wind and withers the grass, and the flower in it falls, and the beauty of its appearance perishes. So the rich man will also fade away in his pursuits.

¹²Blessed is a person who endures temptation, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to those who love him.

¹³Let no man say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God," for God can't be tempted by evil,

and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. ¹⁵Then the lust, when it has conceived, bears sin. The sin, when it is full grown, produces death. ¹⁶Don't be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, nor turning shadow. ¹⁸Of his own will he gave birth to us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

¹⁹So, then, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man doesn't produce the righteousness of God. ²¹Therefore, putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with humility the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. ²²But be doers of the word, and not only hearers, deluding your own selves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for he sees himself, and goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵But he who looks into the perfect law of freedom and continues, not being a hearer who forgets, but a doer of the work, this man will be blessed in what he does.

²⁶If anyone among you thinks himself to be religious while he doesn't bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, this man's religion is worthless.

²⁷Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in

their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

SESSION 2 READING

James 2

Faith That Acts · session on page 13

JAMES 2

Faith and Favoritism

¹My brothers, don't hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with partiality. ²For if a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, comes into your synagogue, and a poor man in filthy clothing also comes in, ³and you pay special attention to him who wears the fine clothing and say, "Sit here in a good place;" and you tell the poor man, "Stand there," or "Sit by my footstool" ⁴haven't you shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵Listen, my beloved brothers. Didn't God choose those who are poor in this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor man. Don't the rich oppress you, and personally drag you before the courts? ⁷Don't they blaspheme the honorable name by which you are called?

⁸However, if you fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well. ⁹But if you show partiality, you commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors.

¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. ¹¹For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak and so do, as men who are to be judged by a law of freedom. ¹³For judgment is without mercy to him who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if a man says he has faith, but has no works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵And if a brother or sister is naked and in lack of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you tells them, "Go in peace. Be warmed and filled;" yet you didn't give them the things the body needs, what good is it? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself. ¹⁸Yes, a man will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

¹⁹You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰But do you want to know, vain man, that faith apart from works is dead?

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

In verse 20, some manuscripts read "useless" (or "barren") rather than "dead." Either way the point stands: faith that produces no works accomplishes nothing.

²¹Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²²You see that faith worked with his works, and by works faith was perfected. ²³So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴You see then that by works, a man is justified, and not only by faith. ²⁵In the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute also justified by works, in that she received the messengers and sent them out another way? ²⁶For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

SESSION 3 READING

James 3 The Tongue and True Wisdom · session on page 17**JAMES 3**

The Tongue and True Wisdom

¹Let not many of you be teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive heavier judgment. ²For we all stumble in many things. Anyone who doesn't stumble in word is a perfect person, able to bridle the whole body also. ³Indeed, we put bits into the horses' mouths so that they may obey us, and we guide their whole body. ⁴Behold, the ships also, though they are so big and are driven by fierce winds, are yet guided by a very small rudder, wherever the pilot desires. ⁵So the tongue is also a little member, and boasts great things. See how a small fire can spread to a large forest! ⁶And the tongue is a fire. The world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire by Gehenna. ⁷For every kind of animal, bird, creeping thing, and sea creature, is tamed, and has been tamed by mankind; ⁸but nobody can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men who are made in the image of God. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth comes blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring send out from the same opening fresh and bitter water? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brothers, yield olives, or a vine figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh water.

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good conduct that his deeds are done in gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't boast and don't lie against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition are, there is confusion and every evil deed. ¹⁷But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. ¹⁸Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

SESSION 4 READING

James 4–5 Humility, Patience, and Prayer · session on page 21**JAMES 4**

Friendship with the World

¹Where do wars and fightings among you come from? Don't they come from your pleasures that war in your members? ²You lust, and don't have. You murder and covet, and can't obtain. You fight and make war. You don't have, because you don't ask. ³You ask, and don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. ⁴You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is hostility

toward God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously"? ⁶But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." ⁷Be subject therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Lament, mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to

gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you.

¹¹Don't speak against one another, brothers. He who speaks against a brother and 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. ¹²Only one is the lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge another?

¹³Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow let's go into this city, and spend a year there, trade, and make a profit." ¹⁴Whereas you don't know what your life will be like tomorrow. For what is your life? For you are a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. ¹⁵For you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will both live, and do this or that." ¹⁶But now you glory in your boasting. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷To him therefore who knows to do good, and doesn't do it, to him it is sin.

JAMES 5

Patience and Prayer

¹Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming on you. ²Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and your silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be for a testimony against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up your treasure in the last days. ⁴Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you have kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of those who reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Armies.

⁵You have lived in luxury on the earth, and taken your pleasure. You have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and you have murdered the righteous one. He doesn't resist you.

⁷Be patient therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious

fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receives the early and late rain. ⁸You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

⁹Don't grumble, brothers, against one another, so that you won't be judged. Behold, the judge stands at the door. ¹⁰Take, brothers, for an example of suffering and of perseverance, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we call them blessed who endured. You have heard of the perseverance of Job, and have seen the Lord in the outcome, and how the Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

¹²But above all things, my brothers, don't swear—not by heaven, or by the earth, or by any other oath; but let your "yes" be "yes", and your "no", "no", so that you don't fall into hypocrisy.

¹³Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praises. ¹⁴Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the assembly, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, ¹⁵and the prayer of faith will heal him who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Confess your offenses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The insistent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it didn't rain on the earth for three years and six months. ¹⁸He prayed again, and the sky gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

¹⁹Brothers, if any among you wanders from the truth and someone turns him back, ²⁰let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

At 4:5 (page 48) the Greek can be read more than one way: the Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously (as the WEB has it), God yearns jealously over the spirit He placed in us, or the human spirit in us longs with envy. No single Old Testament verse has these exact words.

AFTER THE LAST SESSION

Four verses to carry

One verse from each session. Read them aloud once a week and they will stay with you.

1 “But be doers of the word, and not only hearers, deluding your own selves.”

JAMES 1:22

2 “Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself.”

JAMES 2:17

3 “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

JAMES 3:17

4 “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

JAMES 4:8

WHAT COMES NEXT

James is step 5 of 6 on the **Disciple** path.

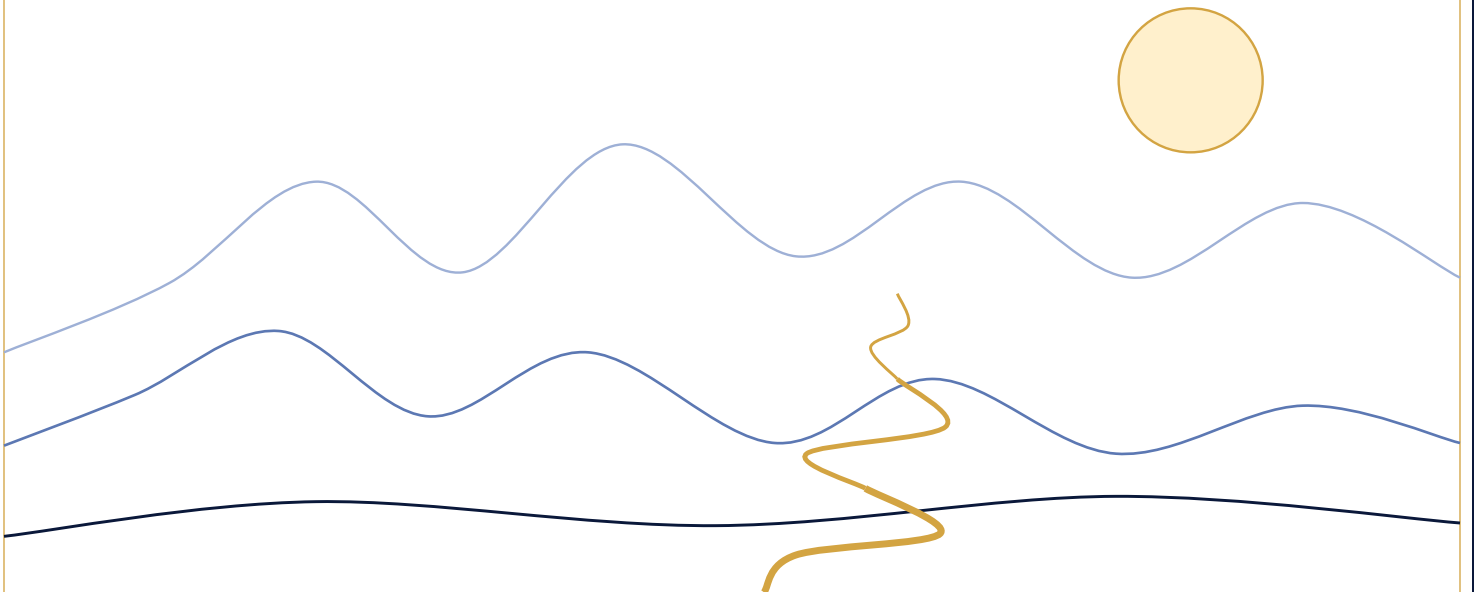


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PART FIVE

Take it with you

A worked example, a harder question for each session, a glossary, a Scripture index, and the pages that connect you to the people behind this study.



PART FIVE · BEFORE YOU BEGIN

What a good answer looks like

Most discussion questions do not have one right answer, but they do have good ones. Here is the third question of Session 1, a sample answer written the way a participant might write it, and the note a leader has beside it. Read all three once. That is what “doing the study” looks like.

- 3 James says we deceive ourselves by hearing the word but not doing it. What does it look like to be a doer of the word, and not only a hearer?**

A SAMPLE ANSWER · WRITTEN IN THE MARGIN

James says to “be doers of the word, and not only hearers” (1:22). What I notice is that the hearer does look. He sees “his natural face in a mirror” (1:23). The trouble is that he “goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was” (1:24). So the failure is not hearing; it is walking away. The doer “looks into the perfect law of freedom and continues” (1:25). For me, being a doer starts with not closing the book on what I just read. This week that means being “slow to speak” (1:19) in one conversation I usually rush.

WHY IT IS A GOOD ANSWER

It stays in the passage. It quotes the words on the page (“his natural face in a mirror,” “immediately forgets,” “looks into the perfect law of freedom and continues”) instead of general church language.

It says something in the writer’s own words. “The failure is not hearing; it is walking away” is not in the Bible; it is what the writer understood from 1:23–25.

It ends with the writer, not with a summary. The last two sentences turn from the mirror to one conversation this week. That is what makes it an answer and not a summary.

THE LEADER’S NOTE FOR THE SAME QUESTION · PAGE 34

James says, “be doers of the word, and not only hearers” (1:22), and he names the danger, “deluding your own selves.” He gives a picture of a man “looking at his natural face in a mirror” (1:23) who then “goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was” (1:24). The person who “looks into the perfect law of freedom and continues” (1:25) is the one who “will be blessed in what he does.” Being a doer means acting on what the word says, as the mirror picture shows.

Getting the most from this guide

- **Write before you talk.** In a group, two minutes of silent writing before the first question gives quieter people time to find their words.
- **Watch for commands.** James gives dozens of them in five short chapters. Underline each one and ask what it would look like on an ordinary Tuesday.
- **Do the recall page from memory first.** Guessing and then checking is how the passage stays with you.
- **Keep the one thing small.** The “One thing to live out” is meant to be done, not admired.

PART FIVE · FOR GROUPS THAT WANT MORE

Go deeper

One extra question for each session, for groups that have walked with James before. Each comes with a leader's note. Leaders can use one in the Interpret minutes of the timed plan if the room has the energy. This section is for leaders.

Session 1 · James 1:13–15

- James says God “tempts no one” (1:13), yet trials are to be counted as joy (1:2). How do trials and temptation differ?

LEADER'S NOTE

One Greek word family lies behind both (1:2, 13); context decides. God leads no one into sin; each is “drawn away by his own lust” (1:14).

Session 2 · James 2:21–24

- James says, “by works, a man is justified, and not only by faith” (2:24). Paul says a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law (Romans 3:28). How can both stand?

LEADER'S NOTE

James answers a faith that only talks (2:14, 19); his Abraham example comes long after “Abraham believed God” (2:23). Traditions explain the fit differently; the major ones agree saving faith is not idle.

Session 3 · James 3:1

- James opens the tongue passage with “Let not many of you be teachers” (3:1). Why begin there?

LEADER'S NOTE

Teaching is done with words, so the warning leads into 3:2. It does not forbid teaching, and it never asks anyone to stay silent about harm.

Session 4 · James 5:14–16

- James says “the prayer of faith will heal him who is sick” (5:15). What does the passage promise, and what does it not say?

LEADER'S NOTE

It calls the elders to pray and anoint (5:14); churches practice this differently. It does not say lasting sickness means weak faith or hidden sin (“if he has committed sins,” 5:15). Prayer does not replace a doctor.

PART FIVE · FOR LEADERS

Objectives and questions, aligned

Every session names what it is for. This table shows which discussion (D) and reflection (R) questions carry each objective, so a leader who is short on time can cut a question without cutting an aim.

D = discussion questions on the session's second page; R = reflection questions on its third page. A dash means no question asks that directly. A star means a partial fit: the question touches the objective without asking it outright. A leader who wants a dashed objective covered can raise it from the passage or the leader page. The recall practice on each fourth page serves most objectives by retrieval. Session 4's fourth question also reaches the wanderer (5:19–20), a step past its third objective. Session 2's first objective, favoritism, has no reflection question of its own; the leader can raise it from 2:1–9.

	LEARNING OBJECTIVE	DISCUSSION	REFLECTION
1	See why James tells believers to count trials as joy (1:2–4)	D1	R2*
	Learn what James says about asking God for wisdom (1:5–8)	D2	R2*
	Understand what it means to be a doer of the word, and not only a hearer (1:22–25)	D3, D4	R3
2	Notice what James says about showing favoritism (2:1–9)	D1	—
	Read what James says about faith that has no works (2:14–26)	D2, D3	R2*, R3
	Follow how Abraham and Rahab illustrate his point (2:21–25)	D4	R2
3	See how James describes the power of the tongue (3:1–12)	D1, D2	R2
	Compare the two kinds of wisdom in 3:13–18	D4*	R2, R3
	Identify the marks of the wisdom from above (3:17)	D3	R3*
4	Trace what James says causes conflict, and how he calls us to respond to God (4:1–10)	D1, D2	R2, R3
	Hear his words about boasting about tomorrow and his warning to the rich (4:13–5:6)	D3*	R3*
	Learn what James says about patience and prayer (5:7–18)	D4*	R2, R3

PART FIVE · WORDS JAMES USES

Glossary

Short definitions of the words a first-time reader of James is most likely to stumble on. Chapter and verse point to where James uses them.

Crown of life

The reward promised to the one who endures testing, “which the Lord promised to those who love him” (1:12).

Dispersion

God’s people living scattered outside the land of Israel. James writes “to the twelve tribes which are in the Dispersion” (1:1).

Double-minded

Divided in loyalty. James uses it of the one who doubts (1:8) and calls the double-minded to purify their hearts (4:8).

Elders

Leaders of the local church. James tells the sick to call “the elders of the assembly” to pray (5:14).

Endurance

Staying faithful under pressure. “The testing of your faith produces endurance” (1:3); James points to “the perseverance of Job” (5:11).

Father of lights

James’s name for God, the giver of every good gift, “with whom can be no variation, nor turning shadow” (1:17).

Gehenna

A valley outside Jerusalem whose name became a picture of judgment. James says the tongue is “set on fire by Gehenna” (3:6).

Justified

Shown or declared to be in the right. James says Abraham and Rahab were “justified by works” (2:21, 25). Paul uses the word in another argument; see Go deeper, page 53.

Lord of Armies

A title for God as ruler over heaven’s hosts. The cries of cheated workers reach “the ears of the Lord of Armies” (5:4).

Partiality

Favoring some people over others for what they have. “If you show partiality, you commit sin” (2:9).

Perfect

Complete or mature. Endurance makes believers “perfect and complete” (1:4); one who doesn’t stumble in word is “a perfect person” (3:2).

Religion

Religious devotion and practice. Pure religion is “to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained by the world” (1:27).

Royal law

James’s name for the command “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (2:8).

Synagogue

A meeting place. In 2:2 the WEB uses it of the believers’ own gathering.

Wisdom from above

The wisdom God gives, known by its character (3:17). James sets it against wisdom that is “earthly, sensual, and demonic” (3:15).

World

Life arranged as if God were not there. “Friendship with the world is hostility toward God” (4:4); James calls that disloyalty adultery, the prophets’ picture of unfaithfulness.

PART FIVE • WHERE EACH PASSAGE IS USED

Scripture index

Every passage cited by chapter and verse in the sessions, the reference pages, the leader's guide, and this Part Five, with the pages where it appears. The full text of James is in Part Four, pages 46–49.

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PART FIVE · YOUR TURN

Tell me what helped.

You've just spent some hours in this study. Before you put it on the shelf, I'd like to know how it went: the part that landed, the part that lost you, and the part you'd fix if it were yours.

Three questions. No account needed. Name and email only if you want me to write back.

1 What helped? A session, a question, a line you underlined.

2 What confused you, or slowed you down? Be blunt. If a question didn't make sense, that's my writing, not your reading.

3 What would you add, cut, or change?

What you write helps shape the next edition of this study.

— Ron Givens

Founder — Executive Director, Clear Path Bible Studies



SCAN TO ANSWER

clearpathbiblestudies.com/s/james/feedback

Opens the three questions with this study already selected.

Jotted your answers above? Type them into the form when you're ready. Nothing on this page is sent anywhere until you do. Hand it to your group leader, too, if you'd rather say it out loud.

PART FIVE · FOR EVERYONE WHO LEADS, AND EVERYONE WHO SHARES

Care in the room

People say real things in a Bible study, and that's the point. These four agreements keep the room safe. The lines at the bottom are for the moments that are bigger than a study.

Four agreements

What's said here stays here. Names, stories, and struggles don't leave the room, not even as prayer requests somewhere else. The one exception is safety: if someone is in danger, or a child is being hurt, you get help.

No one has to speak. Silence is fine. A person who listens for four sessions has still done the study.

The text comes first. The leader isn't the last word. When we disagree, we go back to the page together.

Disagree, but don't scorn. A question is never a threat. No mocking, no interrupting, no fixing people.

Some passages in James land hard: 1:2–4, which can be used to hurry someone through pain; 2:1–9 and 5:1–6, on rich and poor; 3:1–12, on words; and 5:14–16, on sickness and confession. Never ask someone who was harmed to confess to the one who harmed them. Notes: leader pages 33, 35–36, 38, 41–42, 44.

If someone shares something heavy

Thank them. Don't rush to a verse. Say, "That took courage. Can we talk after?" and then do. If what they shared involves danger to them or to someone else, now or at home, the help lines below come first, and, if they want it and it is safe, you stay with them while they call.

If a child is being hurt, call Childhelp, below, any hour, and report to child protective services or the police as your state requires. Reporting laws vary by state, and in some states every adult is required to report. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

If someone says they want to die, ask them plainly, stay with them, and call or text 988 together. If they have a plan or are in immediate danger, call 911.

A study isn't counseling. Before you ever need it, know the name of one counselor, one pastor, and one help line, so you can hand them over without scrambling.

Help lines · United States

Emergency — call 911.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text 988, any hour. For anyone thinking about ending their life, in a mental-health crisis, or worried about someone who is. Veterans and service members: call 988 and press 1, or text 838255.

National Domestic Violence Hotline — 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788. Danger or fear at home.

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline — 1-800-422-4453. A child who is being hurt, or an adult who suspects it.

National Human Trafficking Hotline — 1-888-373-7888, or text 233733. Forced labor or forced sex.

RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline — 1-800-656-4673. Free and confidential.

SAMHSA National Helpline — 1-800-662-4357. A treatment referral and information line for substance use and mental health; it is not a crisis line.

Verified October 2026. The current list, with lines for other situations, is kept at clearpathbiblestudies.com/help. These pages are not a substitute for a doctor, a counselor, or a pastor who knows you.



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SCAN TO OPEN THIS
STUDY ONLINE