



FATHOMCHURCH

THE LETTER OF JAMES

WEEK 1 JAMES 1:1

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss around the room: what do you know about the book of James? Have you ever studied it before? Which verses/themes are you familiar with as you begin this study?
2. Who wrote this letter? Base your answer on James 1:1. Then read: Mark 6:3 & Galatians 1:19
3. What does James refer to himself as? Why do you think he doesn't identify himself as the brother of Jesus?
4. What did James think of Jesus while he was alive on earth? Read: John 7:3-5
5. What do you think changed James' mind concerning who Jesus was? Read: 1 Cor. 15:6-7
6. Back to James 1:1, with all of that in mind, why do you think James refers to himself as "a servant (slave) of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"?

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. What would it take for you to believe a sibling or other family member was God?
2. How do you think of yourself as a "slave" to Jesus Christ?
3. What does this greeting teach us about how we see ourselves in relationship to how we see Jesus?



THE LETTER OF JAMES

WEEK 2 JAMES 1:2-18

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What term of endearment does James use when addressing his readers? (1:2)
2. What do you think James means when he says to “count it all joy” when we meet trials? (1:2)
3. What do you think it means to be made perfect through suffering? What does it not mean? (1:4)
4. How certain is James that our request for wisdom will be granted? (1:5)
5. What do you think is the key difference between trials (v 2, 12) and temptations (v 13)?
6. What is James warning his brothers not to be deceived about? (1:16)

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. What makes it hard for us to find joy in the midst of difficulty? Is James telling us that we are sinful for finding trials to be difficult?
2. How would developing steadfastness and perseverance change the way you live your life? How would it affect your relationships with those around you?
3. When you are in a time of trial, is wisdom the first thing you ask for? Why or why not? What other requests do you tend to make first?
4. Not all good and perfect gifts appear to be so at first. Not all gifts that initially appear to be good and perfect turn out to be so in hindsight. Think of a personal example that fits each of these scenarios and write it below. How can we learn to discern what is a good and perfect gift, versus what only appears to be?



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WEEK 3 JAMES 1:19-27

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. In 1:19, to what or whom should we be quick to listen?
2. How would you define “righteous anger”? What is its motive?
3. What does it mean to “receive the implanted word” (1:21)? With what attitude are we to receive the Word of God? Why is this attitude key?
4. How is Scripture like a mirror (1:23)? What does it show us about ourselves?
5. What did James think of Jesus while he was alive on earth? Read: John 7:3-5
6. In 1:26, what do you think James means by the term religious? What would be an appropriate synonym you could substitute there?
7. What does James tell us is a sure indicator that someone’s outward religious practice is false?

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. Think of a time you have gotten angry too quickly. What were you really angry about? How did your anger affect the outcome of the situation?
2. How does God’s law give us freedom? Give an example from your own experience.
3. Based on this passage, do you practice true religion or false religion?



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WEEK 4 JAMES 2:1-13

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to show favoritism or partiality? What are some ways favoritism can occur in the church?
2. In 2:2-4, how were those James addresses discriminating between rich and poor? What clues did they focus on? Are these clues always reliable? Why or why not?
3. What motivates a person or group to treat rich people better than poor ones?
4. In 2:8, what is the "royal law"? Why is it royal? Can you find another place in Scripture where it occurs?
5. What do verses 2:10-11 tell us about being a lawbreaker? Does it seem fair to you? Why or why not?
6. Read Matthew 6:14-15 and compare it to 2:13. Why do you think our treatment of others affects God's treatment of us?

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. Why is it so important for believers not to discriminate among those who enter the doors of our churches?
2. Is there anyone to whom you show favoritism? Why have you singled out that person for your favor? How does showing favoritism toward them damage your ability to love them as you should?
3. Is there a person in your life to whom you need to extend mercy instead of judgment? What is holding you back from doing so?



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WEEK 5 JAMES 2:14-26

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think James means by faith in 2:14? What kind of faith? Look back at 2:1 for a hint. What do you think James means by works?
2. James challenges those who would separate faith and works in 2:18. What problem does he point out in their argument?
3. According to 2:19, what do demons believe about God? What is wrong with this kind of faith? How is it like human faith that produces no good works?

The word “justified” is an important term in this passage, and it is crucial that we have a correct understanding of what James does and does not mean by it. There are two definitions that will help us as we look at this idea. (1) justified: to be *declared* righteous or in right standing. (2) justified: to be *shown* as righteous or in right standing.

4. Read the words of Paul in Romans 3:27-28. Look back at the two definitions of “justified”. Which definition does Paul have in mind in these verses?
5. Which definition does James have in mind in James 2:24? (Look back at 2:14 to help with your answer.)

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. How is faith in Christ different than faith in other things, like elevators, spouses, or savings accounts? How is faith in Christ a genuine, saving faith?
2. How have you trusted in your good works to justify yourself before God?



THE LETTER OF JAMES

WEEK 6 JAMES 3:1-12

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Based on the context of 3:1-2, what potential pitfalls await those who teach?
2. Why is it appropriate that teachers be judged with greater strictness?
3. How might the topic of pure speech build on his discussion of the relationship between faith and works?
4. What does James mean when he says that one who controls his tongue is “a perfect man”? (3:2)
5. What imagery does James use to describe the tongue and its role in verses 3-12?
6. What kind of speech are you characterized by?
7. Why is it especially wrong to curse a human being (3:9)? What types of speech do you think are included under the category of cursing?

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. Do you think that teachers in the church today take seriously the warning that they will be judged with greater strictness? Why or why not?
2. What are two ways you can avoid sins of speech this week? What are two ways you can practice positive speech?



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WEEK 7 JAMES 3:13-18

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Look back at James 1:5. Specifically, what do we learn about wisdom in this verse?
2. James begins with a question in 3:13. How can we recognize wisdom and understanding in ourselves and in others?
3. How do many people attempt to “show” they are wise? (Look back at 3:5.) When we are attempting to “show” ourselves to be wise, what is often the motive? In contrast, in what way are we called to show that we our wise according to 3:13?
4. Why do you think humility/meekness is such an essential sign of wisdom?
5. What can bitter jealousy and selfish ambition look like within community of believers?
6. Read 3:13-18 again. Within the context of the whole passage, where do the good fruits listed in verses 17-18 come from?

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. Which of the evidences of Godly wisdom would you like to see more of in your life?
2. Which relationships in particular would benefit from your operating out of Godly wisdom?



THE LETTER OF JAMES

WEEK 8 JAMES 4:1-12

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What does James say causes quarrels among people? How does his answer differ from the one a quarrelsome person would give?
2. In 4:2-3, does James mean to imply that we do not have the things we covet because we haven't asked God for them?
3. In 4:4-10, James characterizes the behaviors of 4:1-3 as friendship with the world. How would you define "worldliness"? What do you think it means to have "friendship with the world"?
4. In 4:7, James offers a solution to the problem he outlines in 4:1-6. What is it?
5. What do you think James means by "humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you"?
6. How does James move logically from his discussion about friendship with the world to the topic of slander? How are the two discussions related?

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. What outward behaviors do Christians typically associate with having "friendship with the world"? Are any of these behaviors more of a problem for you than others? What about the attitudes (desires/passions) that lie behind them?
2. Describe how you have found "humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you" to be true in your own life.
3. Think of a time you have spoken evil against a brother or sister in the faith. How did it make you feel to slander them? What lie(s) do we tell ourselves when we slander a brother or sister in the faith?



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WEEK 9 JAMES 4:13-17

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. How does this section piggyback on 4:11-12? What kind of evil speech does James address next?
2. Specifically, what is wrong with the kind of boasting that James forbids here?
3. Why does James tell us to preface our plans by saying "If the Lord wills..."? Is the problem with planning for the future merely in the way we word our plans? Explain your answer.
4. What attitude lies behind future plans that exclude the consideration of God's will? (4:16)
5. How does 4:17 complete the idea James is conveying in 4:13-16? What is "the right thing to do" that someone might fail to do?
6. Summarize what James is saying in 4:13-17 in one sentence.

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. Is it wrong to make plans for the future? If so, why? If not, what kinds of planning are wrong and what kinds are okay?
2. How can we know if God wills something in our life or not? Can we know the will of God for certain? Explain your answer. Give an example if you can.
3. What future plans have you made? List several below. Have you evaluated these plans in light of God's right to direct your plans?



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WEEK 10 JAMES 5:1-6

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Look back through the book of James. How many sections of the book of James address the topic of wealth?
2. What apparent sins characterize the rich people James is addressing?
3. Read the following passages in Deuteronomy and note what each commands about money:
 - a. Deuteronomy 10:17-21
 - b. Deuteronomy 15:7-11
 - c. Deuteronomy 23:19-20
 - d. Deuteronomy 24:10-15How does the description of the rich oppressors in 5:1-6 show a disregard for these commands?
4. In 5:1-3, what does James point out about the relationship between worldly wealth and the passage of time?
5. Based on the words of James, what is the right relationship to have with wealth and possessions? Why?

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. What is your attitude toward wealth and possessions?
2. Specifically, what are you tempted to hoard or indulge in?
3. How are you tempted to misuse the resources entrusted to you?
4. How does your attitude display a lack of trust in God?



THE LETTER OF JAMES

WEEK 11 JAMES 5:7-12

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Why does 5:7 begin with the phrase "Be patient, therefore..."? How does 5:7-9 follow logically after 5:1-6?
2. Note the occurrence of the word patient or patience. How would you define patience?
3. What other repeated ideas or words from earlier sections do you recognize in 5:7-11? Why do you think James restates them here?
4. Why do we need patience and steadfastness if "the coming of the Lord is at hand" and "the Judge is standing at the door"?
5. Who does James offer as an example of steadfastness? List below two ways that Job's steadfastness can be an example to you in times of suffering.
6. James warns against swearing oaths. Is James telling us we should never, under any circumstance, swear oaths?

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. Do you believe that the Lord's coming is near? Why or why not? If so, how do you feel about it?
2. What fellow believer has been an example to you of steadfastness in suffering? How has their example challenged you to face lesser or similar difficulties in your own life?
3. How are you guilty of not allowing your "yes" be yes or your "no" be no? Which of your relationships suffer the most because of this particular sin?



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WEEK 12 JAMES 5:13-20

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Pray for God to give you and your discipleship group eyes to see and ears to hear what he is saying in the Letter of James and then read the passage aloud.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Specifically, who does James indicate is to offer the “prayer of faith”? (5:14-15) What two types of requests would the “prayer offered in faith” by these men include? (5:15)
2. Why do you think James mentions forgiveness of sin in relation to healing? Are problems of health always related to sin in our lives?
3. What attitudes does James tell us underlie effective prayer? (James 1:6-8; James 4:3)
4. Have you ever prayed for a sick person to be healed? Describe what happened.

James offers us Elijah as an example of someone whose prayers were powerful and effective. Elijah was a great prophet of Israel, held in high regard by James’s Jewish audience. He was used by God to teach a lesson to the wicked king Ahab. Read the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 17-18 and note any clues it contains about why his prayers were so effective.

5. Why does James say “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours”? (5:17a). Are you just like Elijah? Why or why not?
6. Specifically, how did Elijah pray? (5:17)

APPLICATION QUESTION:

1. Why do you think the prayer of a righteous man has great power as it is working/is powerful and effective? Does his righteousness entitle him to make requests of God that others cannot?
2. Why does God value persistent prayer? Does He need to be convinced of our faith?
3. Practically, how can we bring back a brother who wanders from the truth? What causes us to hesitate to do so? How does James address our hesitations?

