



Walk By Faith

A Study in the Gospel of
James

Kathy Jorgensen

Welcome

Dear sister in Christ:

I am so blessed you chose to study the book of James with me over the next 10 weeks. When women gather to study God's word together, something life transforming happens. The Bible tells us God desires to transform us into the image of His Son Jesus Christ. In other words, God desires us to become Holy as He is holy (Leviticus 19:2, 1 Peter 1:16). Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we strive to live our lives in a way that we become more like our Savior Jesus Christ. This process is called sanctification. We know this through the scripture. By reading God's word, we learn more about the Holiness of God and how we can transform the renewing of our mind. Romans 12:2 says, ***"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."***

Spiritual transformation should not always take place in isolation. It is good for God's people to study His living word together. As we hear God's Word preached and when we discuss it with other believers, God uses his Word to transform us into the reflection of his Son, Jesus Christ.

So welcome aboard! It is my personal prayer we will all become better disciples for the Lord Jesus. I pray your journey in God's word will be lifechanging. I pray you will be encouraged by our discussions each week. I pray you will also develop new relationships with your fellow sisters in Christ. I also pray that our time together will glorify our Lord Jesus Christ.

To God be the glory forever and ever, Amen!

Kathy Jorgensen

How to Benefit from Your Bible Study

Prayer

Before you sit down to read God's word and complete your study questions, you should begin with prayer. Seek help from the Holy Spirit to guide you. In John 14:26 (ESV), Jesus encourages his eleven disciples, saying to them, ***“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”*** The late theologian Charles Spurgeon explained, “If you do not understand a book by a departed writer you are unable to ask him his meaning, but the Spirit, who inspired Holy Scripture, lives forever, and He delights to open the Word to those who see His instruction.”

As you approach our study of God's Word with joy and eagerness—the Holy Spirit will illuminate your heart to comprehend, embrace, and apply the truths you are studying. This does not mean you will have an answer for every question, or the scriptures will be crystal clear each time. That is the beauty of studying God's word in a community. The Bible says, “iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another”. (Proverbs 27:7)

Personal Study

Purpose

The purpose of our Bible study is not a journey of self-discovery. We are on a journey to discover what the Bible says about God and His promises. We will accomplish our purpose as we study a book of the Bible from beginning to end. As you learn more about the character of God, you will understand who God is and how to grow in your relationship with Him.

Approach

It is important you read the scripture passage each week before starting your study. If you do not already have a daily routine for reading God's word, now is a good time to start. You will need at least 1-2 hours in your week to complete all the study questions. Divide your study time throughout the week, rather than putting your study off to one day. Life gets busy and comes with many distractions. If you are unable to do your study, please still come. Your absence would be greatly missed.

Bible Translations

Your teacher will framework all questions and verses from the English Standard Version (ESV) translation. You are welcome to use any translation you desire; however, it is recommended for consistent translation, you use the ESV Bible or New International Version (NIV) or New King James Version (NKJV). Free translations are found at www.biblegateway.com. Translations such as the Message Bible (MSG) or the New Living Translation (NLT) are paraphrased versions of the original languages of scripture and are not recommended for this study.

It is also important you do not refer to other commentaries, until after you have completed your study. In addition, do not share your pastor's teaching or comments from popular authors or blogs. Instead, invite the Holy Spirit to lead your heart and mind during your personal study time.

Study Questions

Each week, you will have study questions to complete. There will be interpretative questions to help you think about the meaning of the passage. These questions will help you learn new facts about the scripture. Application questions will ask you to reflect on ways you can apply what you learn into your own life. Ask yourself, "How will the scripture transform the way I will live?" There will be a section of personal reflection. You are not obligated to share your personal thoughts with the group; however, they may encourage others. We will begin our discussion each week with a review of the Personalize Your Lesson section from the preceding lesson.

Teaching Time

Each week, your teacher will present a 15-20-minute lesson to help reinforce what you have discussed in your group. Teaching time will examine the context of the passage as it relates to the rest of scripture, church history, doctrine, and implications for daily living.

Goals and Gifts

Spiritual transformation is about changing from the inside out. If we are to be transformed into the image of Christ, we must allow our hearts and minds to grow spiritually. God wants us to pursue after His holiness, by becoming more like Him in our attitudes, behaviors, and goals. If we plan to enjoy God in eternity, we need to be enjoying Him now in the present.

I pray you will see the scriptures as a precious gift from your Heavenly Father. James 1: 17 says, ***“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change”***. May you labor well to see the precious gift before you.

To God be the glory for ever and ever Amen!

Kathy Jorgensen

CONTENTS

James

LESSONS 1-10

Week	Lesson	Page	Class Date
1	Introduction		
2	Faith in Trials (James 1: 1-18)		
3	Faith Obeys God's Word (James 1:19-27)		
4	Faith Loves Well (James 2:1-13)		
5	Faith in Action (James 2: 14-26)		
6	Faith in Speech and Wisdom (James 3: 1-18)		
7	Faith Submits (James 4: 1-12)		
8	Faith Perseveres (James 4:13 – 5:12)		
9	Faith Through Prayer and Love (James 5:13-20)		
10	Reflections and Fellowship		

Introduction

Bible scholars unanimously believe the author of James is the half-brother of Jesus. James wrote this letter, also known as an **epistle**, with Apostolic authority. An **Apostle**, comes from the Greek word “apostolos”, which means “person sent”). An Apostle is anyone of the 12 disciples chosen by Jesus Christ. The term is sometimes applied to others, especially Paul, who was converted to Christianity a few years after Jesus' death.

James was not always a supporter of Christ's ministry. Although James believed in the prophecies of the Messiah, the promised deliverer of the Jewish nation, he initially rejected his half-brother as the **Messiah** (John 7:5). James however would later become a believer (1 Cor. 15:7) who preached the Gospel until his martyred death. James was also a prominent leader in the Jerusalem Church. The Apostle Paul described James as, “the Lord's brother” in his own epistle to the church in Galatia (Galatians 1:19). It is believed the book of James was written around 44-49 AD, which makes it one of the earliest books of the New Testament.

James is one of the most practical books of the Bible, providing a variety of statements for wise living reminiscent of those written in the book of Proverbs. In summary, James is a letter written to Jewish Christians of the early 1st century church which encourages its readers to pursue a life of Godly living. His letter was addressed to those who had already accepted the **Gospel** message of Jesus Christ. “The Gospel is a public exhibition of the Son of God manifested in the flesh, to deliver a ruined world, and to restore men from death to life” (John Calvin) The Gospels of the Bible are represented by the first four books of God's Word: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The four Gospels offer the earliest accounts of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

There are few references made to the Gospel by James, however the letter is full of advice on Christian living. In fact, out of the 108 verses in James, 59 of them are instructions for a living a life dedicated to Christ. The theological challenge in the book of James is the author's emphasis on the relationship between Christian faith and works. The practical application for Christians is to self-examine how we live out our faith in our families, church communities and a hurting world.

These are some of the many themes we will explore as we study James together. James includes over 20 references to the Old Testament in his epistle. His reference to nature and farming suggests that James was quite familiar with an agrarian society. Some Bible scholars also believe the epistle is a collection of short sermons James delivered to the Council in Jerusalem. One thing is clear, the author's words speak as one who wrote with authority and personally knew the resurrected Christ. We are hearing the words of God through a man who once rejected the Messiah. James is a beautiful example of faith and a life changed by the Gospel. James in turn, helps us better understand our faith as we strive towards a life of Godliness.

Before you begin your study, read through the entire book of James. It should take less than 20 minutes. Please answer the following questions and be prepared to share your responses if you desire.

Introduction Questions

1. During your reading of James this week, what ideas or thoughts spoke to you personally?
2. Would you say your faith is producing Godly results in your life?
3. What do you hope to accomplish through this study in James?

Personalize Your Lesson

As you read James, you will find yourself conducting a self-analysis of your faith and Christian walk. You will be confronted with questions about how you face trials, how you treat the poor, how you speak and relate to others, and the role that money plays in your life. There will be many more words of wisdom as we continue the study. May you apply what you learn from the scriptures so you will live out your faith according to the manner that glorifies God. *What areas in your own life do you hope to see yourself growing more like Christ?*

Notes Week 1

Faith and Trials

JOHN 1:1-18

When you experience a trial or temptation do you consider how God will deepen our faith? As you read the scriptures think about the difficult times in your own life and how you persevered through them. As you do your study, do not worry about answering every question perfectly. There will be opportunity for you to share your personal thoughts. Feel free to answer as you feel lead by the Holy Spirit.



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How does James describe himself in his letter's introduction and why do you think he described himself this way?
1. The Greek word for *trial* or test is *peirasmos*, which means to *experience* or *endeavor*. How does James tell us to respond to trials?
2. What is the dictionary's definition for "joy"? Would you say you experience "joy" when you face trials or suffering? Why or why not?
3. Why do Christians face trials according to James 1:3?
4. What may we lack when we walk through trials and how should we respond?
5. How is God's divine wisdom different from human wisdom?

6. According to Proverbs 2:1-8: Who can know the “gift of wisdom” and what is its purpose?
7. How is a person to respond to their “lowly” circumstance?
8. How is a rich person to respond to their wealthy circumstances?
9. What is God’s promise for those who love Him?
10. Give some modern examples of misplaced hope?
11. What are the differences between a trial (James 1:2,12) and a temptation (James 1:13)?
12. According to the following verses, what is God the source of?
 - 1:5
 - 1:17
 - 1:18
13. What is the source of temptation (James 1:14)?
14. What is the outcome of temptation (James 1:14,15)?
15. Read 2 Timothy 2:22. How does Paul instruct Timothy to deal with temptation?
16. According to Romans 7:18, where does the fault of sin lie?
17. What is the name used to describe God in verse 17?

18. *First fruits* is an Old Testament term used to describe the first and best harvests given to God as an offering (Exodus 23:19, Leviticus 23:9-14). By giving God your best, He promises to provide a full harvest to come (Proverbs 3:9). Rewrite verse 18 in your own words.

Application: The first century church suffered many trials and temptations during their persecution from the Roman empire and Jewish community. Paul's letter to the Roman church says God can use anything for good (Romans 8:28). Describe a time in your own life when God turned a trial into something good.

Personalize Your Lesson: This week we learned true faith helps us endure trials and temptation. Through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of God's son Jesus Christ, we receive forgiveness and the Crown of Life. What a joy to know God "chose to give us birth through the word of truth (James 1:18). Reflect on ways God has helped you through a difficult trial. How was your faith strengthened? Knowing you will one day receive the Crown of Life; how will this blessed assurance help you to endure future trials and temptations?

Notes Week 2

Faith Obeys God's Word

JOHN 1: 19-27

Last week we learned how faith helps us endure trials and temptations, while keeping our eyes on the crown of life. We also learned God desires to give His children wisdom, especially during difficult times. This week, James tells us where we can find God's wisdom. As you read the passages, think about your own life. What role does God's Word play in your pursuit of Christlikeness? Remember all scripture references are taken from the English Standard Version Bible (ESV). You can locate a free copy of the ESV Bible at www.esvbible.org



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Last week we learned how God's children should respond to trials. We learn this week how we should respond to God's truth. Locate all the verses in today's passage that mention the Word of God.
2. Read John 1:1,14
3. . Who is the "word of Truth"?
4. James describes several positive and negative attitudes a "brother or sister" can demonstrate. List as many as you can from verses 19-27

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE

5. Read Jeremiah 31: 31-33 and Ezekiel 36:24-27.
 - a. According to Jeremiah, where does God put His law?

- b. According to Ezekiel, what does God put in our hearts?
- 6. According to James, what should be our attitude when receiving the word of God?
- 7. Mirrors in the 1st century were not made of glass like today. They were highly polished pieces of bronze or silver. If you were wealthy, you possibly owned a gold mirror. Regardless of the material, these early mirrors gave an imperfect reflection. How would you say God's word is like a mirror?
- 8. Answer the following questions using verse 25.
 - a. How does James describe God's law?
 - b. What does a "doer" of the law receive?
- 8. How does 1 John 2:4 help you understand the meaning of verse 25?
- 9. According to verses 26 and 27, what must "true and acceptable religion" include?
- 10. Why do you think the word "religion" is viewed with such criticism among both Christians and the world today?
- 11. Read the words of Christ in Matt 12:34; Matt 15:18 and Luke 6:45. What do our word choices say about us?
- 12. Why do "orphans and widows" need special care?

13. According to 1 John 5:19, who is in control of the whole world?

14. According to 1 John 4:4, how does one have victory over the world?

Application: Perhaps this lesson has convicted you to pray for ways in which you can put God's word into service in your own church and community by being a "doer of the word". Share with your group ways in which you presently serve God's kingdom and/or hope to in the future.

Personalize Your Lesson: In Romans 12:1-2, Paul instructs us "*to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect*". What must you change in your life so that you will conform to the standards of Christ rather than the standards of the world? Pray the Holy Spirit will use your lesson and prayer time to reveal ways in which you may remain "unstained" by the world.

Notes Week 3

Faith Loves Well

JOHN 2:1-13

Jesus loved all people despite their culture, religion, or economic standing. However, the world we live in shows favoritism to the rich, while neglecting the poor. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you study what it means to “love your neighbor as yourself”.



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What three tests of acceptable religion are given by James in verses 1:26-27?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
2. How does James describe Jesus in 2:1?
3. Why do you think James describes Jesus in this manner? (see 2 Corinthians 8:9)
4. What is the charge James is giving in James 2:1?
5. Do you believe favoritism exists in today's modern church?
6. Jesus often taught from the old testament and referred to the Royal Law. Read Leviticus 19:15-18 and Deuteronomy 6:4-10. How are we to “love our neighbor” & God?

7. What is God's view on favoritism?
8. Is it possible to obey God's Law 100% of the time? (see verse 10)?
9. James 2:13 says, "**Mercy** triumphs over **judgment**".
 - a. What is the definition of "**mercy**"? (use a dictionary)
 - b. What is the definition of the verb "**judge**" (use a dictionary)?
10. Read Galatians 2:16 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 How do these verses help you understand what James meant in verse 13, "Mercy triumphs over judgement"?

Application: According to James 2:12-13, a person who has accepted God's gift of salvation will receive God's mercy on the day of judgement. Knowing this truth, how will you choose to live your life differently today?

Personalize Your Lesson: Mercy cannot be earned. It is a gift from God, demonstrated through the life, death and resurrection of His son, Jesus Christ. From the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus taught: "For if you forgive people their wrongdoing, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don't forgive people, your Father will not forgive your wrongdoing" (Matt 6:14-15). We are commanded by God to love others by showing mercy and forgiveness. Loving others is not always easy, especially when we are offended or hurt. Is there someone you find difficult to love? Share with your group if you feel lead.

Notes Week 4

Faith in Action

JOHN 2:14-26

The original readers of this epistle were Jewish Christians from the 1st century church. Many Jews believed they received God's favor by keeping the Mosaic law. As we learned in our prior lesson it is impossible to obey God's law completely. James provides several tests used to evaluate whether faith is alive or dead.



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The word “**faith**” appears 16 total times in the book of James. How often is the word “faith” mentioned by James in this week’s verses?
2. How does the English dictionary define **faith**?
3. Read Matthew 7:16-20. How do Christ’s words from The Sermon on the Mount help you understand v.14?
4. James makes it clear we are NOT saved by our actions or works (1:17-18, 21; 2:5). Read the words of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:8,9 and answer the following questions.
 - a. Who is the source of our faith?
 - b. What is the benefit of true faith?
5. From this week’s passage, give two examples of “dead” faith without works?
 - i.
 - ii.
6. What is your understanding of v.19?
7. Rewrite James 2:20 as a statement rather than a question.

8. The word “**justified**” means “to be declared right”. Other bible interpretations often substitute the word “**righteous**” for the word “justified”.
 - a. Read Romans 3:21-26. How does this passage help you understand what it means to be justified by God?
 - b. What is your understanding of the word “propitiation” mentioned in v. 25?
9. Abraham is one example of faith from the old testament. Read Genesis 15:1-6 and Genesis 22:1-14 to answer the following questions.
 - a. How did God justify Abraham?
 - b. How did Abraham prove to God his faith was genuine?
10. Read Joshua 2 and answer the following questions.
 - a. Who was Rahab?
 - b. How did Rahab prove her faith in God was genuine?
11. Describe the difference between dead faith and living faith?

Application: The Apostle Paul declares, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him” (Col. 2:6). Trust in God is a requirement for joyful growth in the Christian life. Faith leads to obedience and obedience matures our faith. How is this truth playing out in your walk with God? Provide examples and share with your group.

Personal Reflection: As we conclude this week’s lesson, let it be clear good works do not get us into heaven. When you turn away from your sin and trust Jesus Christ is the only one who can save you, God clothes you with his righteousness (Galatians 2:16). In Ephesians 2:8, Paul tells us “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift.” This is what you must believe to be saved. You believe Jesus is your Lord and King and He has paid for your sins, finishing the work of salvation for you. The moment you trusted in Christ you were justified before God. Abraham and Rahab demonstrated a faith that trusted God and they were not afraid to obey Him and take risks. When we trust God, we should be willing to follow and obey him sacrificially. What are you willing to risk or sacrifice for the glory of God’s name?

Notes Week 5

WEEK 6

Faith in Speech and Wisdom

JAMES 3

Last week we learned that our good works do not earn salvation, but they do reflect a heart that has been saved by grace. This week pay special attention to the words you speak. Do they reflect a heart that glorifies God?



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean that teachers are judged by God more strictly?
2. Read Paul’s charge in 2 Timothy 4:1-5 to answer the following.
 - a. What are God’s standards for teachers?
 - b. Why would someone not want to listen to “sound teaching”?
3. The word *mature* in Greek means “complete, mature, or perfect”. Go back to verse 1:26. Now, rewrite James 3:2 in your own words.

4. Verses 3-6 warn of the tongue's power and influence. What illustrations does James use to make this point?
5. Which of these illustrations in question 3 best describes your tongue?
6. According to James, why are we not able to tame the human tongue? (see Romans 3:13,14 and Proverbs 12:27)
7. According to James when we curse others who else do we curse? (see also Matt 25:40)
8. Why should we try to tame our tongue, even if James says it is impossible (v.8)?
9. How does James describe Godly wisdom and where does it come from?
10. How does James describe ungodly wisdom and where does it come from?
11. Why is God honored in the "harvest" in 3:18? (see John 15:8)
12. What is the role of "Peacemakers" in God's kingdom? (see Romans 12:18 and Matt 5:9)

Application: Today's passage lists several Godly traits of wisdom and faith. Which of these traits do you most reflect in your walk with God? Which of these traits would you like to incorporate more in your life?

Personal Reflection: One way in which we should reflect God's image is through our speech and our words. We learned that the tongue is "full of deadly poison" (James 3:6). There are many self-help books and conferences available to help us learn to be better communicators. However, for a Child of God, tongue control is a heart issue and self-control are not always easy. Just as a tiny spark can obliterate an entire forest, so can our tongues light a fire that destroys relationships and damages our witness. Proverbs 6:27 says "A worthless man digs up evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire". Think about our present world that is saturated by social media, cell phones and gossip. Seek God's wisdom to help you live a life of faith that reflects Christ in all you say and do. What are some ways you feel convicted to exercise more wisdom and self-control with your words?

Notes Week 6

Faith Submits

JAMES 4

We finished our lesson last week with the scripture telling us to be “peacemakers”. Peace is something God desires to see in our relationships, homes, and churches. However, Satan desires to see God’s people in conflict with each other. This week James reminds us to submit to God and each other with humility. Submission isn’t popular in today’s culture; however, it is important for Godliness.



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does James say is the cause of fights and quarrels?
2. What problems existed among the original audience James addresses in verses 1-3?
3. What is similar between verses 3 and James 1:5? What insight about prayer do you learn from these verses?
4. Why do you think James referred to the readers of his epistle as “adulterous people”? (see Jeremiah 3:20)
5. Who does God oppose? _____ Who does God favor? _____ (Proverbs 3:34)
6. Using a dictionary, define the word “**submit**”.

7. James proceeds to describe what submission should look like. List these instructions and the desired outcome from each verse provided. The first one is done for you as an example.

Verse	Instruction	Outcome
7b	Submit to God, Resist the Devil	The Devil will flee from you
8a		
8b		
9		
10		

8. How do we submit to God (Romans 12:1-2)
9. According to verses 11 and 12, what is our responsibility to the law?
10. Who is the only Lawgiver and Judge? (see Isaiah 33:22, Romans 14:10-12)
11. Answer James in your words: “But who are you to judge your neighbor?”
12. Is James condemning profitable business in v.13-16? Explain your answer.

Application: Sins of commission are sins that we commit by doing something we should not. We conclude our lesson with verse 17 which refers to sins of omission. These are sins we commit by not doing something we should. God expects humble submission to His will, but He also knows we struggle with sin and disobedience. That is why God extends grace for the forgiveness of sin provided through the sacrifice of His son, Jesus Christ. Grace is a gift we do not deserve. Romans 6:23 tells us what we do deserve: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”. Knowing this truth, we still struggle to humbly submit to God and each other. What personal sin or conflict with other believers is keeping you from fully enjoying the peace of your salvation? Confess your sin to God. “Purify” your heart. “Come near to God and he will come near to you” (James 4:8).

Personalize Your Lesson: We should never underestimate the power of Satan. 1 John 2:15 says, “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them”. Ouch! This verse hurts almost as much as James 4:4 which calls us adulterers if we choose friendship with the world! God knows it is impossible for us to obey every command, however it should not stop us from trying to be more like His son Jesus. The late theologian R.C. Sproul wisely stated, “*To know that God knows everything about me and yet loves me is indeed my ultimate consolation.*” How does grace inspire you to live a life pleasing to God?

NOTES WEEK 7

Faith Perseveres

John 5:1-12

We finished chapter 4 with James talking about boasting business men. This week we transition into chapter 5 with a rebuke of the rich. There appears to be a sense of urgency in the message as James warns his readers about God's impending judgement. Is that time drawing near? Let us see what James has to say on the matter.



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Read through the entire book of James. Note the verses where James addresses his readers as “brothers and sisters”. Who is James addressing now in 5:1.
2. James brings four accusations against the rich. List each accusation.
3. James points out the “rich people” were hoarding their wealth “in the last days” before eternal judgement. According to Jesus in Matt. 6:19-2, what is the danger of laying up “treasures on earth”?
4. The rich had become wealthy by withholding the wages of their workers (v.4) What does God's law say to such practice in Deuteronomy 24:14,15 ?
5. In v. 4 James assures the “Lord of hosts” hears the cries of “the harvesters”. Why would this be a comfort to the original recipients of this letter (see also Romans 8:18)?

6. What imagery does James use to describe the rich in v.5? Do you find his description fitting?
7. How can Christians be a blessing to others in need?
8. In v.7 several Bible translations read, “Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord.” Why does James start this section with the word “therefore”?
9. Locate each verse where the words patient or patience is mentioned. Describe how patience is exemplified in the examples mentioned by James.
 - i. Farmer
 - ii. Prophet (see Matt.5:12 and Acts 7:52)
 - iii. Job (see Job 2:9-13)
10. According to James, who is considered blessed?
11. Think of a time when you were in the middle of a trial. Did you feel blessed?
12. The idea of Christ’s return is a common theme throughout the New Testament.
 - a. How does James describe Christ in v.9?
 - b. Why would Christ’s return be a comfort to Christians throughout the centuries?
13. James 5:12 reinforces the teaching of Jesus regarding oaths (see Matt. 5:33–37, Matt. 23:16-22). Is James telling his readers oaths are strictly forbidden? Explain your answer.

14. Which Commandments does v.12 address? Explain your choices.

Application: The scriptures are full of examples where God keeps His promises. God promised to keep Noah and his family safe during the great flood. God promised Abraham a son. God promised to deliver Israel to the Promised Land. God promised to send the Messiah, to save His people from sin. God promised the Son of Man will return at an hour we do not expect. God expects us to keep our promises as well. Is there an area in your life at present where you feel tempted to go back on your word? Confess your temptation to God and seek His wisdom. Feel free to share with your group.

Personalize Your Lesson: James 5:1-11 tells us our faith is in danger if we ignore or abandon Christ's return and final judgement. Yet, as we wait for this time, he calls us to the "steadfastness of Job". The Second Coming of Christ must have been an encouragement for the early church as it suffered persecution and mistreatment. James also recognized the temptation for the early church to grumble in their circumstances. The late theologian Charles H. Spurgeon said: "Be ready Servant of Christ, for thy Master comes on a sudden, when an ungodly world least expects Him". Think about your own circumstances in life at present. Are you expecting the Lord's return? Are you patiently waiting or are you grumbling His return is not soon enough? Go to the Lord in prayer. Ask Him for a patient and courageous heart. May the Lord's character be a source of great comfort to you during these difficult times.

NOTES WEEK 8

Faith Through Prayer and Love

John 5:13-20

Oil in biblical times often symbolized the Spirit of God (1 Sam.16:1-3). The scripture often uses anointing as a symbolic demonstration of setting someone or something apart for a special purpose. The Greek word for anoint in verse 14 is “chrío” which translates to a sacramental anointing as opposed to the other Greek word for anoint, which is “aleipho”, which means “to smear”. The correct translation in this week’s passage does not refer to medicinal healing, but a spiritual anointing. A familiar example of spiritual anointing is demonstrated when Moses anointed his brother Aron and sons, declaring them Holy and ready to serve the Lord as priests (Leviticus 8:30). In today’s passage, the elders of the church anoint a sick member and pray over them. It is the only place in the New Testament scriptures where anointing a sick person occurred.



STUDY QUESTIONS

1. According to v. 13, James provides two examples how words can be used for something positive.
 - a. What should be our response to suffering?
 - b. What should be our response to cheerfulness?
2. “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”.
(1 Thess. 5:16-18). Does this verse describe your prayer life?
3. The second part of v.13 alludes back to James 1:2, “count it all joy” when under trial. What is your normal response to trials?
4. Who are the “elders of the church” (v.14) and what are their roles and responsibilities?
(see Titus 1:7, 1 Peter 5:1-5)
5. Why do you think James tells us to confess our sins to each other and pray for each other in a discussion about healing?

6. Why do you think James said, “the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working”?
7. How is Elijah a model of prayer? (read 1 Kings chapters 17,18)
8. In James 5:19 and 20, what two things will God do for someone who “wanders from the truth”?

Application: The parable of the Lost Sheep was taught by Jesus. It appears in the Gospels of (Matt 18:12–14) and Luke (Luke 15:3–7). It is about a shepherd who leaves his flock of ninety-nine sheep to find the one which is lost. Jesus also said, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). In a society that tends to mind its own business, we sadly don’t follow Christ’s example to save a “soul from death” (James 5:20). What hesitations must you overcome to bring back a brother or sister from wandering?

Personalize Your Lesson: In our lesson this week, James gave practical advice for living out our faith in community. Jesus was so committed to His church; He was willing to die for her. Perhaps you are not willing to die for another person, but Christ does tell us, “all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). The local church is where we gather to worship, pray and help each other grow in our walk with Christ. When we gather in the local church, we demonstrate our love for God and His family. How committed to God’s church are you? Ask God to help you value His church as a community of faith, where love and grace abound.

NOTES WEEK 9

Reflections and Fellowship

For the past 9 weeks, the book of James taught us how to demonstrate a life of faith in our families, church communities and a hurting world. Read through James one more time. Make note of those items in the epistle that stand out to you the most. Answer the following questions to help you prepare to share what you have learned with your group. Remember, we are all at a different place in our spiritual walk with Christ. Each person's answers will be different. If you desire, prepare a 5-minute testimony about your experience in the book of James. If you feel comfortable, please share your testimony with your group.



SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What characteristic(s) of God stand out to you from the book of James?
2. Which characteristic(s) of God do you feel the Holy Spirit wants you to work on in your walk with Christ?
3. What did I discover about myself as I learned more about God through the study of His word?
4. How has your spiritual life changed in the following areas since studying the book of James? Feel free to share them with your group.
 - a. Prayer
 - b. Worship
 - c. Fellowship
 - d. Evangelism
 - e. Confession
 - f. Forgiveness
5. Did you have a favorite verse in James?