

Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Studies

James Bible Study

Faith = Do

Bible Studies
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Chapter-by-Chapter Bible Studies

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This book has been put together for your use:

- In your personal devotional Bible Study time.
or
- For your Bible Study Discussion Group.

It is divided into several lessons, each lesson typically covers one chapter of the book..

Each lesson has two parts:

1. Questions for you to Answer.
2. My Answers to those same questions.

I suggest answering the questions on your own before you read my comments on the passage. If you are studying as a group and not everyone has their own copy of this Bible Study, I suggest making sure each member of your group has a copy of the next week's questions in advance so that they can prepare if they want to. Preparation for a Bible Study is a great way to establish the habit of getting into the Word every day.

An online version of this study is available for free download at:

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Introduction James Bible Study Faith = Do

As you read through the whole book of James, certain common themes begin to emerge:

1. He calls them “my brothers” very, very often.
2. He’s not too impressed with “rich people”.
3. He talks about a new kind of law: the “law of liberty”.
4. He expects people of “faith” to be doing something.
5. He thinks talking is serious business.
6. He accuses them of thinking they are something great when they are not.
7. He advises prayer when any need arises.

So you realize that he had a few things to say...and I think he could barely get them on paper because of all the other things he kept thinking of.

Like sending the kid off to college – or off to camp – and don’t forget this...and don’t forget this....and don’t forget this....

Memory verse for this study:

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)

The person with worthless religion is the one whose talk doesn’t match their walk.

Lesson 1

Questions for you to Answer

James 1

Memory verse for this study:

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)

1:1 Why does James seem to take such a “protective, lecturing, Dad” position with these people? Who were they to him?

1: 2-4 How can we possibly have joy in hard times?

1: 5-8 What are the two rules for receiving wisdom from God?

1:9-11 Why should the poor man be proud? Why should the rich man be proud?

1:12 Who is the really happy man?, and why is he happy?

1:13-15 What actually causes us to sin?

1:16-18 So, if we can't blame God for giving us temptation, what can we blame Him for?

1:19-21 When should we get angry? How can we help ourselves follow that advice?

1:22-25 Can we read the Bible every day and still be deceived? What is the "law that gives liberty"?

1:26,27 What is religion? What is worthless religion? What is faultless religion?

Lesson 1

Answers

James 1

Before we begin answering questions why not take the time to read through all of Chapter 1, and summarize in your own words each of these sections:

Passage	Summary
1:2-4	
1:5	
1:6-8	
1:9-11	
1:12	
1:13-18	
1:19-20	
1:21	
1:22-25	
1:26-27	

James tosses out a lot of thoughts – and they don't always seem to be connected to each other...

:2-He starts out with the thought that you should think of it as joy when you are going through trials

:5 Then he says if you need wisdom, you should ask God for it, and He will give it

:6-8 Then, if you want to receive that wisdom, make sure you really want it

:9-11 Then, out of the blue he mentions that poor men should realize how lucky they are, and rich men should realize how temporary their riches are.

:12 Then he switches to how happy a person should be when he is tempted and doesn't give in

:13-18 And then explains that temptations don't come from God, but all good things do.

:19-20, :21, :22-25 Then he jumps to be a good listener, don't get mad, get rid of immoral habits, and be changed by the Word.

:26,27 And he finishes with how to be religious: watch what you say, take care of the needy, and don't be dirtied by the world you have to live in.

Whew! He has so much to say!

As you go through the whole book, certain common themes begin to emerge:

1. He calls them "my brothers" very, very often.
2. He's not too impressed with "rich people"
3. He talks about a new kind of law: the "law of liberty"
4. He expects people of "faith" to be doing something.
5. He thinks talking is serious business.
6. He accuses them of thinking they are something great when they are not.
7. He advises prayer when any need arises.

And you realize not only that he had a few things to say... he could barely get them on paper, because of all the other things which kept popping into his mind, like sending the kid off to college – or off to camp – and don't forget this...and don't forget this....and don't forget this....

Miss Manners says: "One of the joys of parenting is the lecture". James seems to be enjoying his parenting here.

So let's slow it down, back up, and see what our Dad, James, has to say, which, if we pay attention, will grow our lives into what God knows they could be:

1: 1

Why does James seem to take such a "protective, lecturing, Dad" position with these people? Who were they to him?

James was the Pastor of the church at Jerusalem before the great persecution scattered the believers all over the known world. He's writing them now, believing that this letter will somehow be passed from one to another...writing with the love and authority that only a Pastor can feel for the people under his care. He speaks with authority which comes from having been placed in this position by God...but he knows that not one of his listeners has to follow what he says...they may choose freely to disregard him...to question him...but that does not change his vision for them.

They are scattered. Their lives have been damaged, changed. Never again will they be what they were before. They will never live where lived before, and they have lost loved ones, security, homes, possessions, and cultural boundaries. They must be thinking that they have little to draw from or fall back on. You know, the habits which we all depend on to make the right decisions often without thinking.

James has help for them in the form of guidelines – rules which will help them reform their society – and he probably surprised them by expecting them to be living with joy,

liberty, brotherhood, and an expectation of a wonderful future...no matter what they had been through.

No pity here.

He speaks as a servant. This is the role chosen for him by Christ. He will obey his Lord. Write the letter...speak the hard things. Confront.

Stretch out the truth to straighten the road

What else do we know about James?

- Matthew 13:55: He was one of the brothers of Jesus, probably the oldest
- John 7:2-5: At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, none of his siblings were believers in Him.
- Acts 1:14: But after Jesus' resurrection, we see them as believers
- Acts 15:13: James became a leader in the Jerusalem church
- 1st Corinthians 15:7: And, here is a record that at some point Jesus appeared to James personally, after His resurrection.
- Jude 1:1: Jude, another new testament writer, was also a brother of Jesus, and of James
- He was martyred in 62AD

(If you are leading a discussion group, you can read together each of these verses, one at a time, and then let your group, for each verse, come up with an answer to the question: "What did I just learn about James in this verse?")

1: 2-4

How can we possibly have joy in hard times?

Pastor James begins with joy, and says you should be joyful no matter how hard things are. There are several questions to consider with this shocking statement:

- First, even if you want to do as Pastor James says, and consider your trials "all joy"... **how do you do it?** You can't just change your feelings from fear and grief to joy. You can't just make yourself feel joy. We'll get back to that one.

- Second, Pastor James says that the reason you can count these trials as joy is that when your faith is tried, you will develop patience. And that patience will develop completeness in you. That's nice, I suppose, but really, I'd rather have things like they were before all this began. **I can't see how "patience" and "completeness" are such a prize compared to what I've lost.**
- Third, I'm in the middle of a horrible trial. **I don't know what to do next.** Maybe I can count it joy, and maybe God will fill me with patience and completeness, but I need practical help right now. What do I do today? What do I do tomorrow? What decision do I make?

Good questions. The answers follow:

1: 5-8

What are the two rules for receiving wisdom from God?

How to know what God's will is?

1. Ask God.
2. Ask in faith

Asking in faith means: No one is to ask God for answers to questions so that he can then decide whether or not he likes God's answers. God doesn't hand out His answers like a column of internet sites. They are not for perusing, for surfing, for exploring, or for curiosity-seekers.

God's answers are for doing, and for doing only.

If you are not sure you want to do God's will once you find out what it is, then don't ask. You won't receive the answers anyway. You are too unstable to trust with such great value.

But, if you do want to be a doer of God's will, then ask your questions. God wants to give answers.

So – how about the questions we just asked?

First, even if you want to do as Pastor James says, and consider your trials “all joy”... **how do you do it?** You can't just change your feelings from fear and grief to joy. You can't just make yourself feel joy.

Actually, you **can** change your feelings. You can't manufacture joy on command, but joy does happen when you think about joyful things. So if you are in the middle of a trial, you can choose to think:

- God says there is joy in this somewhere, so I believe it
- I know where I'm going when this life is over. Even if things never get better for me, I can look forward to eternity with Jesus. John 3:16
- Jesus is right here with me. I am not alone. I am never alone. Matthew 28:19,20
- No one can ever snatch me out of the hand of Jesus. John 10:27-29
- Even when the disciples were persecuted, they had joy. Acts 13:50-52
- Sometimes our hardships are turned into joy because we see that people come to know Jesus because of them. Acts 8:4-8
- When joy comes from God, I get stronger Nehemiah 8:10

Second, Pastor James says that the reason you can count these trials as joy is that when your faith is tried, you will develop patience. And that patience will develop completeness in you. That's nice, I suppose...but really, I'd rather have things like they were before all this began. **I can't see how “patience” and “completeness” are such a prize compared to what I've lost.**

We're living an imperfect life. Things are going to go wrong. Maybe not everyone has to leave their home in fear and flee to a new place, start a new life... maybe not everyone has to go through a divorce....or watch a child suffer with a

debilitating disease, but everyone will have heart-wrenching life experiences to go through. And nothing which we consider important in this life is going to last. Nothing. Not homes, not people, not things.

So since we can't avoid these hard times, then maybe there is something to be said for becoming more and more "complete" people – so that someday when life deals me a blow, I can reach down inside myself for strength and find that it is there! Someday I will react not in fear when the wind blows hard on a cold night – but with the knowledge of how God brings me through! Someday I will react not with shame at how little I have, but with joy at how much I have. I'll reach down into my abilities and find I am not wanting – I have abundance! That, actually, is a wonderful joy.

Third, I'm in the middle of a horrible trial. I don't know what to do next. Maybe I can count it joy, and maybe God will fill me with patience and completeness, but I need practical help right now – what do I do today? What do I do tomorrow? What decision do I make?

Ask God what to do next. He has wisdom for you. You will find it in the Bible. If you can't find it, or don't know where to look, ask someone to help you. Find out if there is a right and wrong in your situation, then choose the right. If that doesn't help, then ask God for the desire. Don't expect everything to be over fast or to have all the answers for next week today. But do expect to know what to do in time to do it.

And remember....ask in faith..... Ask expecting to **do** God's will once you find out what it is.

This is going to be a common theme in the book of James.
Faith = Do.

1:9-11

**Why should the poor man be proud?
Why should the rich man be proud?**

Does that seem contradictory? It's not.

- The poor man should be proud because, really, he is a rich man.
- The rich man should be proud because, really, he is on the same level as a poor man. He is rich...but rich in things which will not fade away.

When you're poor you know you need things that you can't seem to get, and that can make you frustrated or defeated or scared. But if you know that the real riches in life are all yours, you are filled with happiness. The frustration, defeat and fear can all melt away.

But if you are rich in this world, it doesn't take long before you realize that those riches are not bringing you happiness. In fact, it seems that the more you get, the more you want, and the more you are afraid to lose what you have. Your only happiness, then, will come from knowing that your worldly riches are only going to fade away, like flowers in the hot sun. But if you know Christ, you know you have the same riches the poor man has – riches that will last for eternity. The fear, the emptiness, the wanting which never quits...melt away, and you are finally filled with happiness.

1:12

Who is the really happy man? And why is he happy?

The really happy man is the one, who, like a runner in a race, perseveres to the finish line and finds there a prize. But this race isn't like the 50-yard-dash with only one winner. This race is like a cross-country race. Everyone finishes. Everyone wins. And everyone gets a reward. The goal is to run the race. You don't worry about finishing. But you keep your eyes on the finish so that you can beat your best time.

1:13-15

What actually causes us to sin?

Sin begins with desire...or, lust. You want something God doesn't want you to want. You keep thinking about it. Then you begin to plan how to get it. And before you know it, you have done it.

Maybe a better question to ask here is: If you are tempted to sin, is that the same thing as doing the sin? The answer is: no. If you are tempted to sin, stop thinking about it. Don't plan on how to do it. And then you never commit the sin. The temptation is what gets you there....so stop the temptation at the door and send it away.

And one further thought....the temptation never comes from God. It doesn't come from Satan either, contrary to the popular adage: "The devil made me do it." Temptation begins with lust...and lust, or desire to do wrong, is already inside of you. It was born there long, long ago when Adam and Eve first disobeyed God, and it has been passed down, like a bad gene, from generation to generation.

Well, then, what hope do I have that I will ever be able to say no to temptation? If it is already inside of me? And then, even though I understand how temptation and sin work now, I know myself pretty well, and I know that even though I should stop thinking about it, I won't. And even though I shouldn't plan for doing it, I will. In other words, I'm trapped! I can't stop wanting sin....and I can't stop sinning. Help! (keep reading – here comes the answer!)

1:16-18

**So, if we can't blame God for giving us temptation,
what can we blame Him for?**

It's a trick question....the obvious answer is: nothing. We can't blame Him for anything at all...but we can thank Him.

God never gives us temptation. God never wanted us to have a sin nature in the first place. He didn't create us that way. But when Adam and Eve messed up, and passed that

sin problem on to us, God already had a plan to get us out of the mess we were in.

He gave us a gift. He actually gave us a way to be born one more time. The first time we were born we were born with a nature which wanted to sin. The second birth is one we choose – by faith – and that birth brings forth a new me...a person who wants to live God's way. A person who loves God's ways, and hates sin.

How do I get that second birth? Look at John 1:12. *"But as many as received Him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."* We actually get a second chance. We get to be born into a new family – one that doesn't love sin – when we believe on the name of Jesus.

Now in our day and age we have a weak idea of what the word "believe" means. So many of us might think – "I believe in Jesus... I always have." Or...." I believe in Jesus – I know the story of Jesus." Or... "I believe in Jesus, I was raised in a Christian home...or in a Christian nation". But that's not what "believe" means.

When the Bible uses the word "believe", it means not just knowledge, but knowledge that results in action. Not just knowing the facts about Jesus, but going the next step, and bowing my knee to Him. Not just knowing that He is the Son of God, but in awe wanting to obey everything He says, because He is the Son of God. Bible belief means change. Bible belief means leaving all, if necessary, in order to follow Him.

When you decide to "believe" in Jesus, you are born a second time – and you are now a part of the family of God. And you have a new you inside of you. It's a gift from God...the One Who knew we were trapped inside sinful bodies. The One Who gave us a way out.

1:19-21

**When should we get angry?
How can we help ourselves follow that advice?**

The answer to the first question is...very slowly. Hear fast. Speak slow. Anger slow. The anger which most of us experience is not going to do good things. How do I help myself follow that advice? The new me inside of me needs to be fed. The old me is fed with food, water, sleep, etc. The new me is fed with the Word of God. As I read and study and talk about God's words I am getting stronger and stronger on the inside...and I am becoming more and more what God always intended me to be.

1:22-25

**Can we read the Bible every day and still be deceived?
What is the "law that gives liberty"?**

Hmm. Interesting. So I can read the Bible every day and still not understand the truth? How is that possible? Remember the major theme of this book? **Faith = Do**. If you only hear the truth, but never do it, you actually are going backwards, not going forward, and not standing still.

When you read the Word of God you have to approach it with Faith. And **Faith = Do**. A relationship with the LORD of All the Universe is not one of simply acquiring knowledge. It is one of loving, changing, growing, admitting your shortcomings, asking Him to change you. Yes, read and study the Bible. But each time you open your Bible, ask yourself: What have I learned? What should I do?

You are going to find that your new self, unlike your old self, has the desire and the ability to do what you know you should do.

Your old self has sinful desires, remember? And your old self doesn't even have the ability to fight off those sinful desires, right?

Well, good news. Your new self, which is ruled by the "law that gives liberty", does want what God wants. And your new self does have the ability to do what God wants.

The law that gives liberty, gives liberty. Liberty from the slavery of sin. Liberty from desires that used to rule your life. Liberty from the ugly consequences of sin. Liberty from thinking about sin. Liberty from planning to do sin. Liberty.

- Believe in Jesus. (real belief)
- Fill your life with His words (the Bible)
- Obey what He tells you to do.
- Experience freedom
- Keep feeding your new self

1:26,27

What is religion?

What is worthless religion?

What is faultless religion?

Religion is simply the outward show of a person's inward relationship with God. Someone with worthless religion is someone whose talk doesn't match their walk.

Faultless religion is helping the weak and defenseless and staying away from the sin the world offers.

James ends this chapter with “**do**”. Are you a religious person? Here are some things for you to “**do**”:

- Watch what you say
- Take care of those who can't take care of themselves
- Stay away from sin.

Lesson 2

Questions for you to Answer

James 2

Memory verse for this study:

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)

2:1 What two things don't go together?

2:2-4 On what basis were the readers of this letter judging who was worthy of respect and who wasn't?

2:4-7 What was “evil” about what these readers were doing?

2:8 Why does James call this the “Royal Law”?
Matt. 22:39

2:9 So, if any of us at any time respect one person more than another, what does that make us?

2:10 & 11 Why are you guilty of all the law if you just do one thing wrong?

2:12 Yikes! How do we change?

2:13 Which is easier to do? show mercy or pass judgment? Which is the best? Can it be done?

2:14-26 James gives 5 illustrations in verses 14-26 of the fact that faith and works go hand-in-hand.... What are they?

1. :14-17

2. :18-19

3. :20-24

4. :25

5. :26

Bonus Question:

How do you reconcile James 2:14,17,22, 24 & 26 with Romans 3:20, 27&28 and 4:1-3?

Lesson 2

Answers

James 2

2:1

What two things don't go together?

1. Faith in Jesus
doesn't go with
2. Respect of persons

What is respect of persons? It's considering one person more important than another - more deserving of preferential treatment.

Why don't they go together? (Philippians 2:5-8)

Because Jesus is the Lord of Glory. If He would leave Glory in order to live with us, who truly are less deserving of preferential treatment, how can we do less for others, who are just as non-deserving as we are?

2:2-4

Example of Respect of Persons:

On what basis were the readers of this letter judging who was worthy of respect and who wasn't?

Clothing and jewelry, appearance. In other words, money.

On what basis do we judge who is worthy of respect and who isn't?

What were these readers *doing* which showed they respected one person more than another? They were making sure people who obviously had wealth were getting the best seats in the congregation.

What do we *do* which shows more respect to one person as opposed to another? Maybe we make a point of conversing at church only with our friends. Maybe we ask men and women to serve in leadership positions based solely on how affluent they are, or how much power they have in our community.

2:4-7

What was “evil” about what these readers were doing?

- Proud.
- Condemning.
- Assuming there was not much importance in some people...people for whom Christ had died.
- Assuming there was no hope for change.
- Assuming that if a person had sinned, they were a failure.
- Putting more value in earthly things than in heavenly things.
- Being ignorant of what is true, but instead looking at people as the world looks at them.

2:8

Why does James call this the “Royal Law”?

Matthew 22:39. It’s royal because the King of Kings, the LORD Jesus, gave us this law.

2:9

So, if any of us at any time respect one person more than another, what does that make us?

It makes us just like the people we are condemning. Failures. Sinners. And even worse, we might be refusing to be what God tells us we could be.

In other words, if I have respect of persons I am a failure, too, just like the people I am judging.

2:10 & 11

Why are you guilty of all the law if you just do one thing wrong?

Because the law is a whole. If you fall short in any one part, no matter how “small” it may seem, you have fallen short of the whole. Romans 3:23 Romans 6:23

If you buy a boxed apple pie at Kroger, bring it home, open it up, and find that one piece of the pie is missing...would you eat the pie? Probably not – because it has been ruined, and who knows how? You didn’t get a few pieces of pie...you got less than the whole you thought you bought.

It’s the same way with the law. It’s a package. You can’t just obey part of the law and think you are doing good. You have to obey all the law – no mistakes ever – or else you are ruined....not the whole, perfect person God wants.

2:12

Yikes! How do we change?

Start talking and acting like a person who is operating under a different “law”. Not the law which says “You have failed...you are now a failure from here on out”, (that’s the old law of sin and failure) but the law which says “Get back up – you have a clean slate - you can do it!” (John 8:1-11) (that’s the Law of Freedom – the Royal Law)

That’s the law we are to operate under. And that’s the way we are to look at everyone who also is a “failure” at keeping God’s whole law. Nobody is more of a failure than we are - because we haven’t kept the whole law, either

2:13

**Which is easier to do? Show mercy or pass judgment?
Which is the best? Can it be done?**

Our sinful nature would rather pass judgment. God would rather show mercy. Mercy is best. And mercy is do-able when we ask God to change us into merci-ful people.

2:14-26

James gives five illustrations in verses 14-26 of the fact that faith and works go hand-in-hand.... What are they?

- :14-17 Helping people with needs. (You don't really care about someone just because you say you do...it has to be coupled with doing something to help them if you really care)
- :18-19 Satan himself (Even Satan acknowledges God's existence...but He doesn't couple that with bowing before God...knowledge without "do" doesn't equal faith)
- :20-24 Abraham (& Isaac on the altar) (The proof of Abraham's faith was that he was willing to obey even when it was hard...even when he didn't understand it all)
- :25 Rahab (She was a prostitute. She became a righteous person because she believed the God of Israel was the One, True, God, and she did something about it. She hid the spies. She risked her life because she believed)
- :26 Body and spirit (When you see a dead body there is no doubt that there is no life inside. No breath. No eyelids flickering. No facial expression changing. Same thing with faith. If you can't see it moving...it isn't faith)

Bonus Question:

How do you reconcile James 2:14,17,22, 24 & 26 with Romans 3:20, 27&28 and Romans 4:1-3?

In other words, how does "faith without works is dead" go hand-in-hand with "justified by faith, apart from the deeds of the law"? Don't these two teachings contradict each other?

Lesson 3

Questions for you to Answer

James 3

Memory verse for this study:

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)

:1-2 If you could choose one area of your life over which you could have great control, what would it be?

3:3-6 James gives three illustrations to prove how powerful the tongue is:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3:7-8 Why does James say the tongue is evil?

:9-12 When two opposite things are coming out of our mouths at the same time, what does that show?

3:13 If someone has the ability to lead, or teach, how will we know whether or not he/she is safe to follow?

3:14-16 If a person claims to be a “teacher of truth”, but his own “talk” is full of envying and strife, what do we know about him?

3:17 How does James describe a good “teacher”?

Bonus: Read and comment on the following:

Proverbs 6:16-19

Proverbs 12:13-25

Proverbs 24:28&29

I Samuel 3:19

Lesson 3

Answers

James 3

3:1-2

If you could choose one area of your life over which you had great control, what would it be?

No matter what choice everyone makes on this question, the point is: James is saying here that if you have control over what you say, over your “tongue”, you will be a complete and perfect person. Wow.

Powerful stuff, this tongue business...just look at what Isaiah went through to be sure his mouth was qualified to speak the truths of God! (Isaiah 6)

3:3-6

James gives three illustrations to prove how powerful the tongue is:

1. Bits in horses' mouths
2. Rudders on ships
3. Fire

3:7-8

Why does James say the tongue is evil?

Because of its power to hurt people. And because it is restless. Just about the time you think you have it under control...off it goes again. Even wild animals have been easier to tame than one person's tongue.

3:9-12

When two opposite things are coming out of our mouths at the same time, what does that show?

Hypocrisy. We can't be two opposite things, so it shows that one of the things coming out of our mouths is a lie.

3:13

If someone has the ability to lead, or teach, how will we know whether or not he/she is safe to follow?

If their life, their actions and their words, line up with their teaching. For instance, if they are honest on their tax returns, then we can trust them when they say "You shouldn't lie". Or if they are kind and gentle to their families, then we know we can follow them when they teach on family values.

3:14-16

If a person claims to be a "teacher of truth", but his own "talk" is full of envying and strife, what do we know about him?

He is really out of control in his own life. Envy and strife are good "red flags" for someone who isn't "walking the talk".

3:17

How does James describe a good "teacher"?

- Full of wisdom.
- Pure.
- Peaceable.
- Considerate.
- Submissive.
- Full of mercy.
- Full of good fruit.
- Impartial.
- Sincere.

Do you have a desire to “teach” or “lead” as your service to God? If so, then read Chapter 3, count the cost, and if you need to, change what needs to be changed.

Bonus: Read and comment on the following:

Proverbs 6:16-19

Proverbs 12:13-25

Proverbs 24:28&29

I Samuel 3:19

Lesson 4

Questions for you to Answer

James 4

Memory verse for this study:

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)

Think of a fight or quarrel you have had recently.
What caused it?

4:1-2 Now think of that fight or quarrel again. Be honest.
What was it you wanted that caused it?

What is this passage saying you should do about the things you want?

4:3 What if you do ask, and then don't get what you asked for....what is the reason for that?

4:4 What is “adultery”?

Why would James call us “adulterous” if we are fighting, quarrelling, or asking for things just so we can satisfy ourselves?

Why would James call fighting, quarrelling or asking for things just so we can satisfy ourselves being a “friend of the world”?

4:5 What is this verse saying about the way God feels about us?

4:6 For the things we need and want, God can give us grace (giving us far more than we deserve or even want)...but what can stand in the way of this wonderful grace of God?

4:7-10 What should you do if you realize you are proud...a friend of the world?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 10.

Serious business, huh?

4:11-12 How am I speaking against the law when I speak against my brother (or sister)? (clue: what law?)

4:12 Who is the only worthy judge? What can He do that you can't?

4:13-17 What attitude is James talking about here?

Bonus: This whole chapter seems to be about submitting my desires to God. Read about someone who learned to submit to God in Genesis 37 through 41 (skip 38), and tell us what you learned about submitting.

Lesson 4

Answers

James 4

Think of a fight or quarrel you have had recently.
What caused it?

Note to discussion leaders: Give your group a chance to think about this. Everyone will think of something,...but will not necessarily want to answer this out loud. Play this by ear. Bring an illustration of your own in order to answer this when everyone gets quiet. It could be about a fight or quarrel of yours...or one you witnessed (don't use names)...or, better yet, describe a quarrel or fight between two children in your acquaintance.

4:1-2

**Now think of that fight or quarrel again. Be honest.
What was it you wanted that caused it?**

Interesting, huh? It is always something you want that causes a quarrel.

What is this passage saying you should do about the things you want?

You should ask God for the things you want. Can you think of another passage from scripture which tells you that? How about *Psalms 23:1*...“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

4:3

What if you do ask, and then don't get what you asked for....what is the reason for that?

How many times have you either said this or heard this? “I prayed and God didn't answer.” “I asked, but God didn't

come through. James tells us why this sometimes happens: You aren't going to get what you want, even if you pray about it, if all you are concerned about is your own wants and needs.

Why not? Because it really isn't about you. It's about God. Our desires and even our needs are supposed to be submitted to Him...that's what this chapter is teaching us. True spiritual growth will place you in a position of wanting God's will more than yours. God's pleasure more than yours. God's glory more than yours. If you are only thinking of yourself when you pray, you are falling so short of the things God really wants you to be asking for...and receiving.

Read Matthew 6:25-34, and 7:7-11 and talk about those verses in the light of James 4:3.

4:4

What is "adultery"?

Adultery is being married to one person, but being intimate with another.

Why would James call us "adulterous" if we are fighting, quarrelling, or asking for things just so we can satisfy ourselves?

Because we are "married" to God. He is our first love. The One we should be faithful to. If we are more in love with ourselves....or with the things we want...than we are with Him....then we are, in fact, adulterers.

Why would James call fighting, quarrelling or asking for things just so we can satisfy ourselves being a "friend of the world"?

Describe some of the things you do with a friend:

- Go places
- Talk on the phone
- Share confidences
- Cry together
- Laugh together

- Accept each other as you are
- Etc.

What do you want most in life?

- Your needs met?
- Your wants satisfied?
- Your dreams to come true?
- Know God better?

Whatever or whoever you want the most – that’s the one you spend the most time with. That is your “friend”

4:5

What is this verse saying about the way God feels about us?

He loves us so much He is actually jealous for our love. He doesn’t want it to go to anything else. He knows that when our love comes only to Him, we can be the person we were always meant to be...but He also wants our love for Him to be unique – for Him alone. It’s a relationship.

4:6

For the things we need and want, God can give us grace (giving us far more than we deserve or even want)...but what can stand in the way of this wonderful grace of God?

Pride. Pride stands in the way of God’s wonderful gifts. How would you define pride? How do you get rid of pride? What would you pray in order to get rid of pride?...keep reading

4:7-10

What should you do if you realize you are proud...a friend of the world?

1. Submit your will to God.
2. Resist the devil.
3. Come near to God.

4. Wash your hands.
5. Purify your hearts. “
6. Grieve, mourn, wail.
7. Laughter to mourning.
8. Joy to Gloom.
9. Humble yourself before God .

Search me, O God....” Psalms 139:23

4:11-12

How am I speaking against the law when I speak against my brother (or sister)?

(clue: what law?)

The law of liberty. When I point out someone’s faults I am comparing them to the law of “you are not perfect”. When I point out someone’s potential, I am comparing them to the law of liberty. We are free to be all that God intended us to be when we are trusting Jesus to change us.

4:12

Who is the only worthy judge? What can He do that you can’t?

He can destroy...but He also can save. I can destroy...but I can’t save. I wouldn’t want me to be the judge. And you should be very glad I’m not.

4:13-17

What attitude is James talking about here?

Making plans with only me in mind. Make your plans based on what God wants.

Bonus: This whole chapter seems to be about submitting my desires to God. Read about someone who learned to submit to God in Genesis 37 through 41 (skip 38), and tell us what you learned about submitting.

Lesson 5

Questions for you to Answer

James 5

Memory verse for this study:

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)

We’re all going to be “counselors” today. Let’s talk through chapter 5 first, and then try to help some “friends” with the truth we see here.

5:1-6 Who is James addressing in these six verses? Do you fit into that category? What characterizes the people being addressed? What is James’ advice to them?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

5:7-14 Who is James addressing in verses 7-14? Do you fit into that category? What characterizes the people being addressed?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is James' advice to them?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

5:15-18 What do these verses tell us about the Christian who is sick?

What do these verses tell us about prayer?

5:19&20

What does it mean... "wander from the truth"?

What does it mean... "bring him back"?

What does it mean... "save him from death"?

What does it mean... "cover over a multitude of sins"?

Lesson 5

Answers

James 5

Let's talk through Chapter 5 first, and then I have some "counselor" questions for you, so you can try to help some "friends" with the truths we see here.

5:1-6

Who is James addressing in these six verses?

Rich people...especially those who are rich because they have cheated poorer people out of what was promised them.

Do you fit into that category?

Each person can answer this for themselves

What characterizes the people being addressed?

1. They are rich.
2. They have hoarded wealth...meaning, I suppose, that they have wealth and are not using it for anything at all...like Scrooge keeping all his money in the vault.
3. They have held back wages from workmen who deserved them.
4. They have lived in luxury.
5. They have lived in self-indulgence.
6. They have lived like every day is a feast day.
7. They have condemned innocent men.
8. They have murdered innocent men.

What is James' advice to them?

Weep and wail. Repent. Be very sorrowful over your sinfulness. See yourself as God sees you. Have a strong desire to change. The things you are so in love with are crumbling away even as you read this page.

5:7-14

Who is James addressing in verses 7-14?

Christians who are suffering.

Do you fit into that category?

Each person can answer this for themselves.

What characterizes the people being addressed?

1. They want their suffering to be over. They are impatient.
2. They are grumbling against each other.
3. They are "swearing"...or making oaths...probably in order to get out from under the load of suffering they are enduring.

What is James' advice to them?

1. Be patient...like a farmer waiting for spring rain.
2. Don't grumble against each other...the other guy isn't the problem.
3. Persevere. Keep putting one foot in front of the other. Keep loving each other. Keep witnessing for Christ.
4. Let your "yes" be yes, and your "no", no. In other words, keep it simple. Just say what you mean and let your word be all that is needed to guarantee something.

5:15-18

What do these verses tell us about the Christian who is sick?

If a Christian is sick he should depend on other Christians to pray for him, and he should pray himself. And...if this is the case...he should be willing for the LORD to show him what sin in his life may have caused this...and be willing to

confess it and ask for forgiveness. Although this is not always the case when a Christian is sick, it is a possibility. So ask God if that is the case, and be willing to change whatever is wrong. God doesn't play games with us...so if that is what it is, He will let us know.

What do these verses tell us about prayer?

Prayer is a powerful tool in the hands of a righteous man. A man whose life is right with God can partner with God in the work of prayer.

Charles Swindoll, in his booklet, "Steadfast Christianity", says: "Without prayer, we see only the visible; with prayer, we see the hidden dimension of the invisible."

What is the first thing most of us think when we are sick? "Should I go to the doctor?"...right? This passage is simply telling us that our first thought should be..."I need to pray about this."

5:19&20

What does it mean..."wander from the truth"?

This is describing someone who has heard that Jesus has died for him, but has never made a heart commitment to Him.

What does it mean..."bring him back"?

Bring him back to the truth. Confront him with the Savior, Jesus, and ask him to make a decision for Him.

What does it mean..."save him from death"?

Without that heart commitment to Christ, that person is going to die. (see John 8:24 to see Jesus' own words on this)

What does it mean..."cover over a multitude of sins"?

When a person accepts Jesus' offer of the gift of salvation, it is as if his sins are "covered over" by the blood of Jesus. From that point on, that person is viewed by God as righteous, because God looks at that person through the perfect life of Jesus Christ...Who is "covering over" his life.

You are The Counselor

Find a truth in James 5 which will help in each of these situations:

1. A Christian friend is having health problems and comes to you, asking you to pray for him/her.....
2. Someone you know is working hard to raise funds in order to go on a short-term mission trip. He/she is complaining that some Christians who could afford to help don't seem to be even interested in the Lord's work....
3. You know a Christian who is very rich and he confides in you that, honestly, he knows he feels superior to Christians who have very little. He would like to change.....
4. Your sister, who is a Christian, too, is going through a really hard time in her marriage. At work, she has met a wonderful Christian man who has listened to her problems and been very kind to her and helpful. She admits that she is attracted to him.... and is beginning to spend more time with him than with her husband....
5. A Christian single you know has told you that she has met a wonderful guy who doesn't believe in Jesus, and that she thinks she just might be falling in love. She is tired of waiting for a Christian guy to appear on the horizon...

Answers on next page:

1. A Christian friend is having health problems and comes to you, asking you to pray for him/her.....

Gladly join that Christian friend in prayer about their sickness. Ask your Christian friend if they know of any reason why this sickness might be a reminder to them of some unconfessed sin in their life. Read James 5:13-16 together.

2. Someone you know is working hard to raise funds in order to go on a short-term mission trip. He/she is complaining that some Christians who could afford to help don't seem to be even interested in the Lord's work....

Warn your friend about "grumbling" about another Christian. Read James 5:7-9 together. Encourage your friend to be patient...to trust God...and to know that it is not another believer's fault that you are suffering.

3. You know a Christian who is very rich and he confides in you that, honestly, he knows he feels superior to Christians who have very little. He would like to change.....

Read James 5:1-6 together, and encourage your friend to see how wrong his attitude is. Encourage him/her to "weep and wail", in other words, feeling bad about this is very appropriate. Ask God to make him/her feel so bad that they truly repent, and begin to make some changes.

4. Your sister, who is a Christian, too, is going through a really hard time in her marriage. At work, she has met a wonderful Christian man who has listened to her problems and been very kind to her and helpful. She admits that she is attracted to him.... and is beginning to spend more time with him than with her husband....

Read James 5:10-11, and encourage your sister to persevere in her marriage. Help her to see that her new friendship is actually going to make it harder for her to work on her marriage. Her attraction to this other man is wrong...it is a form of adultery.

5. A Christian single you know has told you that she has met a wonderful guy who doesn't believe in Jesus, and that she thinks she just might be falling in love. She is tired of waiting for a Christian guy to appear on the horizon...

Read James 5:19&20, and encourage your friend to be concerned not about her own need of a guy...but about this young man's need of a Savior. She is being extremely self-centered to be thinking of her own needs when this young man has a need which will affect the whole rest of eternity. Encourage her to be patient and wait for God to provide a man who loves Him first, and her second...or, to accept whatever God provides, even if it is singleness. Challenge her to take her focus off of herself, and put it back on Jesus.

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