

A Study in the Epistle of

JAMES

TESTS OF FAITH

Practical Christian Living

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LESSON ONE – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

James 1:1

James 1:1a – “James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...”

1 The Author: A number of men in the New Testament bear the name "James":

James the apostle, the brother John and son of Zebedee. But this James was killed by Herod Agrippa I not later than 44 A.D. (Acts 12:2). Most consider his death happening so early in the history of the Church as to rule out that he could have been the author.

James the son of Alphaeus, who was also an apostle (Matthew 10:3). But it appears that this James is not mentioned after Acts 1:13. In addition, the writer of this letter doesn't assert his apostleship, as Peter (1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 2:1) and Paul often did (Romans 1:4 and so on). It would appear that the writer of this letter was so well known and prominent that he could simply say, 'James, a bondservant of God', and Christians in the first century would immediately recognize the identity of the writer. 'Only a very prominent person could use such a common name without further identification. To suggest some obscure "James" would not be convincing.'

James the physical brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). This James is consistently referred to by his personal name alone (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Galatians 2:9,12; Jude 1).

The Life Of James - Because he is first mentioned in the list of the Lord's brothers (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3) it is assumed that he was next in age after Jesus. During the public ministry of Jesus, James and the other family members had tried to visit Jesus (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21). It appears that they were concerned about His health (Mark 3:21,31). Up until at least seven months prior to the crucifixion, James and the other brothers remained unbelievers in Jesus (John 7:3-5). And yet prior to the day of Pentecost we find James with the apostles and other disciples (Acts 1:13), evidently now a believer in Jesus. Many feel that the "James" mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:7, to whom Jesus appeared, was this James. And that this appearance convinced James and subsequently the other brothers that their brother Jesus was indeed the Messiah. In the history of the early church we increasingly find James playing a prominent role. Three years after his conversion, Paul had met with Peter and James (Galatians 1:18-19). In Galatians 2:9, Paul referred to this James as being one of the pillars of the church, along with Peter and John. Around 47 A.D., James takes a prominent and vocal role along with Peter, Paul and Barnabas in opposing the Judaizing teachers (Acts 15:13-21). Clearly, he is a man who had the gift of speaking by inspiration. When Paul brought the collection for the poor Christians to Jerusalem, James is mentioned along with the elders of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 21:18). This was the end of Paul's third missionary journey and would be spring of 58 A.D. Josephus claims that between the death of Festus and the arrival of the new Roman governor in Judea, the high priest, Ananus, seized the opportunity to call the judicial council together. He charged James and others with violating the law, and James was stoned to death. If we take this account as accurate, then James would have died around A.D. 62.

The Date: Considerable attention is given in the letter to the economic inequity between the poor and the rich among the readers (5:1-6). This condition largely ceased after the Roman-Jewish War (A.D. 66-70).' (Kent p. 27). But such would have to assume that the primary audience addressed were Christians living in Judea. 2. James is said to have died around 62 A.D., so this would be the limit for when the epistle would have been written. 3. Within the letter we learn that Christians are already suffering persecution (2:7). That the name "Christian" (Acts 11:26) is already being used and is being ridiculed by unbelievers. This would place the epistle as being written probably at least after 40 A.D. The letter also mentions orphans and widows and

brethren in poverty (1:27; 2:15-18). A great famine had hit Judea around 44 A.D. Many date the letter as being written being A.D. 44 and A.D. 62 or 65, seeing that another tradition has James living until 65 A.D.

To Whom Was The Letter Written: 'to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad' (1:1)

"Twelve tribes"-Obviously, James isn't writing to non-Christians or Jewish unbelievers. The expression 'twelve tribes' must be taken figuratively to apply to the Church, the new Israel (Galatians 3:28-29; 6:16; Romans 2:28-29; 4:11-12).

"Dispersion"-Initially, the word was used of Jews who from time to time had been scattered among the Gentiles (John 7:5), Jews who lived outside of Palestine. But since James isn't writing to unbelieving Jews, the word 'dispersion' must mean, 'figuratively of Christians who live in dispersion in the world' Therefore it would seem that this letter is addressed to Christians who have been scattered due to persecution (Acts 8:4) and other factors. This is a general letter addressed to all Christians.

Where Written: Woods notes, that James mentions the "early and latter rain" (5:7), which is a characteristic of Palestine. In addition, all the references to James in the latter half of the book of Acts place him in Jerusalem (Acts 15,21). The years during which James was a prominent voice for Christians in Palestine were troublesome years. Roberts notes, 'The political and religious life of the country in these years is filled with corruption, strife, intrigue and hatred...In the governorship of Cuspius Fadius (A.D. 44-46) occurred the uprising of Theudas in Judea...It was during these years that the infamous Ananias was elevated to the high priesthood which he held A.D. 47-59. In A.D. 48 another governor Cumanus replaced Tiberias Alexander, and under his blundering occurred the riot in the temple in which Josephus says 20,000 Jews lost their lives...The new Procurator was Felix (A.D. 52)..Under him conditions of "legalized extortion" became the order of the day. The Jewish nation, already impoverish by the famine (Acts 11:27), reached a critical economic state...The greed of Ananias and the rich Jews of whom the Sanhedrin was typical...Resentment against this situation and against Rome, who allowed it, became intensified in the 50's by the growing Zealot bands of murderers and armed Dagger Assassins. These Assassins who appeared in the early reign of Felix began their work under the instigation of the Governor himself with the murder of the ex-high priest Jonathan in the Temple...The recall of Felix soon after the rule of Nero began brought the more able Festus to the troubled province. But his efforts to promote peace availed little...Festus died in A.D. 62,)and according to Josephus, before the new governor could arrive (Albinus), Ananus and the Sanhedrin took the life of James)... The high priest who had done the deed was deposed by the new Governor, but the Governor...organized his own pillage, set prisoners free for fees, and allowed the Sadducees free rein in Jerusalem; mobs ran riot...Meanwhile the Romans were growing tired of the bickering and the attacks upon Roman supply trains. Vespasian was on his way to set the troubled province at peace. The rest is tragedy.'

Complaints Against The Book: Martin Luther attacked the book of James, but he also had a low view of Jude, Hebrews and the book of Revelation. His dislike for the content of this epistle was based on his misunderstanding of what Paul meant by justification by faith. He failed to realize that the faith that results in justification is a faith which is obedient (Romans 1:5; 2:6-11; 6:1-5,17; 16:26). And that mere mental assent has never saved anyone (John 12:42-43).

Others view the book of James as containing a very low view of Christianity, and that the author was a man still caught up in observing the Law Of Moses. The problem with this, is that the author opposed those who tried to blend elements of Judaism with Christianity (Acts 15:1-21). Paul viewed James as definitely being on the right side of the Judaizing Controversy (Galatians 2:9). In addition, how can anyone read this book and call it a low view of Christianity? Some complain that James doesn't contain the "meat" that is found in other New Testament letters such as Romans. In my view, this book contains a tremendous amount of meat. Just try applying the book in your daily life!

Guthrie has noted that many statements in this book are simply restatements of what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

- Joy in the midst of trials (James 1:2; Matthew 5:10-12)
- Asking for good gifts (1:5; Matthew 7:7ff)
- Teaching against anger (James 1:20; Matthew 5:22).
- Hearers and doers of the Word (James 1:22; Matthew 7:21,24).
- Keeping the whole law (James 2:10; Matthew 5:19).
- Blessings of mercifulness (2:13; Matthew 5:7).
- Blessings of peacemakers (3:18; Matthew 5:9).
- Friendship with the world is enmity against God (4:4; Matthew 6:24).
- Blessing to the humble (4:10; Matthew 5:5).
- Against judging others (4:11-12; Matthew 7:1-5).
- Moth and rust spoiling riches (5:2; Matthew 6:19).
- Against oaths (5:12; Matthew 5:33-37).

There are those who claim that the Greek found in the book is excellent and would be beyond the abilities of a Galilean. Such writers seem to forget that God is the real author (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; Ephesians 3:3-5). And if inspiration means anything, it means that God should be given credit for the grammatical construction of the letter. Good grammar isn't a problem for a person who is being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). If the Holy Spirit could enable men to speak perfectly in a foreign language which they had never learned (Acts 2:6-11), then what is the problem with the Holy Spirit improving your grammar in a language which you have heard since birth?

And then there are the writers who are always trying to find a pseudo-writer behind every New Testament book. That is, someone other than James wrote the book and attached his name to it. But if the real author was deceptive, or in other words a liar (Revelation 21:8), then why should we listen to anything he said?

VI. A Very Practical Book: Various voices within the community of religious scholarship might not like this book, but I have a feeling that some of this is due to prejudice on the part of the scholars. This book doesn't allow us to remain on an academic or theoretical level with the truths of Christianity. 1. This isn't a Christianity which is practiced in the comfort of a study or with the perks of tenure and a successful book tour (1:2-4). 2. God isn't impressed by the skeptic (1:6-8). 3. There is a wisdom that cannot be obtained apart from God and submitting to His will (James 1:5). 4. This book gets down to the nitty-gritty of temptation (1:14-16), and removes all the human explanations, excuses and rationalizations for why people do bad things. The teaching on why people give into evil clearly goes against modern political correctness and what often passes for "science". 5. Often, religious or secular scholarship doesn't like to hear that lip-profession means nothing (1:22-27). Being a Christian means getting your hands dirty, getting into uncomfortable situations, changing your attitude, controlling your tongue and so on. 6. The teaching concerning personal favoritism (2:1-9) goes against the preferences of those who see themselves as belonging to an elite class. 7. A faith that works upsets the Calvinist or the elitist, who wants their salvation locked in, so they can concentrate on more important matters (2:14-26). The book is so practical that some have called it "the gospel of common sense". Or as the writers of the ISBE stated, "The sentence construction is simple and straightforward. There is usually no good reason for misunderstanding anything James says.' One writer noted, "There are those who talk holiness and are hypocrites; those who make profession of perfect love and yet cannot live peaceably with their brethren; those who are full of pious phraseology but fail in practical philanthropy. The epistle was written for them. It may not give them much comfort, but it ought to give them much profit. All who are long on theory and short on practice ought to steep themselves in the spirit of James; and since there are such people in every community and in every age, the message of the epistle will never grow old.' (ISBE p. 1567)

Themes In The Book:

Pure Religion Vs Vain Religion

- Joy and patience in the midst of trials (1:2-4) Complaining (5:9)
- Unwavering faith (1:5-8) Doubting (1:6-8)
- Enduring temptation (1:12-15) Yielding to it (1:14)
- Seeing God as the source of all good (1:17)
- Slow to anger (1:19) Anger (1:20)
- Humility (1:21) Pride (4:6)
- Obedient Faith (1:22-25) Lip profession (2:14-16)
- Control of the tongue (1:26) Lack of control (1:26, 3:2ff)
- Benevolence (1:27; 2:14-26) It's not my job (2:16)
- Moral purity (1:27; 4:8) Friendship with the world (4:4)
- Love of neighbor (2:10) Showing partiality (2:1-9)
- Respect for the whole law (2:12) Picking and choosing (2:9)
- Mercy (2:13) No mercy (2:13)
- Peaceable, gentle, reasonable, good fruits Hypocrisy, jealousy, selfish conviction, sincerity (3:17) ambition, lying, arrogance (3:14-16)
- God is the judge (4:12) Trying to assume God's place (4:11-12)
- Trust in God (4:15) Trust in self (4:13-17)
- Generosity (1:27) Hoarding (5:1ff)

An Active Faith - Paul and James do not contradict each other, how could they if we believe the Bible is inspired of God? Paul and James teach the same thing, the faith that results in salvation is an active and obedient faith. Romans 4 stresses the same truth which is stressed in James 2:14-26. Look at the faith which Abraham possessed, and how Paul describes it in Romans 4:18-22. If one tries to argue that Romans 4 and James 2 are in opposition to each other, what is going to happen when you read Matthew 7:21 and following? Or John 14:15? Do Paul and Jesus contradict each other?

James also makes it clear that we must continue to exercise an obedient faith to end up saved. For James is addressing people who are already saved, (2:15 'If a brother or sister...and one of you says...'). The book makes it clear that a Christian can so sin as to forfeit their salvation (2:14 'can that faith save him?'; 5:19-20). This book contradicts Calvinistic theory, for it presents man as having a choice, a freewill. And much of the book places the responsibility for change and morality upon the individual (1:2,4,6,9,12,21,22, and so on).

The Power Of The Tongue - Whoever wrote, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me", needed to read this letter. Words can hurt and they can destroy (3:6,8). In fact, God feels that one of the real tests of our spirituality is whether or not we can control what we say (1:26).

The Truth About Temptation - In contrast to so many false theories about why a person sins, the letter makes it clear: 1. Temptation is not a matter of fate or some eternal decree from God (1:13). 2. 'nor is it hereditary and so antecedent to choice.' Many modern and ancient theories concerning why people do bad things are completely destroyed by the words found in James 1:13-15.

Outline:

Greeting (1:1)

Trials and how to meet them (1:2-4).

Wisdom and how to obtain it (1:5-8)

Wealth and how to regard it (1:9-11)

Temptation and trial distinguished it (1:12-15)

Good gifts (1:16-18)

While trials are used by God to develop character and spirituality, temptation never comes from God but rather springs from our own evil and selfish desires. God doesn't send temptations, but He does send all good gifts.

Hearing and doing (1:19-27).

The best thing that God has given us is His word. And when the word is received everything that is contrary to the will of God must be removed.

Against partiality (2:1-13)

Against a barren faith (2:14-26)

Qualities required in teachers (3:1-18) (and all Christians)

1 Control of the tongue (3:1-12)

2 True wisdom (3:13-18)

Dangers: (4:1-17)

1 Selfish motivation (4:1-3)

2 Desire to compromise with the world (4:4-5)

3 Arrogance (4:6-10)

4 Unconstructive criticism (4:11-12)

5 Rash confidence, presumption (4:13-17)

Warnings to wealthy oppressors (5:1-6)

Encouragements to the oppressed (5:7-11)

Against oaths (5:12)

The power of prayer (5:13-18)

Help for the backslider (5:19-20)

Before we close we should note that like the other writers of the New Testament, James believed that the examples and events recorded in the Old Testament: A. Really happened. B. Still stand as offering relevant lessons, warnings and words of encouragement (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:1-12; James 5:10-17).

A. Chapter Summary's

1. *Chapter 1* – It is the design of trials to make mature Christian character. We may, therefore, rejoice in such trials (1:1-4). We all need wisdom to recognize this, and God will supply it (1:5-7). Our faith, however, must be stable; and we must not allow outward circumstance to change our status with God (1:7-11). Patient endurance leads to a crown of life (1:12). Evil may not be blamed on God, but results from man's improper desires, and eventually leads to spiritual death (1:13-17). God is the source of all good; and it is through the power of His word that we become His spiritual children (1:18-21). But, to be blessed by it, we must both hear and do it; and this includes the practical precepts of Christianity such as controlling our tongue and caring for the fatherless and widows (1:22-27).
2. *Chapter 2* – It is sinful to show respect for person; and to fawn upon the rich and exhibit contempt for the poor is especially reprehensible (2:1-4). There is really more occasion to regard the poor than the rich; the poor are heirs of God's blessing; the rich oppress us and evilly treat us (2:5-7). The royal law requires us to treat all alike, and avoid all respect of persons (2:8-11). To obtain mercy, we must be merciful (2:12-13). Faith, apart from works, is dead; in order to bless us, faith must always be accompanied by obedience to God's commands (2:14-26)
3. *Chapter 3* – Teachers have a weighty responsibility (3:1). It is indeed difficult for any of us to control our tongues, and they (our tongues) are capable of great evil (3:1-8). It is absurd to suppose that one is either wise or good who utters curses against others. If what he has is wisdom, it is from below, and not from God (3:9-13). There is a heavenly wisdom and it exhibits itself in kindness toward others and in a life richly filed with good works (3:17-18).
4. *Chapter 4* - Conflicts arise because of improper desire (4:1-2). Those desires, once possessed by us, are ever seeking, and are never satisfied. Some do not ask God for their needs; others ask, but for the wrong things (4:2-3). Friendship with the world is enmity with God, and we must every be on guard lest our lower natures pull us down (4:4-6). The most effective way to do this is to resist the devil and turn to God in humility and contrition (4:7-10). We should avoid all fault-finding and censorious judgments, and not be guilty of attempting to usurp the powers and privileges of God Himself (4:11-12). God must be taken into our plans and purposes, and we should live for today, because we have no assurance that tomorrow will come (4:13-17)
5. *Chapter 5* – Let the rich take heed! (5:1-3). That which they have obtained by fraud will witness against them in the judgment soon to come upon them (5:4-6). The faithful are to bear their sufferings patiently, assured that a day of comfort is coming (5:7-11). They are to avoid unnecessary oaths; they are to find in prayer and song solace for life's trials and for the expression of its power of healing then in the hands of the elders of the church (5:14-15); all are to confess their faults, and to pray for each other (5:17-18); and should a brother fall into sin he is immediately to be assisted in order that his soul may be saved from spiritual and eternal death (5:19-20).

- I. **WHAT IS FAITH?** Since the majority of our study will center around faith we need to know what it is.
- A. FAITH (pistis) is used three ways in the bible;
1. Trust, confidence, in an active sense
 - a. 2 Tim. 1:12 – Paul trusted in the Lord
 - b. Heb 11:8-10 – Abraham trusted in God
 2. Commitment of One's Life;
 - a. John 1:12-13 – He gave them the right to become children of God.
 - b. The antithesis is also true – If my life is not wholly dedicated to the Lord, then I do not have faith.
 3. Obedience;
 - a. Heb 11:1ff – By faith Abel, By faith Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc...

II. MAIN POINTS IN OUR STUDY

- A. True Religion Endures Trials And Temptations (1:2-18)**
1. With joy and patience (1:2-4)
 2. With wisdom from God (1:5-8)
 3. With a proper perspective (1:9-11)
 4. With an understanding of temptation (1:12-15)
 5. With an awareness of the Fathers goodness (1:16-18)
- B. True Religion consists of Doing, Not Just Hearing (1:19-2:26)**
1. One should be swift to hear (1:19-20)
 2. One should NOT be hearers only, but doers (1:21-27)
 3. One should NOT show personal favoritism (2:1-13)
 4. One should show their faith by their works (2:14-26)
- C. True Religion displays Wisdom, Not Just Speaking (3:1-18)**
1. The danger of the tongue (3:1-12)
 2. The difference between heavenly and earthly wisdom (3:13-18)
- D. True Religion Befriends God through Humility (4:1-17)**
1. How to be an enemy of God (4:1-6)
 2. How to draw near to God (4:7-17)
- E. True Religion Is Blessed through Patience, Prayer, and Love (5:1-20)**
1. The curse of rich oppressors (5:1-6)
 2. The blessing of patience (5:7-12)
 3. The blessing of prayer (5:13-18)
 4. The blessing of love for the erring (5:19-20).

LESSON ONE – INTRODUCTION AND BACKKGROUND
James 1:1

I. Salutation

A Greetings to Readers (Vs 1)

1. James describes himself as a servant.
2. James writes to Jewish Christians scattered abroad known as the “diaspora”.

II. Questions For Lesson One – Introduction and 1:1

A. Define or explain in light of the context:

1. Servant -

2. Twelve Tribes -

3. Scattered –

4. Dispersed –

B. Questions:

1. Who (or which James) is the writer of this letter?
2. Why is he writing?
3. Who is he writing to?
4. What is the theme of the letter?
5. Why is James called the “Proverbs of the New Testament”?
6. When was this letter written?
7. What are the characteristics of faith that James mentions?
8. List some of the practical lessons James gives us to help us with relationships and our Christian lives?

LESSON TWO – THE TESTING OF FAITH (1:2-12)

(2) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, (3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. (4) But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (5) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (6) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. (7) For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; (8) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

(9) Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, (10) but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. (11) For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

(12) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has proved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

TRIALS – PATIENCE – WISDOM – FAITH - RICHES

Rejoice in trials (2), persecution, afflictions, sufferings, of one kind or another, endurance of which proves our faith, and helps build us into the kind of person that Christ came to make of us. Peter calls “Trials Precious (1 Peter 1:7) Trials work patience (3, 4). Patience, in time of Suffering, is the ability to wait calmly and in joy for that glad day when God shall wipe away all tears. Patience works perfection (4). We are just poor sinners, saved by grace. But perfection is our ultimate goal. Some day we shall be perfect like Him (1 John 3:2).

Wisdom (5). Sound judgment about the practical things of daily life, in all its phases so as to live, in all things, as a Christian should. Prayer (5), will help attain such Wisdom. This epistle begins and ends (5:13-18), with an exhortation to prayer. Faith (6-8). Unwavering faith, that stand sure and undisturbed in all the storms of life, is the condition of prevailing prayer. All things are possible to him that believes (Mark 9:23)

Riches (9-12). A solemn reminder that our status, not here, but in eternity, should be our main concern. Even the poor may rejoice in their glorious destiny (James 2:1-13)

A. JOY OF TRIALS (1:2-2)

1. Gives you a chance to be tested
2. Victory if you pass the tests
3. Results of Trails – makes you complete

B. WISDOM OF TRIALS (1:5-8)

1. Source of true wisdom
2. The promise of wisdom from God
3. Asking for wisdom (Must ask in faith).
4. Results if you doubt – no wisdom

C. THE POOR AND THE RICH NEED TRIALS (1:9-11)

1. Promise to the poor.
2. Promise to the rich.

D. REWARD FOR THOSE WHO ENDURE TRIALS (1:12)

1. Crown of life
2. Promised to those who love Him.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON TWO - James 1:2-12**A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT:**

1. Temptation:
2. Trials:
3. Patience:
4. Perfect:
5. Entire (Complete)::
6. Wavering (Doubting):
7. Double Minded:

B. ANSWER:

1. How can it be counted “joy” to fall into various kinds of trials?
2. What is the “chain of thought” in verses 2-4?
3. Are temptations “joyous” ‘when we succumb or complain?
4. In the context, why are we supposed to ask for wisdom?
5. What assurance do we have that God will answer our prayers?
6. Does the context say we will receive everything we ask for?
7. What then will we receive?

LESSON THREE – THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION

James 1:13-18

(13) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. (14) But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. (15) Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (16) Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (18) Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

James started his epistle to his brethren with a simple salutation and a call to view trials as occasions to rejoice (1-5). If wisdom is needed, the Christian can ask God, with faith and no doubting, and God will provide us with wisdom that will help us endure trials (5-8). The poor and the rich are then encouraged to rejoice. Not in their physical status, but in their relationship with God and what he has done for them.

James then gives us the motivation to endure temptations as well as an explanation of the true source of temptations. He also tells us what produces “spiritual death” and how sin is developed (12-15). God is not the source of temptations. God is the source of “every good and perfect gift”. With Him there is no variation.

A. THE RIGHT VIEW OF TEMPTATIONS (1:13-16)

1. Wrong to blame God
2. Each person is responsible
3. It is a gradual process
4. The end results of following the flesh
5. Know the truth.

B. RIGHT VIEW OF THE GIVING GOD (1:17)

1. Gives only good gifts
2. He never changes.

C. ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD (1;18)

1. Know that we are begotten by the word
 - The Word of Truth
 - Results: First-Fruits

QUESTIONS, LESSON THREE (James 1:13-18)

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT:

1. Blessed:
2. Lust (desires):
3. Enticed:
4. Sin:
5. Death:
6. Variation:
7. First Fruits

B. QUESTIONS:

1. How are we blessed when we endure temptations?
2. Why can't we say we are tempted by God?
3. How is man tempted?
4. What does Lust, produce?
5. What is the sequence of events that produce death?
6. What do we receive from God?
7. What is God's greatest gift?

LESSON FOUR – LISTENING AND DOING

James 1:19-27

(19) Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; (20) for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

(21) Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (22) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (23) For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; (24) for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. (25) But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. (26) If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. (27) 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.

A. PHYSICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD (1:19-20)

1. Swift to Hear
2. Slow to speak
3. Slow to wrath
4. Why? Wrath of man cannot work righteousness.

B. SPIRITUAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD (1;21)

1. Lay aside sin
2. Humble yourself
3. Receive the Word
4. Why? Will save your soul (literally: Keep your souls saved")

C. BELIEVER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD (1:22-25)

1. Be a doer as well as a hearer
2. Don't fool yourself

D. A TEST FOR YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORD (1:26-27)

1. Proper Speech
2. Proper help for the needy
3. Proper conduct
4. Individual in nature

After giving us the benefits and the source of trials and temptations, James then moves on to a major theme in his letter; we are to be doers of the word and not hearers only. James contrasts the differences between religion that is useless and that which is pure and undefiled before God.

**QUESTIONS LESSON FOUR: LISTENING AND DOING
JAMES 1:19-27**

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT:

1. Filthiness -
2. Superfluity (Overflow, Abundance) –
3. Glass (Mirror) –
4. Religion –
5. Orphans (Fatherless) –
6. Himself (Oneself) –

B. ANSWER:

1. Why are we to be “swift to hear and slow to wrath”?
2. Do verses 19-20 refer to our conduct with one another or to our relationship toward God and His word?
3. How are we to receive the Word?
4. Explain the illustration James uses to describe the difference between a “Doer” and a “Hearer” of the Word?
5. What is vain religion?
6. What is pure religion?
7. Do these things refer to our collective or individual responsibilities?

LESSON FIVE – FAVORITISM FORBIDDEN

James 2:1-13

(2:1) My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. (2) For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, (3) and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place." and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," (4) have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? (5) Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? (6) But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? (7) Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called? (8) If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; (9) but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (10) For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (11) For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. (12) So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. (13) For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

A. MUST NOT BE A RESPECTOR OF PERSONS.

1. Jesus did not practice respect of persons
2. They were not following Christ's example

B. PRACTICED BY SOME.

1. Partial toward the rich
2. Prejudiced toward the poor

C. RICHES OF POVERTY, AND POVERTY OF RICHES

D. THE ROYAL LAW

E. THE LAW OF LIBERTY AND MERCY

There must have been a decidedly worldly element in the Judean church for James to issue such a strong rebuke. So different from the way the church had started (Acts 2:45; 4:34). Christ taught kindness to the poor, but evidently some of the church were developing into social circles where the poor were given to understand they were not wanted. But God loves the poor and the rich ought to love them too.

**QUESTIONS, LESSON FIVE – FAVORITISM FORBIDDEN
JAMES 2:1-13**

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT.

1. Assembly –
2. Partial (Partiality) –
3. Convinced –

B. ANSWER:

1. What is “respect of persons”?
2. How are the “judges of evil thoughts”?
3. What is the difference between God’s view, and man’s view of the poor?
4. What is the “royal law”?
5. Is “respect of persons” a serious sin?
6. Does God view sin the same way man does?
7. Explain verses 10-11.

LESSON SIX – FAITH AND DEEDS

James 2:14-26

14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? (15) If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, (16) and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? (17) Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (18) But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (19) You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe -- and tremble! (20) But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? (22) Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? (23) And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. (24) You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. (25) Likewise, was not Rehab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? (26) For as the body without the spirit is dead; so faith without works is dead also.

I. FAITH AND WORKS

- A. Profession and Practice
- B. Not a matter of one or the other, but both.

II. Proof of Faith

- A. A non-active faith cannot save
- B. Well-wishing words do not clothe or feed
- C. How real faith is evidenced
- D. The devils believe but it is without value
- E. Abraham's saving faith is demonstrated.
- F. Rehab is another example of active, saving faith.

Paul's teaching of justification by faith, and James' teaching of justification by works are supplementary and not contradictory. Neither was opposing the teaching of the other. James fully endorsed Paul's work (Acts 15:13-29). There have been many attempts to harmonize Paul (in the book of Romans) and James on this point, from throwing the book out of our bibles, to saying that they referred to a different kind of faith. Our study will reveal the two complimented each other. We will see how the two men talk about different kinds of "works"

QUESTIONS LESSON SIX
JAMES 2:14-26

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTECT:

1. Destitute –
2. Devils (demons)
3. Justified –
4. Dead –

B. ANSWER:

1. Is the royal law expressed by saying or doing?
2. How is faith really shown?
3. Why does James speak of the belief of demons?
4. When was Abraham justified? (Vs 23, Romans 4:1ff; Heb 11:8-11; Gen 12 – 15)
5. What makes faith perfect?
6. Verse 24 is the only verse that uses the phrase “faith only”. What does it mean?
7. What does justification by “works” mean and what does it NOT mean?

LESSON SEVEN – TAMING THE TONGUE

James 3:1-12

(3:1) My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. (2) For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. (3) Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. (4) Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. (5) Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! (6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. (7) For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. (8) But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (9) With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. (10) Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. (11) Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? (12) Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring can yield both salt water and fresh.

A. PERIL OF BEING A TEACHER

1. Think before assuming the responsibility of being a teacher
2. You will receive a heavier judgement

B. PROBLEMS OF THE TONGUE

1. Small but powerful
2. Like a destructive fire
3. Results of inward corruption

C. PROBLEM OF TAMING THE TONGUE

D. INCONSISTENT USE OF THE TONGUE

1. Blessing and Cursing

James deals with sins of the tongue: not only harsh and angry words, but false and foolish doctrines. From the general tone of this chapter we suspect there must have been many presumptuous, quarrelsome, worldly-minded men, of uncontrolled temper, putting themselves forward as leaders and teachers.

Power of the tongue: The tongue is the main expression of our personality, and usually calls forth an immediate reaction, of one kind or another, in others. Mean words have wrecked many a home, divided many a congregation, and sent unnumbered millions to despair and ruin. Yet we know many very religious people who seem never to make even the slightest effort to control their tongue.

QUESTIONS, LESSON SEVEN
JAMES 3:1-12

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT;

1. Masters, Teachers
2. Stumble (Offend)
3. Pilot (Governor)
4. Desires (Listeth)

B. ANSWER:

1. Why is there a warning against being teachers?
2. List the two illustrations about small things controlling big things
3. Illustrate how a little fire (the tongue) kindles a great matter.
4. Explain verse 6.
5. What can man NOT tame?
6. Is nature inconsistent? (How does James prove his point?) –

LESSON EIGHT – TWO KINDS OF WISDOM

James 3:13-18

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. (14) But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. (15) This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. (16) For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there. (17) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (18) Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

A. WRONG KING OF WISDOM (Of the Devil)

1. Bitter Jealousy
2. Selfish Ambition
3. Arrogant
4. Lie against the Truth
5. Disorder
6. Every Evil Thing

B. TRUE WISDOM (From God)

1. Pure
2. Peaceable
3. Gentle
4. Reasonable
5. Full of Mercy
6. Full of Good Fruits
7. Unwavering
8. Without Hypocrisy
9. Fruit of Righteousness
10. Sown in Peace

Perhaps some sought to be teachers so as to appear wise. Yet James writes that wisdom and understanding are to be shown by one's conduct, done in meekness. He then defines and contrasts the differences between two kinds of wisdom. There is wisdom which is earthly that causes confusion and every evil thing. On the other hand, there is wisdom which is heavenly that produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

**QUESTIONS LESSON 8 – TWO KINDS OF WISDOM
JAMES 3:13-18**

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT

1. Conduct (Conversation) –
2. Earthly –
3. Sensual –
4. Devilish (Demonic) -
5. Peaceable –
6. Gentle –
7. Willing to Yield –
8. Without Partiality –

B. ANSWER:

1. How is man to be wise?
2. How does man “lie against the truth”?
3. Contrast the two kinds of wisdom, what are their characteristics?
4. Who produces the “fruit of righteousness”? How?

LESSON NINE – SUBMIT YOURSELVES TO GOD - James 4:1-1-2

(4:1) Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? (2) You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (3) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (4) Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (5) Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? (6) But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

*"God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble." {Prov 3:34}*

(7) Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. (8) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you doubleminded. (9) Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. (12) There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

A. SOURCE OF WARS AND STRIFE

1. Man does his own will.
2. Results of a pleasure filled life.
3. Infidelity toward God.
4. Fellowship with the world and enmity with God.
5. God is a jealous God.
6. The glory of humility in contrast to the tragedy of pride.

B. GODLY ATTRIBUTES NEEDED TO OVERCOME THE DEVIL

1. Godly Purity
2. Godly Sorrow
3. Godly Humility

C. THE SIN OF JUDGING OTHERS

1. It is evil – There is only one judge and lawgiver
2. You are subject to judgment too.

D. JAMES' 10 COMMANDMENTS

1. Submit to God.
2. Resist the Devil
3. Draw Near to God
4. Cleanse Your Hands
5. Purify Your Hearts
6. Be Miserable, Mourn, and Weep
7. Let Your Laughter Turn to Mourning
8. Let Your Joy Turn to Gloom
9. Humble Yourself
10. Do Not Speak Against One Another.

**QUESTIONS LESSON NINE – SUBMIT YOURSELVES TO GOD
JAMES 4:1-12**

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT

1. War-
2. Amiss-
3. Spend it-
4. Submit-
5. Resist-
6. Lament-
7. Mourn-
8. Humble-

B. ANSWER:

1. What is the source of wars and fighting's?
2. How do "lusts" war in our members?
3. Why did they not receive when they asked?
4. What does "friendship with the world" produce? What does it mean?
5. Explain verse 5
6. How does God react to the proud?
7. The scriptures teach that Christians are to rejoice. In view of that, explain James' command I verse 9.
8. Are we to be judges of the law or doers of the law?
9. If we speak evil against our brother, which are we?

LESSON 10 – BOASTING ABOUT TOMORROW

James 4:13-17

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; *(14)* whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. *(15)* Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." *(16)* But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. *(17)* Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

A. MISTAKE OF CONFIDENCE IN SELF

1. Prevalent Attitude
2. Mistaken Attitude
3. Proper Attitude
4. Rebuke of Attitude.

James has counseled his readers to draw near to God in humble submission, with clean hands, purity in heart, and true contrition. He warned them against speaking evil of brethren and judging one another, lest they become judges and not doers of the law. The chapter ends with a call to make plans with the Lord's will in mind, for we have no idea what tomorrow holds and life is short. Otherwise we boast in our arrogance and sin when we fail to do what we know is good.

One of the most amazing teachings in the bible is that God, with the infinite universe in His hands, is still alive and active in our individual lives today. While this passage does not talk about prayer specifically – we need to dedicate our lives to prayer. So that God might work His will in our hearts and minds.

**QUESTIONS LESSON TEN – BOASTING ABOUT TOMORROW
JAMES 4:13-17**

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT

1. Arrogance

2. Boasting

3. Vapor

4. Lord Wills

5. Good

B. ANSWER:

1. In verses 9 – 15, is James condemning preparation for the future via life insurance, etc...? Explain.

2. How should we make plans?

3. Please explain verse 17 in light of the context.

4. What does it mean to “boast in your arrogance”?

5. How do we know if the “Lord wills”?

LESSON ELEVEN – WARNING TO RICH OPPRESSORS

James 5:1-6

- 5** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you!
- 2** Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten.
- 3** Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.
- 4** Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.
- 5** You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.
- 6** You have condemned; you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

The rebuke that James started in chapter four is carried over into chapter five, but with greater concentration and condemnation. James opens this final chapter with a strong condemnation toward the rich who were oppressing the poor while living in pleasure and luxury. Most likely these were rich unbelievers such as those mentioned earlier (2:6-7). The Lord heard the cries of the defrauded, and judgment was to come upon the rich who had condemned and murdered the just. This may be an allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem foretold by Jesus (Matthew 24) and fulfilled in AD 70. James gives a grim warning that hoarded wealth brings consternation, ends up in corrosion, and results in condemnation.

WARNING TO RICH OPPRESSORS (5:1-6)

- Admonition to the Rich
- Condition of Wealth
- Selfishness and its ends.

**QUESTIONS, LESSON ELEVEN, WARNING TO RICH OPPRESSORS
JAMES 5:1-6**

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT

1. Rich

2. Weep, Howl –

3. He does not resist you –

B. ANSWER

1. What would be a witness against these rich?

2. How had they obtained, at least some of their riches?

3. What does “fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter” mean?

4. What sore of miseries were to come upon them?

5. What is God so angry at these rich?

LESSON TWELVE – PATIENCE IN SUFFERING AND OATHS

James 5:7-12

(7) Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. (8) You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. (9) Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the judge is standing at the door! (10) My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering and patience. (11) Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord -- that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. (12) But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

A. ATTITUDE TOWARD MISTREATMENT

1. Be Patient
 - a. Because the Lord is coming
 - b. He will come in due season
 - c. Be strong because of the promise
 - d. Abstain from sin
 - e. Patience has always been triumphant

B. SWEARING FORBIDDEN

1. Oaths are needless
2. Oaths are folly
3. Just say "Yes" or "No".

Patience under suffering. One day the Lord will come, and all suffering will be over. Keep your eyes and your heart fixed on that glad day. By contrast, the greater the suffering here the greater will be the glory there.

James then turns back to the tongue – our sinful tongue - the cause of so much trouble. This time James talked about swearing, a very serious sin, very displeasing to God. Yet how many professed Christians, in their ordinary conversation, profane God's name. Our words should be our bond. We should not have to go in to great detail – but we should be trusted that when we say "Yes" we mean "yes" and when we say "No", we mean "no". This is the kind of reputation we should have.

**QUESTIONS, LESSON TWELVE, PATIENCE IN SUFFERING AND OATHS
JAMES 5:7-12**

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT

1. Grumble -
2. Patient –
3. Perseverance -
4. Compassionate -
5. Mercy -
6. Swear -

B. ANSWER:

1. How does the allegory in verse 7 apply to their needs
2. Why does James refer to both the prophets and Job?
3. What are the Christians to do in response to such oppression?
4. What three examples does James provide to encourage patience?

LESSON THIRTEEN – THE PRAYER OF FAITH

James 5:13-20

(13) Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. (14) Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. (15) And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. (16) Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of righteous man avails much. (17) Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. (18) And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

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

A. PRAYER AND SINGING

B. SICKNESS AND THE POWER OF PRAYER

C. HELPING THE ERRING BROTHER

This last chapter in this great letter provides a call to prayer and praise. The suffering are to pray, the cheerful are to sing praises, and the sick are to call for the elders of the church. The elders were to pray over the sick and anoint with oil in the name of the Lord, most likely for medical reasons (Isa 1:6; Luke 10:34). In answer to the prayer of faith, the Lord will raise the sick and also forgive sins if they had been committed. In this context James encourages Christians to confess their sins to one another and pray for one another that they may be healed. He reminds them of the value of fervent prayer by the righteous, using Elijah as an example of how God answers prayer providentially. The letter then closes with a reminder that turning a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

QUESTIONS LESSON THIRTEEN
JAMES 5:13-20

A. DEFINE OR EXPLAIN IN LIGHT OF THE CONTEXT

1. Suffering
2. Sick (14)
3. Sick (15)
4. Fervent
5. Wanders

B. ANSWER:

1. How many different positions are espoused for James?
2. Is the sickness under consideration spiritual or physical?
3. What does James encourage one to do when suffering? Cheerful?
4. What is one who is sick to do?
5. Is “anointing with oil” sacramental or medical? Explain.
6. What will save the sick? Who will raise him up?
7. What avails much? Who is a good illustration of this?
8. What happens when one turns a sinner from error?