



JAMES

A COMPLEMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

TO LIFEPOINTE'S SERMON SERIES

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

You will receive the most benefit from these studies if you follow these steps in the process. However, remember that our goal is not just to know about God's Word. Our aim is to be transformed more like Christ in our lives. Think about this quote from Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, p. 233.

“When we truly grasp God's Word, we go beyond a series of steps to a dynamic interaction with the Spirit of God. We listen more intently than we listen even to our best friend. We throw off pride and laziness and study diligently and submissively, not because we love study for study's sake but because we love God. Rather we enter into a heavenly conversation. As you study the Bible, remember to pray that the Spirit will work in your heart so that you will have ears to hear what he is saying.”

Try to set aside 30 minutes to an hour each week, maybe on Saturday morning, to reflect on the text for that week. We call this the Saturday Soak! This is a time to think clearly, so try to find a quiet place without interruptions.

1. Begin with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate your mind and heart so that you can grasp the Word of God. John 16:12-14 says, “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.”

2. Read the text carefully and thoughtfully. Don't read commentaries or other studies at this point. Reread the text again, maybe in another translation. We use the ESV translation, but there are other good translations, like the NIV and NKJV.

We have divided the study questions into three sections: CONTENT, CONTEXT, AND SUMMARY.

3. Dig into the CONTENT of the text. The CONTENT questions will help you in this study.

a. At the end of this study you will find a printed copy of the Book of James. Use this copy to make notes, write it out in your own hand, underline keywords, draw lines between similar ideas, note contrasts and lists of things. Look at the sentences and pay attention to the nouns, verbs, and conjunctions. Observe, observe, observe!

b. Look at the text as a whole. What is the flow of thought? Does the author show cause and effect or draw contrasts between opposites? Does the author give illustrations of something, or does he give a command or warning?

I N T R O D U C T I O N

4. Think about the CONTEXT of the text. The CONTEXT questions will give you some things to look up.
 - a. What was the historical situation when the author wrote this letter? Who wrote it? To whom did he write it? What were their circumstances? Now you can consult notes in your Study Bible, commentaries, and Bible dictionaries. You can consult the internet, but be very cautious because some sources are not reliable.
 - b. What text comes before this text, and what comes after it? How are they related?
5. After some prayerful reflection, write down in 1-2 sentences a SUMMARY of what you think the author meant when he first wrote this text. What is the topic, and what does he say about it?
6. Listen to the sermon and take notes on the space provided.
7. Now, write out 1 or 2 big spiritual lessons or principles you have learned from this text. This is the principle of truth that the text speaks to you with the illumination of the Holy Spirit. These lessons and principles are timeless truths about God, about us as people, or about our relationship with God. They can be applied in any time, any culture, and to any person.
8. Finally, think about how you can apply this spiritual truth lesson to your life this week. Make it a part of your life right now.

“In our prayers, we talk to God, in our Bible study, God talks to us,
and we had better let God do most of the talking.”

Dwight L. Moody

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READ JAMES 1:1-8

CONTENT

1. Look for repeated words/ideas in these verses. (Faith, steadfastness, doubt/doubting, lack/lacking). Look up the definitions of keywords in the dictionary and consider the definitions as you reread these verses.
2. Do you see any contrasts? Something positive and negative using similar words? For example:
 - Lacking in nothing vs. lacks wisdom
 - Perfect and complete vs. double-minded and unstable
 - Asking with no doubt vs. one who has doubts

CONTEXT

3. Who is the writer of this letter (v1)? Learn more about the author by reading these passages: ref. Mt13:55, Jn 7:2-5, 1 Cor 15:7, Gal 2:9, Acts 15:13
4. Who was the letter written to (v.1)?
5. What situation(s) do the original recipients likely find themselves in (historical context) (v2)?

SUMMARY

6. What is the writer's purpose or main idea for this section?
7. Using your own words, summarize what these verses said to the original recipients in 1-2 sentences.

WEEK 2

MAY 23

**THE TRIAL OF WEALTH OR POVERTY –
MAINTAINING A STEADFAST
FOCUS ON CHRIST**

JAMES 1:9-12

READ JAMES 1:9-12

CONTENT

1. What does the imagery in verses 10 and 11 describe about the rich man? How is this contrasted in verse 12?
2. “Lowly” in verse 9 and “humiliation” in verse 10 are two forms of the same root word. Does this change your understanding of the call for “the lowly brother to boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation?”

CONTEXT

3. How are verses 9-12 related to verses 2-4?

SUMMARY

4. Summarize in one or two sentences what James said to the dispersed Christians about steadfastness in Christ through trials of wealth or poverty.

WEEK 2

SUNDAY MORNING NOTES

READ JAMES 1:13-18

CONTENT

1. Who is the source of temptation?
2. What is the result of temptation?
3. Why would James describe God as "... the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows," in a passage that addresses temptation?
4. What does it mean for mankind to be the firstfruit of God's creation?

CONTEXT

5. The author, James, is attributed as the half-brother of Jesus. Jesus' brothers appeared to have been skeptical of Jesus' ministry prior to the resurrection (John 7:5); however, James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem after encountering Christ between His resurrection and Pentecost. Can you imagine this meeting and how much it impacted James?
6. The book of James is a New Testament "How to" for Christian living, with fundamental concepts of faith. Can you imagine the conversation if Jesus shared his experience of temptation by Satan during the encounter mentioned in the prior question?
7. Why do you think James addresses temptation so early in this book?

SUMMARY

8. In your own words, summarize the main idea of this text.

READ JAMES 1:19-26

CONTENT

1. What does not produce the righteousness of G-D? What does James direct these Christians to do instead?
2. Verse 21 refers to “the implanted word... which is able to save.” Who does the implanting? What does it mean to “receive with meekness”? For another picture of the sowing of G-D’s word, read Luke 8:4-14.
3. This passage gives a picture of two people reacting to the word of G-D. What does each one do, and what is the result of their actions?
4. Who does James say will be blessed in his doing? Does this mean that there is a way of doing that will not be blessed?
5. James contrasts worthless religion and pure religion. What are the characteristics of each? Does he offer “red flags” or signposts that can help us evaluate our own religious activity?

CONTEXT

6. Why do you think James puts this text about true religion in this place in the book? Is this a summary of the first chapter?

SUMMARY

7. This text treats several themes. Try to write a summary statement that brings them all together.

READ JAMES 2:1-13

CONTENT

1. James alludes to 3 judges: The church towards each other (vs. 4), the judges in the courts (vs.6), and the judge over the law of liberty (vs. 12). Which one is righteous? Who is this judge?
2. James contrasts judgement by “the law” with the “Royal law” and the “Law of Liberty.” What are other names for these? How are they different?
3. Under the Law of Liberty, what are the implications of “mercy triumphs over judgement?” (You can find more information in Matthew 5:17-20 and Romans 8:3-4)

CONTEXT

4. How does James’ warning against partiality tie into the previous section (1:19-26)?
5. James reminds Jewish Christians of God’s perspective on the economically poor and rich. How is it different from their cultural perspective?

SUMMARY

6. Can you paraphrase in 1-2 sentences the main spiritual lesson of this text? Try to imagine how the original audience understood this text.

WEEK 6
JUNE 20

FAITH APART FROM WORKS IS DEAD

JAMES 2:14-26

READ JAMES 2:14-26

CONTENT

1. What are two examples James points to of people in the bible that represented both faith and works together?
2. What does the word faith mean, according to James? What are some examples of useless faith?

CONTEXT

3. Why did James feel this message about faith-producing works was important to share with the Jews during this time period?
4. James refers to the poor and needy in this passage; how does his illustration connect with what he says about the poor and needy in James 2:1-13?

SUMMARY

5. How do actions make our faith complete, according to James?

WEEK 6

SUNDAY MORNING NOTES

WEEK 7

JUNE 27

TAMING THE TONGUE

JAMES 3:1-12

READ JAMES 3:1-12

CONTENT

1. In what way does James say the tongue is like a bit in a horse's mouth or the rudder of a ship?
2. How does the metaphor of a fire add to the understanding of the power of the tongue?
3. Verse 7 mentions taming animals. What is James referencing here? Why mention this as a contrast to the inability to subdue the tongue?
4. In verse 9, James shifts from the power of the tongue to the duality of the tongue. How is the tongue different from springs, trees, and vines?

CONTEXT

5. What verses in James 1 or 2 (or the rest of the Bible) support James' claim that teachers will be judged more harshly?

SUMMARY

6. Using what you have learned from verses 3-12, summarize the reason for James' warning in verse 2.

WEEK 7

SUNDAY MORNING NOTES

READ JAMES 3:13-18**CONTENT**

1. What are the characteristics of earthly wisdom and that James identifies in this passage? (Bullet point list)
2. What are the characteristics of heavenly (from above) wisdom that James identifies in this passage? (Bullet point list)
3. What is the action command James identifies in this passage? See v13.
4. What is the source of the action, and where do we get it?

CONTEXT

5. James addresses how we should talk in 3:1-12; what is James addressing in this passage?
6. Take a moment to define heavenly wisdom. See Proverbs 2:1-15.
7. James starts off chapter 3 addressing those who want to be teachers among believers, and James continues in this passage too. Review v14 in that context again. Is v14 aimed at the believer or unbeliever? Why is that context important to understanding the point James is making?

SUMMARY

8. Is wisdom knowledge? Is wisdom fixed/ stationary or is it active/working?
9. Describe wisdom in your life.
10. Summarize James 3:13-18 in your own words in 1-2 sentences or bullet points.

WEEK 9
JULY 11

**QUARRELING FROM A DIVIDED HEART
(PASSION FOR WORLD AND GOD)**

JAMES 4:1-10

READ JAMES 4:1-10

CONTENT

1. Find the definition of the word “passions” in your most convenient dictionary. Is the word “passions” in verses 1 and 3 being used positively or negatively?
2. What does James say in this text about the characteristics of people who have friendship with the world over God?

CONTEXT

3. James calls his Jewish readers “Adulterous people” in verse 4. What other connections in scripture tie the Jewish people to being adulterous?

SUMMARY

4. Describe in 1-2 sentences what James is addressing in this text.

WEEK 9

SUNDAY MORNING NOTES

WEEK 10
JULY 18

**PRIDE LEADS TO SLANDER AND BOASTING
ABOUT TOMORROW**

JAMES 4:11-17

READ JAMES 4:11-17

CONTENT

1. In order to understand verses 11-12, we need to know the meaning of 'judge' and 'law'. Look up in a Bible dictionary the meaning for these two words.
2. What does James mean when he says, 'we judge the law?'
3. What are the main points James makes about planning the future in verses 13-17. Make a bullet point list.

CONTEXT

4. How does the teaching about planning for the future prepare us for the teaching that comes next in chapter 5 about the dangers of wealth?

SUMMARY

5. James ends this section with a statement of principle: "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." How does this principle apply to the warning against judging others and the dangers of planning ahead?
6. How would you summarize the principle about making plans for the future?
7. How would you summarize the principle about not speaking evil against others?

WEEK 10

SUNDAY MORNING NOTES

WEEK 11
JULY 25

**WARNING TO THE RICH, LAYING UP
TREASURES THAT ROT**

JAMES 5:1-6

READ JAMES 5:1-6

CONTENT

1. Who is James specifically addressing in this section? (see James 5:1)
2. What have they done specifically to receive this warning?
3. Describe the tone James uses in this section of scripture. Why does he use this tone?

CONTEXT

4. Read James 5:4. What would happen to laborers in the first century who faced this situation?
5. Read the following section (James 5:7-11). Who does James address in this section and what connections does it have with the previous section?

SUMMARY

6. Paraphrase this warning using your own words in 1-2 sentences. In what ways might this warning still apply today?

WEEK 11

SUNDAY MORNING NOTES

READ JAMES 5:7-12

CONTENT

1. From your Bible dictionary or regular dictionary, what is the definition of the word patience?
2. What would be the consequences for an impatient farmer who harvests his crop too soon?

CONTEXT

3. Which prophets would James' audience thought of who had shown patience and perseverance? How would these prophets have been an example to them?
4. What types of suffering did Job experience? How did the Lord respond to Job's suffering?
5. What other verses in the Bible refer to swearing?

SUMMARY

6. What is the main spiritual lesson the original audience would take from this text?

WEEK 13

AUGUST 8

POWER OF PRAYER, TO HEAL, CONFESS SINS, DRAW BACK THOSE WHO WANDER

JAMES 5:13-18

READ JAMES 5:13-18

CONTENT

1. Who are these instructions written to?
2. In what situations in life are we to look to God?
3. In vs.15 the word, “save” and phrase “raise him up” are used. Use your Bible Dictionary to find correct understanding of these terms. Where else do you see these terms used?

CONTEXT

4. Our section begins with asking, “is anyone among you suffering?” Where else in the book have you seen suffering mentioned?
5. In ch. 5:10 mentions an example of suffering and patience of the prophets. James mentions in vs. 17 another prophet, Elijah as an example of a man of prayer. Why does he choose Elijah to be an example?

SUMMARY

6. Consistent with the book of James and of ch. 1:22 “be doers of the word”, James stirs our faith to action, to respond to God and to humble ourselves before one another. Following James’ directions, what changes do you need to make to become more of a biblical follower of Jesus?

WEEK 13

SUNDAY MORNING NOTES

WEEK 14
AUGUST 15

**FOCUS ON 'BRINGING BACK THOSE WHO
WANDER FROM THE TRUTH'.**

JAMES 5:19-20

READ JAMES 5:19-20

CONTENT

1. Who is James addressing in this passage? A particular person? A particular type of person? (i.e., rich, poor, leader, young, old...)
2. What are the two results that James lists in 5:20 of when a brother or sister brings back someone who has wandered away from the truth?

CONTEXT

3. Look back on your previous study of the author of this letter, man James, and remember who he is and what his life was like. Did James have any personal experience with wandering away from the truth? If so, what did it take for him to be "brought back" to the truth?
4. James could have placed the admonition found here at any point in his letter. Where in the letter did he put it?
5. What types of things is James wanting people to watch for and confront in those wandering from the truth? Look back through the entire letter of James, and make a list every example that James has shared of the ways that someone "wanders from the truth".

SUMMARY

6. What does this passage teach us about God's design for the church, for fellowship, and for life in the community of believers?

WEEK 14

SUNDAY MORNING NOTES