

Kiama Anglican Church
Christ Church Kiama with St. Paul's Minnamurra

JAMES

FAITHFUL SERVICE is....

Wise Words from the Brother of Jesus.

LEADER'S NOTES

Part 2 STUDIES 7-11

Bible Studies : Term 3/4 : 2011 :

JAMES:

FAITHFUL SERVICE is ...

THE STUDIES

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**This is the Sunday the passage is first preached on (at 8:00 and 10:00). It is preached on the following Sunday at St. Pauls and Sunday@6.*

References:

Blomberg, C.L. & Kamell, M.J. *James* (Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2008). Cited as B & K

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Dauids, P.H.. "JAMES" in Carson, D.A.; France, R.T.; Motyer, J.A.; Wenham, G.J. (Eds) New Bible Commentary (21st Century Edition) (Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

Dickson, J. *James: The Wisdom of the Brother of Jesus* (Reading the Bible Today series) (Sydney South, Aquila, 2006).

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Nystrom, D.P. *The NIV Application Commentary : JAMES* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1997).

Please note that my answers below are not the 'correct' answers or what you are trying to get to in the study. I have set them out as a guide to my thinking only and an assistance to you.

These Leaders Notes are meant to be the start of the assistance I am willing to give in regard to the studies. If you need anything further DO NOT hesitate to contact me.

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Study 7: JAMES 4:1-12

CLEANSING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. In v1-3 what is the problem? What is the answer?

The problem is 'fights and quarrels' among the Christians James is writing to.

Dickson: "*These believers were committing on the most repugnant acts in the Bible: pursuing wealth at the expense of relationships.*"

The answer is a right relationship with God expressed in rightly directed prayer.

Of course you can cast around other parts of James to see other hints.

Anger / Unhelpful words / Favouritism

Motyer: "*When the Lord Jesus undertook to explore the length and depth of the sixth commandment, he spoke of anger, derogatory, dismissive remarks, name-calling. He illustrated his serious intent by the story of the sudden realization, during worship, that a brother has 'something' against us (Mt. 5:21ff.). 6 He spoke not of great, prolonged or unjustified anger, or anything of the sort. He did not specify 'something big', or 'something important', which a brother might be holding against us—or even some charge with which we agreed—just 'something'. Was the Lord Jesus exaggerating when he brought it all under the heading of murder?"*

2. What do v4-6 say about our motives and our focus in life? Note Jesus' words in Matthew 6:24.

Continuing the thought in v1-3 James says these things are related to a wrong focus – A focus on the world.

Motyer: "*We ought to notice that James does not set out lists of forbidden passions, or enter into a discussion of allowable and illicit desires. Maybe we could persuade ourselves to feel more comfortable if he did—our darling indulgence might, perhaps, not get mentioned! But none of us can side-step the accusation of self-pleasing. It is as likely to turn our highest endeavours into sins as it is to make our base passions more defiled.*"

These are strong words.

Moo: "*By drawing out the ultimate consequences of worldly behaviour in this way, James seeks to prick the consciences of his readers and to stimulate their repentance. They need to recognize that their selfish, quarrelsome behaviour is a serious matter indeed.*"

Repeats the ideas in 1:6-7 about being double minded.

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Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

It is significant to note that this affects our prayers.

Dickson: "Jesus had encouraged his disciples to trust God for material support (Matthew 6:28-34) and to ask the Father for 'daily bread' (Matthew 6:11)"

Motyer: "Prayer itself, not just prayer for wisdom, is defiled by the insistently self-centred heart, so that 'we must either cleanse our hearts or stop our prayers'."

And the true antidote is humility v6 – which to some extent is defined in the following verses which start out 'submit yourself, then, to God.

Moo: "Our God is 'a consuming fire' and his demands on us may seem terrifying. But our God is also merciful, gracious, all-loving, and willingly supplies all that we need to meet his all-encompassing demands. As Augustine has said, 'God gives what he demands.' There is, however, a requirement for the experience of this grace: humility."

Dickson: "God stands ready, insists James to cleanse the impure, to forgive the sinner, to lift up the humble. For all the warnings and commands of the Book of James, ultimately it is an epistle of grace."

3. List the commands in v7-10? Who is James talking to?

There are several commands here all under the heading of 'Submit yourselves then to God'.

The Commands

Submit yourselves, then, to God. –

Motyer: "James begins his description of the humble walk with God by commanding active allegiance"

B&K "While "submit" is a loaded term in our culture, here perhaps the best understanding would be the image of ordering our lives under God's authority and will. The commands he has promulgated we must obey."

Resist the devil,

Motyer: "It is not a word for one who is carrying the attack over into the enemy camp, but for one who is manning the defences, knowing that enemy pressure is ceaseless and that he is constantly under fire."

See Ephesians 6:10-18.

Come near to God

Motyer: "a deliberately cultivated fellowship"

Wash your hands,

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purify your hearts,

Motyer: “we are commanded to put in hand a thoroughgoing purification of our lives (8b), to clean up the outer life of the hands and the inner life of our hearts. It touches our specific acts of wrong-doing, for the designation sinners points to individual sins; it touches too the inner disloyalty of the double mind.”

Grieve, mourn and wail.

Motyer: “Joel, warning of the nearness of ‘the day of the LORD’, pictures the Lord as inviting his people to “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning ...” (2:12).”

Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Motyer: “we are prepared for the command to lament our sin and to repent of it (9). Such an awareness of our wretchedness is, of course, beyond us. But then, equally so is every command in the sequence! It is in fact grace alone which makes it possible for us to obey any of God’s commands. Our position is one of perpetual supplication for grace to obey in order that we may experience the more grace which God gives to the obedient.”

Moo: “Many people in our day, both outside the church and within it, are marked by a superficial joy and brittle laughter. They live the hedonist philosophy, ‘eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die’, that ignores the terrifying reality of God’s judgment. But even the committed Christian can slip into a casual attitude towards sin, perhaps presuming too much on God’s forgiving and merciful nature. It is to all such people that James issues his plea for a radical, thoroughgoing repentance. Only such repentance can produce true Christian joy – the joy that overflows from the consciousness of sins forgiven.”

Humble yourselves before the Lord

Moo: “This humility is beautifully exemplified in the tax-collector of Jesus’ parable, who, deeply conscious of his sin, called out to God for mercy. In response, Jesus pronounces him justified, and summarizes: ‘every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted’ (Luke 18:14).”

Note the consequence of some of these:

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*Resist the devil,
and he will flee from you*

We need to remember that we are on the victors side when we enlist with God. In Jesus the decisive battle had been won.

Moo: “*Whatever power Satan may have, the Christian can be absolutely certain that he has been given the ability to overcome that power.*”

*Come near to God
and he will come near to you.*

Motyer: “*We shall, of course, find a tendency in ourselves to want to reverse this order. How easy it would be to keep a daily time with God if only we had, to begin with, a more vivid sense of his presence—in other words, we want the promise to come before the command!*”

Motyer: “*Those who sincerely repent and return to God will find him, like the father of the prodigal son, eager to receive back his erring children.*”

B&K: ‘*But “drawing near” to God is not just a mental or emotional activity for James. Instead, it is a practical response to God: controlling one’s tongue (1:19, 26; 3:2), caring for the poor (1:27; 2:16 – 17), growing in wisdom and peace (1:5; 3:16 – 18), and communing with him in prayer (4:2 – 3, 15; 5:13 – 18). The more we seek to live according to God’s wisdom, the closer we will grow to his purity and holiness. As we cultivate his heart in ourselves, we will automatically begin to see the world through God’s eyes and be humble. As James has already shown, God gives grace to the humble; therefore, he will give strength and “be near” to those who live thus.*’

*Humble yourselves before the Lord,
and he will lift you up.*

Motyer: “*As always, the more we pursue his likeness, the more deeply and sorrowfully our sinfulness and shortcomings are exposed (9). But the Lord sets the downward path before us because there is no other way up (10).*”

James is talking to his Christian friends – his readers.

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We should think through each of these in relation to how we go about our own lives. Do these sorts of actions (and attitudes) characterise the way we go about our Christian lives.

It seems to me that here is the antidote for all the ‘problems’ that James talks about in the rest of the letter.

4. What do verses 11 and 12 warn against?

We are back talking about how we speak to and about one another. We are to leave this sort of ‘judgement’ to God.

Motyer: *“Neighbours belong together in the love which manifests itself in mutual care and concern, the love that sees need and reaches out to meet it. Our Lord’s definition of neighbourliness in the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25ff.) leaves no room for ‘talking down’, but only for coming down to where the needy is, identifying with the need and abandoning self-interest so as to meet it. My fellow-Christian is my neighbour par excellence. Suppose I do know something to his discredit—and be it never so true—my task is not to publicize it, nor even privately to berate him with it, but to go where he is and lift him up. I must be the Samaritan to him. He is my neighbour.”*

D&S: *‘Fulfilling the Biblical command no to judge involves recovering the lost virtue of tolerance, the rare ability to treat with respect and kindness someone with whom you deeply and rightly disagree.’*

Dickson: *“To judge is to go beyond simply discerning people or things; it is to write them off and condemn them and, in this case, to do so openly.”*

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Deeper and Wider

1. **Discuss whether v1-3 reflects your personal experience. What correctives does the rest of the passage have for this situation?**

Firstly for discussion.

I think we need to drive this point home. I suspect there is not a church in the world that does not have this sort of problem.

There are a number of answers in what follows but two that serve as headings are

Submit yourselves, then, to God.

Humble yourselves before the Lord.

Motyer: *“James chooses the vocabulary of war to express controversies and quarrels, animosities and bad feeling among Christians, not because there is no other way of saying it, but because there is no other way of expressing the horror of it. He is seeing the relationships of the church through the eye of God. He speaks of a fact (1a), a condition (1b) and a practice (2a). ... It is a depressing commentary on church life that James can write to a scattered people (1:1) and make the same general comment on all alike. He does not, of course, mean to imply that they are perpetually at loggerheads among themselves, but he does seem to take for granted that the peace of the churches is by no means unbroken.”*

Moo: *“It is deplorable that the Christian church has so often been characterized by such bitter controversies. The seventeenth-century Jewish philosopher Spinoza observed: ‘I have often wondered that persons who make boast of professing the Christian religion – namely love, joy, peace, temperance, and charity to all men – should quarrel with such rancorous animosity, and display daily towards one another such bitter hatred, that this, rather than the virtues which they profess, is the readiest criteria of their faith.’ Some battles are, to be sure, worth fighting; but even then they must be fought without sacrificing Christian principles and virtues.”*

2. **What does James call his fellow Christians in v4a? Does this offend you? What lies behind this imagery? (See Isaiah 54:1-6; Jeremiah 2:2; 3:20 Ephesians 5:31-32.)**

He calls them an adulterous generation.

It is certainly a strong term. And remember James is writing to mainly Jewish Christians with an OT background.

Consistently in the Old and New Testaments the relationship between God and his people is described as like a marriage.

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Isaiah 54:5 For your Maker is your husband— the LORD Almighty is his name— the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.

Jeremiah 3:20 But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel,” declares the LORD.

Ephesians 5:31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

To turn to the world (or to other ‘gods’ – like the 21st Century god of ‘self) is to be unfaithful to the marriage relationship – Adulterous.

Moo: *“As stressed especially in the prophets, god has joined himself with the people Israel by graciously electing them and bringing them into covenant relationship with himself. This relationship is frequently portrayed with marital imagery (Isa. 54:1–6; Jer. 2:2). Thus, when that relationship is jeopardized by Israel’s dalliance with other gods, the situation can be labelled ‘adultery’: ‘as a faithless wife leaves her husband, so have you been faithless to me, o house of Israel, says the LORD’ (Jer. 3:20). It is in Hosea that this theme finds its most poignant expression. The prophet’s marriage to an unfaithful harlot is used to mirror the unfaithfulness of Israel to the LORD.”*

3. **In regard to v12-13 Davids writes “Usurping His judging authority by judging a person is really a blaspheming of God.” What sort of judging is this talking about? See also Matthew 7:1-5.**

Jesus addresses the same issue in Matthew 7 – part of the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 7:1 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4 How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

This sort of judging is not discernment of what is evil or distancing ourselves from sinners. We need to note in the rest of Matthew 7 where we are told to be discerning in regard to ‘swine’ and ‘false prophets’ and ‘fruit’.

4. **What is v5 saying about God?**

This is exactly the same as saying God is a jealous God.

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*Exodus 20:4 “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your **God**, am a **jealous God**, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand[generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

*Exodus 34:14 Do not worship any other **god**, for the LORD, whose name is **Jealous**, is a **jealous God**.*

*Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD your **God** is a consuming fire, a **jealous God**.*

God is not to be ‘blasphemed’ by our two timing – seeking friendship with the world and friendship with God – as Jesus says we cannot serve two masters.

Moo: “to see in verse 5 a reminder of God’s desire that his people be wholly and unreservedly his provides a beautifully appropriate substantiation of the warning against any flirtation with the attitudes and the values of the world in verse 4.”

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Apply

1. **The world around us constantly demands that we be its ‘friends’.
What should be the Christian’s attitude to the ‘world’?**

Basically – In the world but not of it.

A huge challenge.

Needs serious discussion.

Motyer: *“John Blanchard rightly says that ‘it is one of the most astonishing evidences of the sovereignty of God that in spite of the fact that man has ... turned his back on his Maker ... the fact of the matter is that we cannot cast off restraint, run riot, please ourselves and be completely hedonistic without a price having to be paid’. The human price is the destruction of relationships; the spiritual price is a breach with God.”*

B&S: *“It is much harder to admit that our own seemingly more noble requests for good health (so we can serve Christ better), good finances (so we can care for our families properly or give more away), or a good job (so we can exercise our spiritual gifts best there) can easily wind up being motivated by the even more fundamental yet ultimately selfish desires to feel good, to be able to buy whatever we want, or to gain a good reputation with others.”*

2. **Read v7-10 again. How can we help each other do these things?**

In many ways this is nub of what James wants his readers to do.

We can’t do it by ourselves. First we pray for one another, then we encourage one another in relation to these things. See the quote at question 4 in the Basics.

Note 5:19-20

For discussion

Study 8: JAMES 4:13-17

PLANNING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. What sort of people are addressed here?

In this passage the people being addressed seem to be that growing group of ‘middle class’ merchants that were emerging in the Roman Empire.

Here in James it appears that there are some in that group in James’ churches and this warning is for them.

These would be rich and influential people.

2. What sort of thing are they doing?

The merchants are doing what merchants do. Planning trading ventures, making trips, looking to be very organised and strategic.

3. What is the problem with it? What is the solution?

This was the Bible Gateway.com verse of the day on the day I was preparing these notes.

Proverbs 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.

Both this group and the ones we will see at the start of ch5 are leaving God out of the picture.

These merchants are arrogant enough in this area of their lives to think that they have the times and the season under control.

For the merchants – the solution is to give due regard to the Lord’s will when they are making their plans.

Motyer: *“Now how do we guard against presumptuousness? The three verbs in verses 14–15 will put us on our guard against presumptuousness. First, there is our ignorance, you do not know. James indulges here in a little irony. He is talking about a person who was busy laying out his programme for next year (13) and he quietly notes that you do not know about tomorrow (14). This fact alone is enough to keep us low before the God who created, controls and apportions time. Then there is our frailty—you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. We are insubstantial (mist), transient (a little time) and gone without trace (vanishes). Finally there is our dependence, you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills ...’. We come here to the heart of the matter.”*

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4. What is the point then of v17?

Well it is a truism isn't it?

I think both the merchants and the rich people in the next chapter (remember there are no chapter divisions in the original) in some way know (either from God's word or from conscience) the right thing to do.

They just need to do it.

Motyer: *"In the Greek the connective 'therefore' (oun) appears at the opening of verse 17. It must not be overlooked: 'All such boasting is evil. Whoever, therefore, knows....' To James the sin of presumptuousness is so important, so basic, that it is as if the category of sins of omission had been deliberately devised in connection with it: that is the force of the 'therefore' of verse 17."*

Moo: *"He has told his readers what is right; if they now fail to do it, they are sinning. They cannot take refuge in the plea that they have done nothing positively wrong; as Scripture makes abundantly clear, sins of omission are as real and serious as sins of commission. The servant in Jesus' parable who fails to use the money he was entrusted with (Luke 19:11–27); the 'goats' who failed to care for the outcasts of society (Matt. 25:31–46) – they are condemned for what they failed to do.⁵ Another teaching of Jesus reminds us very forcibly of James' words here: 'that servant who knew his master's will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating' (Luke 12:47)."*

Deeper and Wider

1. What do v13-14 say about 'life'?

They remind us that life is fleeting, that our apparent control is just that, only apparent.

Weather is the best reminder of all of this.

Moo: *"This realistic reckoning with the brevity and uncertainty of life, and even the images used to describe it, are found frequently in Scripture. Proverbs 27:1 warns: 'Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.' Job 7:7, 9, 16 and Psalm 39:5–6 describe life as a 'breath'. Particularly close to James' teaching are, as so often, some words of Jesus. In Luke 12:15, he warns the crowds about covetousness and reminds them that 'a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions'. In a brief parable, he illustrated his point with a rich man, who, like James' businessman, made definite plans for acquiring more goods, but who was prevented from executing his plans by his death (Luke 12:16–20)."*

2. What should we do with the idea in v15? Note Proverbs 19:21

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This should be our attitude to our future plans.

I don't think we should use 'If it is the Lord's will ...' as a sort of mantra. Rather it should be in the back of our minds, in our attitudes, that God is the one in control. We might plan all sorts of things but it is God's will that will be done.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, But it is the LORD'S purpose that prevails.

Psalms 33:10 The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. 11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

3. **Jesus taught us to pray 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done.' What does this say to the attitude expressed by these people?**

To pray 'thy kingdom come ...' (Matthew 6:10) is to acknowledge that it is God who rules over every aspect of life.

The merchants in this passage are to varying degrees ignoring this fact.

Their attitude is self centred not God centred.

4. **What boasting is evil? Note Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 Corinthians 1:31.**

Through their words and their actions they are boasting in their own strength.

Motyer: "*The verb 'to boast' (kauchaomai) is often used in the New Testament in a good sense for exultant, abounding joy in something, as when, for example, we are encouraged to boast in our hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2). But what an unholy, unacceptable thing this exulting becomes when it arises from your arrogance! Here is a word (alazoneia) used elsewhere only in 1 John 2:16, and translated the 'pride' of life. In other words, when even in little, secret, almost unrecognized ways we forget how frail we are, and stop short of conscious dependence on our God, it is an element of the proud, boastful, vaunting human spirit, flaunting its supposed independence and self-sufficiency. As such it is evil (16)—and James offers no qualification of the word: he merely says evil, the word which other scriptures use of the devil, the 'evil one'.*"

But Jeremiah says:

Jeremiah 9:23 This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.

And Paul confirms:

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1 Corinthians 1:31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

Apply

1. **"The problem is not that we have tried faith and found it wanting, but that we've tried mammon and found it addictive, and as a result find following Christ inconvenient." Discuss.**

For discussion

B&K: "Barton, Veerman, and Wilson suggest five practices to avoid: envisaging retirement as a time merely to enjoy the fruit of our labor, seeing work as just a way to make the money we need to buy what we want, viewing material prosperity as a symbol of our independence, imagining God as aloof from mundane cares of money matters, and making financial decisions without consulting Christ for detailed guidance."

2. **How then should we make plans?**

For discussion

Motyer: "James is not trying to banish planning from our lives, but only that sort of self-sufficient, self-important planning that keeps God for Sunday but looks on Monday to Saturday as mine. Certainly the words 'God willing' or their equivalents are not to become a fetish, or used as a protective talisman."

For Next Week: Read James 5:1-12

Study 9: JAMES 5:1-12

SUFFERING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. Who does James turn his attention to now (v1)?

Now the people addressed are most likely the non-Christian wealthy 'upper class' of the time who are taking, at times extreme, advantage of the poor. (Though we do need to consider that there may be Christians among them)

Dickson: "*James 5:1-6 ... is a classic prophetic lament. It is designed not as a warning to rich oppressors within the church (of which there were probably none) but as a comfort to the oppressed themselves (of which there were probably quite a few).*"

2. What is their problem and what is its cause (v2-6)?

The 'rich' are hoarding their wealth. Note Luke 12:15-21.

As well the 'rich' are oppressing the poor around them. They are cheating people of their wages and seeking only wealth for themselves.

They are neglecting the fact that God is the one who is control, who cares for the disadvantaged and will judge those who oppress those less fortunate than themselves.

Their ultimate problem is that none of this will last – it is fleeting and vulnerable.

In regard to the result of this for the rich – it almost seems it might be too late – but God is ever merciful and they need to repent and turn to the Lord.

Motyer on v5: "*The picture is fearfully vivid. They are like so many unthinking beasts, luxuriating in their rich pasture day after day, growing fat by the hour and careless of the fact that each day, each hour, brings the butcher and the abattoir nearer. Only the thin beast is safe in that day; the well-fed has made itself ready for the knife. In such a way James saw the wealthy, blind alike to heaven and hell, living for this life, forgetting the day of slaughter.*"

Motyer: "*By facing a clear-cut case of those who have wealth at their disposal, James teaches all of us in respect of whatever resources, however small, God has entrusted to us. By exposing such glaring abuses, he teaches us how we ought to use our wealth as an adjunct to a humble walk with God. He shows us the pits, so that we may not fall into them.*"

3. What is to be the oppressed believer's response (v7-11)?

In a word – Patience.

Note that James returns to calling them 'brothers'.

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This passage turns the believer's thoughts to the 'parousia' (the 'coming') of Jesus. It is in looking forward to God's coming complete and perfect justice and the heavenly rewards of serving Jesus that they are able to go on.

Further they are encouraged to 'stand firm' and to 'persevere'.

Larry Crabbe (The Pressure's Off, Pages 213-214.): *"Relax in the safety of His seal on your life. No act of terrorism, no stock market slide, no medical scare, no rejection, no broken family has the power to thwart God's work in your life. Everything can be redeemed by the Spirit for good purposes."*

Motyer: *"In this way we see ... that sections dealing with joyful hope (7-8 and 10-11) lead into sections dealing with fearful expectation (9, 12). The whole unit (7-12) is, in fact, wonderfully symmetrical and balanced."*

B&K: *"James can take this tack because of his theodicy — his solution to the problem of evil. Christ is coming back, he is coming back soon (at least from God's perspective), and he will wreak vengeance on the wicked — with absolute justice and equity — something sinful mortals could never do and therefore should not try to do!"*

Dickson: *"At its core, the theme of God's judgment is not simply a theological scare-tactic designed to make the non-religious more religious. Judgement is the pledge of the loving God to oppressed humanity that he hears their cry for justice and will one day bring his justice to bear on every act of tyranny."*

4. What must they not do (v9,12)?

Grumble / 'Swear'

Moo: *"However, grumbling against others is surely one temptation that accompanies the pressure of difficult circumstances. How often do we find ourselves taking out the frustrations of a difficult day on our close friends and family members! Refraining from this kind of complaining and grumbling can be seen as one aspect of patience itself."*

Motyer: *"Secondly, we need to watch our fellowship (9). The call for patience needs to be made only in situations where there is a temptation to impatience. Under the stresses of living for God we may so easily round on our fellow Christians, our brethren, in all sorts of grumbles and recriminations. Our hearts may let us down (8) through failure in commitment and resolution. Our tongues may let us down and rob us of the harvest through failure to cherish the family (brethren) and fellowship of the people of God among whom he has set us. James has already taught us that the harvest requires*

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the soil of fellowship (3:18). When our tongues disrupt the fellowship they rob us of the harvest. Of course it is true that the Judge, when at last he steps over the threshold, will bring every aspect of our lives and service under review, but the one aspect that led James to recall the imminent Judge and the inescapable judgment was the tongue which brings divisions into the fellowship.”

Deeper and Wider

1. **Read Luke 16:19-31. How does this parable illustrate James’ point in v1-6?**

This is the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man.

Though we are not told here that Lazarus was ‘oppressed’ by the Rich Man. This still illustrates the type of attitude.

AND the results

2. **Read Matthew 6:19-20. What does Jesus demand of us?**

Matthew 6:19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

That we have our treasures in the right place.

Verses 22-23 and verse 24 of Matthew 6 are relevant here too.

Jesus demands single-minded focus, our priorities in the right place.

Note also: *Luke 12:33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor.*

Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.

3. **What examples of endurance are given? In what way is Jesus also an example?**

The Farmer and the Prophets are given as examples of patience (more the Farmer) and endurance (more the Prophets). Though both are also examples of both.

Job likewise is shown as one who endures terrible suffering trusting in God.

They can do so because they know the future holds the true ‘fruit’ of God’s purposes.

Motyer: *“Faith meets life’s tests and, through patience (and not without it), grows into full maturity of settled character (1:2–4).*

James’ doctrine of the Christian life is a doctrine of process or growth, and patience is its central requirement. We neither drift into holiness nor are we wafted there by some heavenly visitation; we grow to holiness and, like every harvest, it is a process.”

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Jesus' example was to endure all that 1st Century Palestine could throw at him for the 'end set before him'

4. **Read Matthew 5:34-37. How do Jesus words compare with what James writes? What are they saying we should and should not do?**

This relates to v 12.

This is probably the closest thing in the letter to a direct quote from Jesus.

The underlying issue here is 'truth'. We must be people who are known for speaking the truth. So that it does not have to be 'reinforced' by oaths.

Moo: *"The swearing that James here prohibits is not 'dirty' language as such, but the invoking of God's name, or substitutes for it, to guarantee the truth of what we say. In the Old Testament, God is frequently presented as guaranteeing the fulfilment of his promises with an oath. The law does not prohibit oaths, but demands that a person be true to any oath he has sworn (cf. Lev. 19:12 – yet another instance in which James includes a topic also mentioned in that chapter). Concern about the devaluation of oaths because of their indiscriminate use and the tendency to try to avoid fulfilling them by swearing by 'less sacred' things (cf. Matt. 23:16–22) led to warnings against using them too often (cf. Eccles. 23:9, 11; Philo, On the Decalogue 84–95). Jesus, it appears, went even further than this, when he commanded his disciples not to swear 'at all' (Matt. 5:34)."*

Dickson: *"There is no such thing as graded truthfulness and, despite the growing acceptance of obfuscation and 'little white lies', Christians must commit themselves afresh to the principle of speaking truthfully at all times. If we are not known for speaking words of truth, how can we believably claim to know the Word of truth."*

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Apply

1. **On a personal level, we need, I think, to take warning from v1-6 and then comfort from v7-12. Discuss.**

One of the elements here is, of course, how much are we oppressed?

But we do have our difficulties. Then v7ff comes into play.

Motyer: *“We must not shirk the implication of James’ harshness and directness. More than any of the areas of high risk, wealth threatens its possessors with coming misery (1). Its earthly cushioning dulls the sense of spiritual urgency (2–3) and of the reality of divine judgment (5). Affluence opens the door to commercial carelessness and insensitivity to what is both due and needful to others (4). It leads finally to setting aside the honour and dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ (6). He says nothing of the great good that those who possess wealth can do—maybe because the actual doing of good still leaves those who are rich within the high risks he has outlined. Good may be done with all the implicit arrogance, and sense of self-importance, that is more plainly seen when riches are wreaking their more obvious ill-effects on the human spirit.”*

It is easy then in our secure, well fed, relatively wealthy lives to miss the urgency of the second coming.

Motyer: *“If we wish to be New Testament believers, and to think in terms of New Testament priorities, then the fact of this great Advent, the sure expectation of it and the desire not to be ashamed before him at his coming should be in the forefront of our thoughts.”*

B&K: *“We, too, easily recognize that, just as the farmer can do nothing to force God’s hand in the sending of rain or the process of growth, so we cannot compel Christ to return according to any timetable other than God’s. Meanwhile, we must busy ourselves with kingdom work, contributing all that we can to the outworking of God’s purposes in our world.”*

2. **What should we as Christians in a 21st Century First World Nation be doing about the global injustices that echo v1-6 of this passage?**

We may not like to see ourselves in v1-6. But we are, without doubt, part of the ‘rich’ of this world in global terms. And unfortunately by much of our economic activity we participate in the exploitation of the poor in other countries.

The group needs to think and act on this.

For discussion.

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For Next Week: Read James 5:13-20

Note this from Motyer: *“If for a moment we stand back from 5:7–20 we see how completely it rounds off the letter. At the beginning, the pathway of steadfastness was linked with the pathway of prayer (1:5) as we sought from the Lord the wisdom needed to plot our course amid life’s trials. Prayer at that point was related mainly to our own welfare: how we can individually keep on course for the crown. In his conclusion, when James has dealt with steadfastness (7–12), he turns again to the topic of prayer (13–18), but this time it is prayer at the service of others, our prayers as the means of dealing with their needs. For between 1:4ff. and 5:7–20 James has shown us that a caring ministry (2:1–26) is the first mark of the child of God.”*

Study 10: JAMES 5:13-20

PRAYING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. What two Christian actions are vs13-18 about?

Prayer (in the main) and Praise.

There is also confession to one another in v16

Motyer: *“James introduces us to the praying individual Christian (13), the praying elders (14–15), the praying friends (16a) and the praying prophet (16b–18).”*

Moo” *“‘Pray at all times’, Paul commanded (Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17). James, similarly, exhorts the believers to pray in whatever situation they may find themselves.”*

2. From v13 who do we communicate with no matter how we feel?

Why?

We communicate with our Lord God.

For he is the one who is concerned for all of our lives. – Just as James has been demonstrating throughout his letter.

Motyer: *“Neither suffering nor ease should find us without a suitable Christian response in prayer and song. We may say that James is asserting, in verse 13, principles which cover life in all its widely differing forms. Our religion should cover all experience, finding expression in prayer or praise as the occasion may demand. Calvin puts it well when he comments that James ‘means that there is no time in which God does not invite us to himself’. It is not so much that our religion should cover all experience, as that we have a God for all seasons.”*

Dickson: *“James is not necessarily exhorting the sufferer to petition God for deliverance – as appropriate that might be; he is simply urging believers to approach God with their pain in whatever way is appropriate. The Old Testament book of Psalms – the prayer book of ancient Israel – has almost as many prayerful laments as it does straightforward petitions. Both can be expressions of devotion to the Lord, and sometimes the former is the only type of prayer a sufferer feels able to utter.”*

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3. How does James suggest we go about praying for healing?

We do it in the community of the church.

We call the 'elders' (leaders in the church) to pray for the person.

Accompanied by this James suggest that the person is anointed with oil.

Motyer: *"In the prayer of faith, our faith is not that 'the promises' will be fulfilled just like that; it is the faith which rests trustfully in the will of a sovereign, faithful and loving God. Neither the sick person nor any of the elders is there to insist that his or her will be done, but to put the sick one within the total, eternal security of the unchangeable and unchangeably gracious will of God."*

4. What is the point being made in v19-20?

Motyer: *"The words My brethren have appeared over and over in James' letter (1:2, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10, 12; 4:11), and especially since he began to pen his conclusion (5:7, 9, 10, 12). Their reappearance here assures us that, no matter how abrupt verses 19–20 may at first sight seem, they have a real place in the scheme James is developing."*

Moo: *"James closes his letter not with the greetings and benediction typical of epistolary endings, but with a summons to action."*

I think the first point is that we have spiritual responsibilities to one another.

We need to care for one another's spiritual wellbeing as well as physical.

Motyer: *"We have a care for each other not only when someone in physical (14–15) or spiritual (16a) need makes an approach for help, but also when there is no such call. This is when the evidence of our own eyes tells us that someone within the circle of the fellowship is slipping away into the path of sin and death."*

Moo: *"If James is indeed something of a sermon in epistolary form, these last two verses are an appropriate closing summons to action. Not only should the readers of James 'do' the words he has written; they should be deeply concerned to see that others 'do' them also. It is by sharing with James the conviction that there is indeed an eternal death, to which the way of sin leads, that we shall be motivated to deal with sin in our lives and in the lives of others."*

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Deeper and Wider

1. **What is the place of Prayer, Praise and Confession in the personal and communal life of the Christian?**

Really a point for discussion.

Remember to discuss them in both the personal and communal aspects.

Dickson re confessing our sins: *“James apparently envisages his readers being open with one another (as well as with God: 4:7-10) about the extent to which they have been party to the sins denounced throughout the letter. Most of the evils mentioned in the epistle are ‘community’ sins; the remedy therefore is community confession and prayer (resulting in healing where appropriate)”*

2. **Consider the Elijah story. What point is James making by using this example?**

Firstly that Prayer works.

Motyer: *“This is part of the wonder of the way of prayer. Those who by grace have been given the status of righteousness in God’s sight have been brought into the realm where effective prayer operates and have been given the right to exercise a ministry of prayer.”*

The Story is in 1 Kings 17-19. Note particularly 18:41-46.

The second emphasis here is on persistent prayer in the will of God.

Motyer: *“James sums it all up by saying that he prayed fervently, but RSV is not our best guide here to James’ meaning. The Greek says, literally, ‘with prayer he prayed’ and the meaning is not his fervency, nor even his frequency of prayer, but that ‘he just prayed’—that, and nothing more! James Adamson puts it correctly when he says, ‘Not that Elijah put up a particularly fervent prayer, but that praying was precisely what he did.’ The general truth which James is drawing out of the history of Elijah is expressed in verse 17: human prayer, divine results. ... James does not actually pause after verse 18 to call us to become people of prayer, but the call is surely implicit and plain.”*

3. **In 21st Century Australia does God still heal? If so how?**

God certainly does heal and we can all cite examples of it.

God may use all sorts of methods (including the wonders of modern medicine) but we still need to pray.

Motyer: *“There is always a spiritual dimension in healing, and here it is in all its glory. On no occasion should a Christian approach the doctor without also approaching God, but there are those times when a notable and special approach to God will seem right and it is for this that James here makes a lovely provision.”*

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Moo: *“Who heals? James’ answer to this question is clear: ‘the Lord will raise him up’. Nowhere does the New Testament suggest any other answer. When the apostles ‘healed’ people, they made it clear that they did so only through the power and the authority of the Lord Jesus (Acts 4:7–12). Paul spoke of a ‘gift’ of healing (1 Cor. 12:9, 28), but this gift, as all others, was empowered by and directed by the Spirit who gave the gift. It is interesting, however, that while Paul speaks of a gift of healing, James speaks only of elders who pray for healing.”*

B&K: *“The promise of healing for the sick offers a much needed corrective for those of us who have trouble praying boldly, for we fear or even assume that God will not do what we ask of him. Instead, we ought to pray boldly, believing that he is a God of power and love and that he listens to the prayers of his people. A necessary caveat, however, requires us to remember that he chooses how and when he heals.”*

4. Read Matthew 18:15-18. How does this relate to v19-20? (You may also like to consider Proverbs 10:12 and 1 Peter 4:8.)

Matthew 18:15 “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

18 “I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19 “Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

The issue here is of course completely different. Here the problem is one brother sinning against another.

But the point of the church being involved and of Christ’s presence with the church is still relevant.

Note : *Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.*

1Peter 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Apply

1. How does this passage challenge us about our prayer life? What should we do about it?

For Discussion

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2. How do we, in our church, put the ideas of v19-20 into practice?

For discussion.

Motyer: *“James brings us within the local church and urges us to watch for anyone who is losing grip on truth, and in whose way of life the error of sin is showing itself. Of course, we must not sit back and do nothing when we see these things on the wider canvas of society, or of our denomination, though more often than not we find ourselves at a loss what to do. But within the local fellowship we dare not treat truth and life as negotiable. It is our task to care and to rescue.”*

Dickson: This *“goes against our modern, individualistic culture. We talk about faith as a ‘private affair’. We say, ‘Who am I to judge?’ We even quote Jesus, ‘Take the plank out of your own eye’, forgetting that he then added, ‘then you will see clearly to remove speck from your brother’s eye’ (Matthew 7:3-5)”*

One important place we should be doing this is in our small groups.

For Next Week: Read James right through.

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Study 11: JAMES 1-5

LIVING

The answers to most of these are to be found in sections of the preceding 10 studies. The basic aim here is revision and application.

You might like to think in terms of

Head – What is here to know?

Heart – What is here to believe?

Hands – What is here to DO?

Of course James has a great practical interest in the last.

We need to remember throughout that James is interested in our growth and development and our maturing as Christians – our sanctification.

He has told us quite forcefully in 1:16-18 that our salvation, our new birth, is as a result of God's gift. – James then sees our obedience as a working out of this life we have in Christ.

Explore the Basics

This is a Review Study. The aim is to get us all to consider what we have learnt from James over the last 10 weeks so the format is a little different.

It would be good to listen to James right through at the start of the study – You can find this on the net at BibleGateway.com

Read James 1 carefully together.

I have focussed on James 1 in this study because most commentators see it as a sort of 'table of contents' for the material in the rest of the letter.

1. In v 1-11 what are the big issues raised?

The ones I picked out for a talk on this recently were:

Trials

Wisdom

Single-mindedness

Riches

2. In v 12-27 what are the big issues raised and how do they relate to the first 11 verses?

For this one I picked out:

Trials

Temptations

New Birth

Speech

Action

True Religion

Broadly these repeat ideas picked up in v1-11 and then developed throughout the book.

3. How are these themes picked up in the rest of James' letter?

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I have placed at the end of this booklet an attempt to put all of James under thematic headings. – It is just my thoughts others may see different organisation.

This summary by Miriam Kammel may help:

Conclusion

(From *The Nature of Eternal Security in James: Divine Grace Pairs with the Imitatio Dei* by Mariam J. Kamell in [Testamentum Imperium – Volume 2 – 2009](#))

James' theology can be seen from both the human and divine perspectives. From the individual's view, the one who is merciful (1:27; 2:13), the one who is a "doer of the word" and not a hearer only (1:22-25; 2:14-26; 4:11-12), the one who endures (1:3-5, 12; 5:7-8), that one is absolutely secure, resting in the bountiful mercy of the Lord. From the divine perspective, there is forgiveness for those who repent (4:6-10; 5:19-20), wisdom for the weak (1:5), and purpose for the outcast (2:5), but even more importantly there is grace in the choosing (1:18) and mercy in the judging (2:13). But these things are within the covenantal context whereby God rightly expects his people to behave in accordance with his own character. As he has called and re-birthed his people, they should be pure of heart (1:21, 27; 3:13-18; 4:1-10) and merciful in their reckoning of others (2:1-12). Those who fail, however, reveal their heart to be unchanged, in love with the world rather than God (1:6-8; 4:1-5), controlled by their own desires (1:14-16; 3:14-16), and interested solely in their own comfort (4:13-17; 5:1-6). These people reveal their hearts to be untransformed by the *logos* of God given to them. Ultimately, sustained disobedience without repentance leads to dire and very serious warnings of judgment. In contrast, those who "receive" the *logos* and obey it, despite their imperfection, find mercy in the judgment day. God opposes the proud who oppose him (4:6) but is full of compassion and mercy for those who seek his ways (5:11).

What does this mean for understanding James' theology of salvation? For one, counter to Dibelius and Luther, James does have a sustained theology that undergirds his exhortations, and it is a theology rooted in the extravagant mercy of God, a mercy that goes from election to eternity. He seeks to communicate, however, that God's election is not for its own sake but for transformation. While God may lean on the side of mercy whenever possible, he is also the just judge. We are saved by the word of truth, but for it to be effective for salvation it must be received and acted upon—until the word is enacted, we merely deceive ourselves. As James writes, we must "*receive* the implanted word which has the power to save [our] soul[s]" (Jas 1:21). To ignore it is our peril, to obey it is to heed the call of our Savior.

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Deeper and Wider

Blomberg and Kamell (2008) suggest there are three big themes in James:

1. Wealth and Poverty.
2. Trials and Temptations.
3. Wisdom and Speech.

1. **Discuss what James has to say about each of these?**

Again the appended thematic approach may help.

2. **What aspects of these have made an impression on you in the last 10 weeks?**

For discussion.

Apply

1. **Having read James and studied it discuss what is the relationship between Faith and Works for the Christian?**

For discussion.

2. **How can we help one another to 'Faithful Service'?**

For discussion.

And note this 'Epilogue' from John Dickson's little commentary:

"The word of truth found in the Jesus tradition, and restated in the epistle of James, has claims over the whole of life. After a tantalising foretaste of the themes of the letter (1:1-27), James has pleaded with believers not to favour the rich as the world so often does (2:1-13) but to demonstrate true faith by works of compassion towards the poor (2:14-26). The same compassion must govern the tongue also, says James (3:1-12): would be teachers are to think twice about assuming such a role and believers are to speak to their neighbours as fellow bearers of the divine likeness. Moreover, they are to work for peace in all their relationships, practising what James calls deeds done in the humility that comes from true wisdom (3:13-18).

This wisdom, rightly grasped, will put an end to the harmful pursuit of wealth and pleasure (4:1-3), demanding of us an unqualified submission to the God who opposes the proud and lifts up the humble (4:4-10), leaving us without a basis for human slander and judgment (4:11-12). The upwardly mobile will keep their aspirations in check (4:13-17), while the faithful oppressed will wait patiently for the overthrow of tyranny at the coming of the Lord (5:1-12). The troubled will pray, the joyful will sing and the sick will find healing and forgiveness in the prayers of the church (5:13-18)

But the impact of James does not end with the close of his book; it continues on through those who have grasped its message. That's what 5:19-20 is all about. By ending the letter the way he does – urging the faithful to win back the wayward – James lifts himself out of the picture and hands the work of the epistle over to his hearers: now we must seek to restore family members back to the Messiah's royal law of love. The real work of the Book of James, therefore, begins now.

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FAITH AND DEEDS

*James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:*

Greetings.

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:18 But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

James 2:20 You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. 24 You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

James 2:25 In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

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WISDOM AND SINGLE MINDEDNESS

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:

Greetings.

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

James 1:16 Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

James 1:26 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. 27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. 11 For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

James 3:1 Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

James 3:13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

James 5:7 Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

James 5:19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

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TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:
Greetings.

James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

James 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

James 5:10 Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

James 5:17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

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WEALTH AND POVERTY

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:
Greetings.

James 1:9 The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. 10 But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower. 11 For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

James 2:1 My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. 2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

James 2:5 Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? 6 But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

James 2:8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. 9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

James 5:1 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. 2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 3 Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. 4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. 5 You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

JAMES: FAITHFUL SERVICE IS

SPEECH

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:
Greetings.

James 1:19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires
James 1:26 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

3:2 We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

James 3:3 When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. 4 Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. 5 Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

James 3:7 All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, 8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

James 3:9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. 10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. 11 Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? 12 My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

James 4:11 Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

James 4:13 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." 16 As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. 17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

9 Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!
James 5:12 Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

James 5:13 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. 14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

JAMES: FAITHFUL SERVICE IS

Reflections of Jesus' Teachings in the Epistle of James.

James 1:4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.	Matthew 5:48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.	Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
James 1:6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.	Mark 11:23 "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.
James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.	Matthew 7:24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.
James 2:2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?	Luke 20:46 "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets.
James 2:8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.	Matthew 22:39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
James 2:13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!	Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
James 3:12 My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.	Matthew 7:16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?
James 3:18 Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.	Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
James 4:9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.	Luke 6:25 Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.
James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.	Matthew 23:12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.
James 4:11 Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?	Matthew 7:1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged.
James 5:2 Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes.	Matthew 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.
James 5:12 Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.	Matthew 5:34 But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.