

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

JAMES

**FAITHFUL
SERVICE**

is...

Wise Words from the Brother of Jesus.

JAMES: FAITHFUL SERVICE is

Bible Studies : Term 3/4 : 2011 :

JAMES

FAITHFUL SERVICE is ...

Wise Words from the Brother of Jesus.

The prophet Haggai, whose prophecy we studied just recently, in more than one place, challenged the People of Israel in post-exilic Jerusalem to ‘give careful thought to their ways’. James, whose letter sits near the end of the New Testament, likewise, without using the phrase, challenges us as Christians to ‘give careful thought to our ways.’

James wants his mostly Jewish Christian readers not to only have faith in Jesus but to live that out in every aspect of their lives. This, to James, is working out the salvation that they have through God’s grace.

From how to speak and how to use ‘riches’ to trials and temptations, to prayer and encouragement of one another James exhorts his Christian brethren to be wise, to be single minded, to be ‘doers of the word

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and not hearers only.'

As we study this letter it is my prayer that we will all be challenged to look carefully at our lives and to seek to become more godly in all that we do.

Greg Holmes - September 2011

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THE STUDIES

	Study Date*	Topic	Passage	Page No
1	Sept 11	Enduring	James 1:1-12	5
2	Sept 18	Hearing	James 1:13-27	7
3	Sept 25	Relating	James 2:1-13	9
4	Oct 2	Doing	James 2:14-26	11
5	Oct 9	Speaking	James 3:1-12	13
6	Oct 16	Choosing	James 3:13-18	15
7	Oct 23	Cleansing	James 4:1-12	17
8	Oct 30	Planning	James 4:13-17	19
9	Nov 6	Suffering	James 5:1-12	21
10	Nov 13	Planning	James 5:13-20	23
11	Nov 20	Living	James 1-5	25

**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).

Dickson, J & Smart, S. Vital Signs : The Wisdom of James for a Life of Faith (Sydney South, Aquila, 2006).

Motyer, J.A. James: The Tests of Faith (The Bible Speaks Today) (Nottingham, IVP, 1985)

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Study 1: JAMES 1:1-11

ENDURING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 1:1-11		
2	Matthew 5:1-10		
3	Proverbs 1:1-7		
4	Matthew 7:7-12		
5	Read all of James.		

Study 1: JAMES 1:1-11

ENDURING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. **Who writes this letter? How does he describe himself? To whom is the letter written?**
2. **Consider v2-5. What is the point of trials?**
3. **v6. Where should we expect to get wisdom? What is it?**
4. **What do vs9-11 have to say to us about our 'circumstances'?**

Deeper and Wider

1. **Read v2 again. Is he serious? How can we consider trials 'pure joy.'**
2. **What is v6-8 saying about doubt?**
3. **What is the problem with riches?**
4. **Look at Matthew 7:7-12. How does what Jesus is promising here relate to James' words in v5-8**

Apply

1. **We are all rich. What warning should we take from this passage?**
2. **Consider the idea of being 'double-minded'. Why is it a problem? What is the remedy?**

For Next Week: Read James 1:12-27

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Study 2: JAMES 1:12-27

HEARING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 1:12-27		
2	Matthew 5:11-16		
3	Proverbs 1:8-19		
4	John 3:1-21		
5	Read all of James.		

Study 2: JAMES 1:12-27

HEARING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. **Who is blessed (v12)? What is the result of perseverance?**
2. **According to v18 where does our salvation come from? See John 3:5-7**
3. **Consider v 19 and 26. What warning is there here for us?**
4. **From vs18, 21-25, what does the 'word' do? And, what should we do with it?**

Deeper and Wider

1. **We all face temptation. What do vs 13-15 tell us about the nature and the result of temptation?**
2. **The controversy about James' letter is that it is all about works and not about grace? How are both addressed in this passage?**
3. **Discuss v16-18. What do we have to thank God for?**
4. **In v27 we are told what 'pure' religion is. Is this all there is to it? What do you think James is saying?**

Apply

1. **The way we use words is an important theme in James. Discuss time when words have been helpful and when they have been**

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hurtful?

2. 'Doing' the word is an important thing for James. Do we adequately 'do' the word? (Be honest)

For Next Week: Read James 2:1-13

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Study 3 JAMES 2:1-13

RELATING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 2:1-13		
2	Matthew 5:17-20		
3	Proverbs 1:20-33		
4	Luke 10:25-37		
5	Read all of James.		

Study 3 JAMES 2:1-13

RELATING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. **Read all of v1-13 carefully. What is this passage all about?**
2. **In v5-7 what is the contrast between the rich and the poor?**
3. **What point is being made in v8-11?**
4. **What provides the antidote to ‘favouritism’?**

Deeper and Wider

1. **Why do you think James starts this as he does in v1?**
2. **How does this passage reflect the teachings of Jesus? Consider Matthew 23:12, Luke 6:20, Mark 10:23; Luke 13:24; Matthew 5:19; Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 18:9-14.**
3. **James refers to ‘the royal law’ (v8), ‘the whole law (v10) and ‘the law that gives freedom’ (v12). Is there a difference? What is it?**
4. **What does it mean to show mercy?**

Apply

1. **Can you think of a modern equivalent of the illustration/story in v2-3? In what ways might we be guilty of this sort of favouritism?**

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2. **From the passage, to whom should we be merciful? How can you practically do this this week?**

For Next Week: Read James 2:14-26

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Study 4: JAMES 2:14-26

DOING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 2:14-26		
2	Matthew 5:21-30		
3	Genesis 21:1-19		
4	Ephesians 2:1-10		
5	Read all of James.		

Study 4: JAMES 2:14-26

DOING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. **What is the main thrust of James' argument here?**
2. **What impact does the story in v15-16 have on you? Can you imagine anyone doing such a thing?**
3. **What point is v18-19 making?**
4. **What two examples does James use of faith in action?**

Deeper and Wider

1. **Discuss the issue of Paul's, 'By grace are you saved ... not by works,' (Ephesians 2:8-9 but note v10) and James, 'so faith without deeds is dead'?**
2. **What do demons do when they recall that 'there is one God'?**
3. **Abraham and Rahab! Discuss the type of example that each provides?**
4. **So, what is the answer to James' question in v14?**

Apply

1. **How is your faith demonstrated by your actions? Talk about what you have done this week.**
2. **What practical and physical thing can you do for a brother or sister in need this**

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week?

For Next Week: Read James 3:1-12

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Study 5: JAMES 3:1-12

SPEAKING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 3:1-12		
2	Matthew 5:31-42		
3	Proverbs 15:1-17		
4	Matthew 23:1-12		
5	Read all of James.		

Study 5: JAMES 3:1-12

SPEAKING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. **What is the main thrust of this passage?**
2. **What positives about speech are there in v2b-4,9a?**
3. **What negative things are said about speech in v5-6?**
4. **What are v9-12 saying about the way we speak?**

Deeper and Wider

1. **What does v1 saying about being a teacher?**
2. **Read Matthew 23:1-12. How does this parallel some of the things James is saying here?**
3. **Look at Proverbs 10:11;15:1,2,4,22,31; 16:24,27;18:21? How do these relate to James' word?**
4. **Discuss the results of careless speech and of careful speech.**

Apply

1. **“No human being can tame the tongue,” says James? Discuss how we should go about trying?**
2. **How can we help each other in the area of speech?**

For Next Week: Read James 3:13-18

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Study 6: JAMES 3:13-18

CHOOSING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 3:13-18		
2	Matthew 5:43-6:4		
3	Proverbs 15:18-23		
4	Luke 18:9-14		
5	Read all of James.		

Study 6: JAMES 3:13-19

CHOOSING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

- 1. This passage speaks of two kinds of wisdom. What are they? What is behind them?**
- 2. What are the characteristics of worldly wisdom (v14-16)?**
- 3. What are the characteristics of the wisdom from above (v13,17-18)?**
- 4. What is the result of each sort of wisdom?**

Deeper and Wider

- 1. What is the answer to the rhetorical question in v13?**
- 2. Discuss each of the elements of ‘wisdom that comes down from heaven’? Consider places you see these?**
- 3. How does this passage relate to the previous one about words and the tongue?**
- 4. Read Luke 18:9-14. How does this parable from James’ brother illustrate James point?**

Apply

- 1. Discuss examples you know of both sorts of wisdom. How do we discern the difference?**
- 2. How do we become wise? What can you**

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**do about it this week? Remember James
1:5.**

For Next Week: Read James 4:1-12

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Study 7: JAMES 4:1-12

CLEANSING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 4:1-12		
2	Matthew 6:5-15		
3	Jeremiah 3:14-22		
4	Exodus 20:1-11		
5	Read all of James.		

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?**
- 2. What do v4-6 say about our motives and our focus in life?**
- 3. List the commands in v7-10? Who is James talking to?**
- 4. What do verses 11 and 12 warn against?**

Deeper and Wider

- 1. Discuss whether v1-3 reflects your personal experience. What correctives does the rest of the chapter have for this situation?**
- 2. What does James call his fellow Christians in v4a? Does this offend you? What lies behind this imagery? (See Ephesians 5:31-32; Isaiah 54:1-6; Jeremiah 2:2; 3:20.)**
- 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.**
- 4. What is v5 saying about God?**

Apply

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

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

For Next Week: Read James 4:13-17

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Study 8: JAMES 4:13-17

PLANNING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 4:13-17		
2	Matthew 6:16-24		
3	Jeremiah 9:23-24		
4	1 Corinthians 18:1-31		
5	Read all of James.		

Study 8: JAMES 4:13-17

PLANNING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. **What sort of people are addressed here?**
2. **What sort of thing are they doing?**
3. **What is the problem with it? What is the solution?**
4. **What is the point then of v17?**

Deeper and Wider

1. **What do v13-14 say about 'life'?**
2. **What should we do with the idea in v15?**

Note Proverbs 19:21.

3. **Jesus taught us to pray 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done.' What does this say to the attitude expressed by these people?**
4. **What boasting is evil? Note Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 Corinthians 1:31.**

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

For Next Week: Read James 5:1-12

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Study 9: JAMES 5:1-12

SUFFERING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 5:1-12		
2	Matthew 6:25-34		
3	Proverbs 30:5-9		
4	Luke 16:19-31		
5	Read all of James.		

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)?**
2. **What is their problem and what is its cause (v2-6)?**
3. **What is to be the oppressed believer's response (v7-11)?**
4. **What must they not do (v9,12)?**

Deeper and Wider

1. **Read Luke 16:19-31. How does this parable illustrate James' point in v1-6?**
2. **Read Matthew 6:19-20. What does Jesus demand of us?**
3. **What examples of endurance are given? In what way is Jesus also an example?**
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?**

Apply

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

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passage?

For Next Week: Read James 5:13-20

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Study 10: JAMES 5:13-20

PRAYING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 5:13-20		
2	Matthew 7:1-14		
3	1 Kings 18:41-46		
4	Matthew 18:15-18		
5	Read all of James.		

Study 10: JAMES 5:13-20

PRAYING

Explore the Basics

Read the passage carefully together.

1. **What two Christian actions are vs13-18 about?**
2. **From v13 who do we communicate with no matter how we feel? Why?**
3. **How does James suggest we go about praying for healing?**
4. **What is the point being made in v19-20?**

Deeper and Wider

1. **What is the place of Prayer, Praise and Confession in the personal and communal life of the Christian?**
2. **Consider the Elijah story. What point is James making by using this example?**
3. **In 21st Century Australia does God still heal? If so how?**
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.)**

Apply

1. **How does this passage challenge us about our prayer life? What should we do about it?**
2. **How do we, in our church, put the ideas of v19-20 into practice?**

For Next Week: Read James right

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through.

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Study 11: JAMES 1-5

LIVING

Day	Reading	My Thoughts	Prayer Points
1	James 1		
2	James 2-3		
3	James 4-5		
4	Matthew 7:15-29		
5	Deuteronomy 15:7-11		

Study 11: JAMES 1-5

LIVING

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.

- 1. In v 1-11 what are the big issues raised?**
- 2. In v 12-27 what are the big issues raised and how do they relate to the first 11 verses?**
- 3. How are these themes picked up in the rest of James' letter?**

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?

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

Apply

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

2. How can we help one another to

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From



From "The Gospel according to Peanuts" – Robert Short
See Study 4

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