

JAMES

Faith That Works

"...so faith without works is dead." (2:26)

A Self-Study Guide

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Directions:

This is a booklet to aid you in your personal study of this book. Read through the text first, discovering God's precious truths for yourself. Write down the main point of each section of text in the space provided. The text is provided for you to mark, color, and highlight things you find interesting and important. Use the margins on each side of the text and the backside of the page to make notations of the truths you discover and passages you do not understand. When you believe you have seen all there is in text, read and answer the questions in the booklet pertaining to that section of text. The questions are not an exhaustive list of things to look for in the text. The questions are to help you consider the points that the author was trying to convey to his audience. Be prepared to share your findings in class.

Introduction:

1. Read through James in one sitting. This will help you see the book as a whole unit. Note places in your Bible where there is a natural division in the book, i.e. changes in subject, emphasis, or thought. As you read through the book, use colored pencils to highlight and make notations. Mark any phrases or thoughts that give you an overall impression as to the theme of the book.
2. Jot down key words or phrases as well as key verses that summarize the main message of the book.

3. Survey: Write down the main theme of the following sections:

1:1-12

3:13-18

1:13-18

4:1-12

1:19-27

4:13-5:6

2:1-13

5:7-12

2:13-26

5:13-18

3:1-12

5:19-20

4. Consult a Bible dictionary or commentary as you answer the following questions:
 - a. Which "James" is the author of this book?
 - b. When is it estimated that this book was written?

NKJV

1* James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

2* My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

3* knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

4* But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

5* If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6* But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

7* For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

8* *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

9* Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

10* but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

11* For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

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

Main point:

Write down points of interest and any questions below:

1. Who are “the twelve tribes in the Dispersion” that James is writing to?

2. List the benefits of trials:

3. What is another word for “*patience?*” (Look in a Bible dictionary if you need help.) How is patience developed from trials?

4. What is “a double-minded man?” How do we avoid becoming this person?

5. Explain how verses 9-11 fit in the context of the discussion of trials:

Passing Thought: “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.” (Proverbs 24:10)

NKJV

13* Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

14* But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

15* Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

16* Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

17* Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

18* Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

6. Explain each step of the process of falling into sin:
7. Explain the phrase in verse 17, "*with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*"
8. Explain the implication of being "*a kind of firstfruits of His creatures*" (vs. 18).

NKJV

19* So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

20* for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

21* Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

22* But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

23* For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

25* But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

26* If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless.

27* Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

9. List all the things we are to do to overcome trials and temptations. Be ready to explain how these things will help us overcome.
10. Explain how "*the perfect law of liberty*" is like a mirror:
11. How does James tell us to have "*pure and undefiled religion?*" How are we doing?

NKJV

1* My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality.

2* For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,

3* and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"

4* have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

5* Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

6* But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?

7* Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

8* ¶ If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well;

9* but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

10* For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

11* For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

12* So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

13* For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

1. List the arguments made against partiality:

2. What are some ways that we tend to show partiality today?

3. What does verse 10 mean? What point was James making?

NKJV

14* What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

15* If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

16* and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit?

17* Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18* But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

19* You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!

20* But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

21* Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

22* Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

23* And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

24* You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

25* Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

26* For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

4. List the arguments to show that faith without works is dead:

5. In Romans 4:1-4, Paul taught that Abraham was *NOT* justified by works. Both James and Paul quote Genesis 15:6 to prove their point. How do you explain this apparent contradiction?

6. Since James is writing to Christians, what is the point and application of James' words?

7. Can faith be seen? If so, how?

NKJV

1* My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

2* For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

3* Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

5* Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

6* And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

7* For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

8* But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9* With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

10* Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

11* Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening?

12* Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

1. List the arguments for bridling the tongue:

2. Explain the meaning of verse 2.

3. How does James tell us to gain control of our tongues?

4. Carefully read verses 10-12. What does James say is the cause of a destructive tongue?

5. In verse 1, is James telling Christians not to become teachers? Explain what James is saying.

NKJV

Who *is* wise and understanding among you?
Let him show by good conduct *that* his works
are done in the meekness of wisdom.

But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in
your hearts, do not boast and lie against the
truth.

This wisdom does not descend from above, but
is earthly, sensual, demonic.

16* For where envy and self-seeking *exist*,
confusion and every evil thing *are* there.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure,
then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of
mercy and good fruits, without partiality and
without hypocrisy.

Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in
peace by those who make peace.

Main point:

**Write down points of interest and questions
below:**

6. How does this section tie into the last section
about the tongue?

7. Describe the wisdom that is from above. Explain each characteristic of wisdom. Also explain why “wisdom that is from above is *first* pure, then peaceable.”

NKJV

1* Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires* for pleasure that war in your members?

2* You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

3* You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

4* Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?

6* But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

1. List all the sins the brethren were committing as a result of their desires for material things:

2. Explain what “friendship with the world” entails (vs. 4).

3. Explain the meaning of verses 5-6. How do these verses tie into the topic of materialism?

NKJV

7* Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8* Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

9* Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom.

10* Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

11* Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

12* There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

4. List the things we are to do to avoid worldliness and materialism:

5. How is speaking evil of one another is judging another (vs. 11)?

6. Explain the statement, “*But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.*” How does fit in with verse 12?

NKJV

13* Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”;

14* whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

15* Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

16* But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

17* Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

7. Make practical applications of this passage to our lives:

8. How can talking about one’s plans, as spoken about in this text, be considered “boasting?”

9. What does verse 17 have to do with this context?

NKJV

1* Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!*

2* Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3* Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

4* Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

5* You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

6* You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

1. What seems to be the cause of “*miseries?*”

NKJV

7* Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

8* You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

9* Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

10* My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

11* Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord--that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

12* But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes,” be “Yes,” and *your* “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

2. What is patience?

3. In verse 8 James says, “*the coming of the Lord is at hand.*” Was James wrong that it would be so soon? What was James referring to?

4. In light of the context, why does James warn against “*grumbling against one another?*”

5. Noticing verse 11, what is “*the end*” that James is referring to?
6. What does the taking of oaths, found in verse 12, have to do with this context?
7. What is the practical application of verse 12? Does this verse teach that we are not to make an oath?

NKJV

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

Main point:

Write down points of interest and questions below:

8. List the things James tells us to do in order to maintain patience:
9. Noticing verse 14, what was the purpose of “*anointing with oil?*” (Check a Bible dictionary for help, or concordance for other places in the Bible where this is spoken of).
10. How does confession help us overcome trials and temptations?

11. What is the purpose of the example of Elijah?