

## Calendar

1 - September 23	Introduction
2 - September 30	Study - James 1
3 - October 7	Teach & Application - James 1
4 - October 14	Study - James 2
5 - October 21	Teach & Application - James 2
6 - October 28	Study - James 3-4:12
7 - November 4	Teach & Application - James 3-4:12
8 - November 11	Study - James 4:13-5
9 - November 18	Teach & Application - James 4:13-5

## Some thoughts and guidelines:

*Please don't use commentaries or study bible notes* until you have completed the homework and earnestly considered the text. This will keep you in the process of discovering what it actually says and then working towards understanding its meaning and then applying it to your life. (observation, interpretation, and application) When you read initially and start having questions and jump right to notes or commentary you are just taking in another person's conclusion. You will gain a much greater understanding and benefit if you learn to wrestle with it yourself. Commentaries and notes are certainly useful, but we first must engage with the text on our own.

Please use cross references. Other passages can explain a lot of things we read.

Please use dictionaries (English ones—like Websters or whatever your phone app is)

Please use other translations of the bible. You can get a fuller understanding by reading several.

You may want to print out a copy of James so you can really mark it up. ([biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)) Repeated phrases, words, or ideas can be marked. Things that stood out to you. Questions.

Here are some helpful resources:

Webster's 1828 Dictionary. ([webstersdictionary1828.com](http://webstersdictionary1828.com))

[Blueletterbible.com](http://Blueletterbible.com)

[Openbible.info](http://Openbible.info) (search cross references)

[Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com)

[calvaryrathdrum.com/messages](http://calvaryrathdrum.com/messages) (if you miss a message--look under Luann Kirkham/James)

# WEEK 1 - INTRODUCTION TO JAMES

Who wrote the book of James?

When was it written?

To whom was it written?

What were the conditions like for the recipients of this letter?

What is the overarching theme of the letter?

Does this book present or defend the gospel? Why or why not?

## **Week 2 & 3 - James 1**

Read the passage at least twice.

### ***OBSERVATION***

#### **Verses 1-4**

- How does James describe himself?
- How does James describe the “various trials” the brethren have/will encounter(ed)?
- What is the result of endurance?

#### **Verses 5-8**

- How does God react to our asking of Him?
- How must we ask God for something?
- What are we like when we doubt?
- How can someone be “double-minded” when asking of the Lord?

## **Verses 9-27**

Find the chunks.

Ask yourself questions similar to the above questions and record facts. You are not looking for meaning yet. You want to observe what is in the passage.

Note repeated words or phrases.

Summarize or state the main idea of each chunk. Take notes below.



## ***INTERPRETATION***

Read the passage at least twice. Use different translations!

### **Verses 1-4**

- How were these brethren probably being tested?
- Why does God test us through trials?
- How does testing produce endurance?
- How would endurance make these believers perfect and complete?

### **Verses 5-8**

- What is the difference between smart and wise? (Look up definitions and look at James 3:13-18)
- What does a double-minded and unstable person look like in our culture?
- How is doubt treated here?

**Verses 9-27**

Use the same chunks you found when doing observation. You are now looking for meaning and are seeking to understand it. Ask yourself questions similar to the ones above.

Ask yourself:

What would the original audience have thought?

How does this fit within the greater story of the bible?

How does it fit within the gospel?

Take notes below.



### ***CROSS REFERENCES***

Look up the following passage and write down how it relates to, or expounds upon, the teaching in James 1. **Then look up other cross-references and do the same thing.**

- 1 Peter 1:6-7

### ***DEFINITIONS***

Look up the words below and write the definitions that relate to how they are used in James 1.

**Then look up any other words you find repeated, emphasized or relevant.**

- Trial
  
- Endurance

Note anything significant the Holy Spirit draws you to in the passage.

## Prayer Requests

## **APPLICATION**

Read the passage again thinking about all that you have learned through observing and interpreting. You are now free to consult a trusted commentary or listen to a teaching.

- How would it change you/your experience if, at the beginning of a “trial”, you stopped and considered it “all joy?” How can you cultivate this? (Eph 3:14-21, Hebrews 10:19-25)
- What does it tell us about God that He will give us wisdom generously and without reproach if we just ask?
- The context of this discussion about wisdom is enduring trials. How does wisdom come into play as we suffer and go through hard things?
- How does one “ask in faith” when all evidence points to doubt, such as a terminal diagnosis, loss of job with no prospects, etc.?
- How can you be a better doer of the word and not just a hearer of the word?
- What steps can you take to bridle your tongue? Become a better listener? Control your anger?

**Additional Application questions. Answer the ones that apply.**

- What is God leading me to do differently?
- What might these truths look like in my day to day life? In my goals & dreams? In my family? In my church?
- Is God prompting me to respond to a specific person or situation in my life in light of what I have just studied?
- Is there a belief of thinking I am engaging in that needs to change?

**What does this passage reveal about God and His character?**

**Prayer Requests**

## **Week 4 & 5 - James 2**

Read the passage at least twice.

### ***OBSERVATION***

Verses 1-7

- What were the two men judged on and what was each given as a result? (v. 2-3)
  
- What has God given us? (v. 5) And what have the readers of this letter done? (v. 6)

Verses 8-13

- What is the “royal law”?

Verses 14-26

Find the chunks.

Ask yourself questions similar to the above questions and record facts. You are not looking for meaning yet. You want to observe what is in the passage.

Note repeated words or phrases.

Summarize or state the main idea of each chunk. Take notes below.



## ***INTERPRETATION***

### Verses 1-7

- James is describing a situation in the church at the time of his writing this letter where the church was very poor and the few more financially advantaged people were being treated differently and better than the poor. The word translated partiality or favoritism used in 2:1 literally means “to receive someone according to their face.” The focus in these verses is the outward appearance.

What “evil motives” may have been behind the act of showing personal favoritism?

### Verses 8-13

- Why is the law an “all or nothing”?
- How is mercy vs judgement (v. 12,13) tied to the discussion about favoritism?
- What kind of attitude is necessary to love people as much as you do yourself?
- How is it inconsistent to show partiality in light of what Jesus did on the cross?

## Verses 14-26

Use the same chunks you found when doing observation. You are now looking for meaning and are seeking to understand it. Ask yourself questions similar to the ones above.

Ask yourself:

What would the original audience have thought?

How does this fit within the greater story of the bible?

How does it fit within the gospel?

Take notes below.



## **CROSS REFERENCES**

Look up the following passages and write down how it relates to, or expounds upon, the teaching in James 2. **Then look up other cross-references and do the same thing.**

Galatians 3:10

Leviticus 19:15

## **DEFINITIONS**

Look up the words below and write the definitions that relate to how they are used in James 2. **Then look up any other words you find repeated, emphasized or relevant.**

- Favoritism
  
- Partiality

Note anything significant the Holy Spirit draws you to.

**Prayer Requests**

## ***APPLICATION***

- What “evil motives” might we have when we show personal favoritism?
  
- What should our heart be towards any race, group, or other category that is different than our own? (Acts 10:34-35, Romans 2:9-11, Ephesians 6:9)
  
- What does showing favoritism toward one person do to your relationships with others? Have you ever been treated in a condescending manner by a Christian? Did it impact how you thought about God?
  
- What opportunities do you have in your life to show mercy instead of judgment?
  
- How does Jesus model faith AND works? How do we show our faith by our works?

**Additional Application questions. Answer the ones that apply.**

- What is God leading me to do differently?
- What might these truths look like in my day to day life? In my goals & dreams? In my family? In my church?
- Is God prompting me to respond to a specific person or situation in my life in light of what I have just studied?
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**What does this passage reveal about God and His character?**

## Prayer Requests

## **Week 6 & 7 - James 3-4:12**

Read the passage at least twice.

### ***OBSERVATION***

Verses 3:1-4

- What two images does James use to illustrate the power of teachers?

Verses. 3:5-12

- How does James use fire as a description of the use of the tongue?
- What does James say our tongues can be used for in v. 9 & 10?
- What are the three images in v. 11 & 12 that James uses to make his point?
- What does James say about this reality of blessing and cursing from the same mouth? (v. 10)

Verses 3:13-4:12

Find the chunks.

Ask yourself questions similar to the above questions and record facts. You are not looking for meaning yet. You want to observe what is in the passage.

Note repeated words or phrases.

Summarize or state the main idea of each chunk. Take notes below.



## ***INTERPRETATION***

### Verses 3:1-4

- Why do teachers incur stricter judgment?
- James has already instructed us to be slow to speak (1:19). How is the word stumble in v.2 a good description of what often happens when we speak?
- How do the images of a horse and a bit, and a ship and a rudder explain the power of our words?

### Verses 3:5-12

- The fire illustration hits close to home. Living in the PNW we know the absolute destruction of fires that are out of control. How can our words cause destruction and devastation? How can they quickly go out of control?
- What is the connection between the reminder all people are made in the image of God (v. 9) and James' admonition that blessing and cursing should not be coming from the same mouth?
- How can the tongue bless and destroy?

Verses 3:13-4:12

Use the same chunks you found when doing observation. You are now looking for meaning and are seeking to understand it. Ask yourself questions similar to the ones above.

Ask yourself:

What would the original audience have thought?

How does this fit within the greater story of the bible?

How does it fit within the gospel?

Take notes below.



## CROSS REFERENCES

Look up the following passages and write down how it relates to, or expounds upon, the teaching in James 3-4:12. **Then look up other cross-references and do the same thing.**

- 1 Timothy 1:6-7
- Proverbs 18:21

## DEFINITIONS

Look up the words below and write the definitions that relate to how they are used in James 3-4:12. **Then look up any other words you find repeated, emphasized or relevant.**

- Stumble
- Tongue

Note anything significant the Holy Spirit draws you to.

## Prayer Requests

## ***APPLICATION***

How does the Word of God shape our words?

- In 3:1-12, James talks about the power of the tongue in great detail. It can teach, direct, boast, destroy, bless and curse. He says the tongue cannot be tamed. How can we better control our tongues so we direct, delight and bless more than we boast, destroy and curse?
- Do you think teachers in the church today take seriously the warning that they will be judged with greater strictness?
- Think about times when words hurt you. Think about times when words were healing and life giving. Share about your experience with the POWER of words.
- Which of the characteristics of wisdom in v.17 would you like to ask God to cultivate in you?
- How do we show divided allegiance between the world and God? Do we think we can be friends with the world and God?
- James' "cure" for worldliness is direct and to the point. How do we practically implement these steps?

- What is the difference between judging someone and correcting someone? How do we confront someone to correct them without judging them?

**Additional Application questions. Answer the ones that apply.**

- What is God leading me to do differently?
- What might these truths look like in my day to day life? In my goals & dreams? In my family? In my church?
- Is God prompting me to respond to a specific person or situation in my life in light of what I have just studied?
- Is there a belief or thinking I am engaging in that needs to change?

**What does this passage reveal about God and His character?**

# Prayer Requests

## **WEEK 8 & 9 - JAMES 4:13-5**

Read the passage at least twice.

### **OBSERVATION**

Verses 4:13-17

- According to v. 4:14 what two things are dependent on the Lord's will? What are we to say instead about our plans? (v. 15)
  
- How does James define sin in v. 17?

Verses 5:1-6

- How are the rich (unsaved) described?
  
- Who has heard the cries of the laborers?
  
- What name does James use for God in v. 4?

(**Lord of hosts, Lord Almighty, Lord Sabaoth**--this particular name is only used one other time in the New Testament, Romans 9:29, where Paul is quoting Isaiah. However, this name for God is used many times in the Old Testament and is used to describe God in His role as the commander of vast armies. We need to remember that God is a mighty warrior who battles for His people and He will wage a war to defend the defenseless. James is reminding his readers that God sees and hears, and is a God of justice and He is One who will go before and protect His people.)

Verses 5:7-20

Find the chunks.

Ask yourself questions similar to the above questions and record facts. You are not looking for meaning yet. You want to observe what is in the passage.

Note repeated words or phrases.

Summarize or state the main idea of each chunk. Take notes below.



## INTERPRETATION

Verses 4:13-17

- Is James saying it is wrong to make plans? What should our attitude be? Look up Proverbs 16:3 & 16:9
  
- What would be an arrogant and boastful way of making plans?

Verses 5:1-6

- Is James condemning people because they have wealth?
  
- Look up 1 Timothy 6:9-10, 17-19. How can wealth be a snare? How are we to view/handle riches?
  
- What would a harvester be equivalent to in modern America?
  
- What is the overall picture of the unsaved?

Verse 5:7-20

Use the same chunks you found when doing observation. You are now looking for meaning and are seeking to understand it. Ask yourself questions similar to the ones above.

Ask yourself:

What would the original audience have thought?

How does this fit within the greater story of the bible?

How does it fit within the gospel?

Take notes below.



## **CROSS REFERENCES**

Look up the following passages and write down how it relates to, or expounds upon, the teaching in James 4:13-5. **Then look up other cross-references and do the same thing.**

- Romans 2:5
- Psalm 37:7

## **DEFINITIONS**

Look up the words below and write the definitions that relate to how they are used in James 4:13-5. **Then look up any other words you find repeated, emphasized or relevant.**

- Boast
- Patient

Note anything significant the Holy Spirit draws you to.

## ***APPLICATION***

- How do we make plans for our future while still being in God's will? What kind of plans are OK to make, and what kind are wrong?
- How does the contemplation of the brevity of our lives impact how we live?
- Does the description of "the rich" in 5:1-6 bring out feelings in you of mercy or judgment? How do you think God feels about them?
- How can we be patient for the Lord as we suffer and go through trials? How can we strengthen our endurance?
- Do you believe Jesus is coming soon? How do you feel about that?
- How is your prayer life? How much of a priority is prayer in your life?
- Do you confess your sins to fellow believers? Do you have an "accountability partner"?

**Additional Application questions. Answer the ones that apply.**

- What is God leading me to do differently?
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