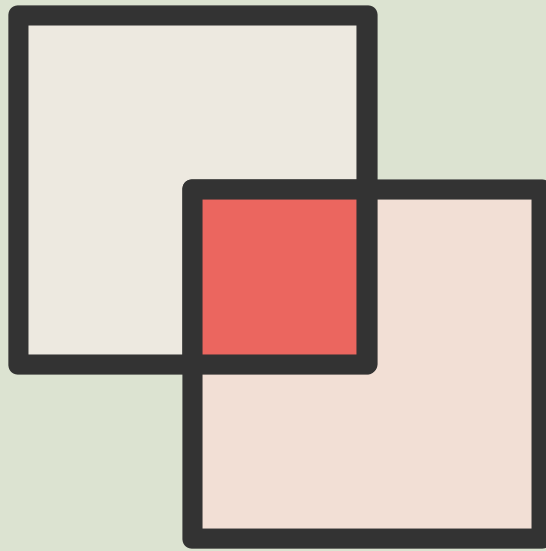


 Theology +
Bible +
Discipleship to Jesus



James

a faith that works

Foreword

On May 2, 2022 I sent a cover letter to the team here at SouthRidge to be considered for the role of Discipleship Pastor. In a part of that cover letter, I wrote the following:

“I am passionate about seeing each and every disciple grow in their conformation to the likeness of Jesus within the context of a healthy local church family. I believe an essential way this Christlike conformation happens is through the development of biblical literacy, theological acumen, and spiritual formation habits. I believe that, broadly speaking, the deepest disciples have the widest missional impact. “

I firmly believe that your investment of time in this Theology + Bible + Discipleship to Jesus study is a crucial part of our church's mission (i.e. to Love God – Change the World – One Life at a Time) and vision (i.e. that As we follow Jesus daily, we will intentionally take risks to bravely live outward).

When I sent that cover letter a few years ago, I could never have imagined being a part of such an amazing church family with such gifted and committed colleagues.

This workbook wouldn't be possible without the hard work of a husband-and-wife team: Adam and Jess Van Rees. Jess was the primary curriculum writer, and Adam designed this booklet. I'm thankful for their friendship and their hard work.

Additionally, through Elijah Kroeker's encouragement and hard work, there is a multi-episode podcast season—featuring conversations between Dr. Larry Perkins, Linda Murdoch, and myself—to serve as a resource for this term of Theology + Bible + Discipleship to Jesus. I'm thankful for Elijah's creativity and persistence, and for the depth of insight and wisdom that Larry and Linda brought to our conversations. You can listen to this podcast on YouTube, Spotify, or Apple.

This is the first term of Theology + Bible + Discipleship to Jesus here at SouthRidge Fellowship, and it simply would not have been possible without this small army of people, plus all those who will help in various ways to make our in-person gatherings possible. And, finally, I'm glad you're joining us on this journey. You're why this ministry exists.

Greg Harris
Discipleship Pastor

Welcome

We are excited to begin this journey of studying the book of James together.

Our desire is that through participating in this study you would grow. Both in knowledge and understanding and in wisdom and character. We hope that this would serve as an opportunity for you to grow in Christlikeness and to be spiritually formed.

As you position yourself before the Scriptures, we ask that you would surrender yourself to the work of the Spirit. Allow him to plant and uproot, encourage and correct, convict and sanctify. In all of this, our prayer is that you would be encouraged to follow Jesus daily and that God would be glorified!

HOW TO WORK THROUGH THIS BOOKLET

This booklet consists of six weeks of material. Below outlines the major components.

- **Pray** - we have included a prayer that can be used as you enter into God's Word each week.
- **Scripture** - Each week includes the passage from the NIV translation. As you read through the passage feel free to mark up, underline, and highlight in what ever way you find beneficial for your personal engagement.
- **Look, Learn, Contemplate** - this section consists of three categories of questions.
 - Look: These are questions that primarily focus on what the text is saying.
 - Learn: Takes it a step further as you examine the meaning of the passage.
 - Contemplate: This is where the rubber hits the road and you begin to consider how this text applies to your life.
- **For Further Study** -this section is for those who desire to dig deeper in their study.

Formed: From the Garden to Glory

by: Adam Van Rees

“There are no quick and easy paths to spiritual maturity. The soul that seeks a deeper level of maturity must be prepared for a long, arduous task.”
- R.C. Sproul -

The path of following Jesus and becoming more like him has no shortcuts. It's no surprise then that Jesus tells his disciples that they must count the cost of following him (Matt 16:24). One must consider what it will mean to die to self, time and time again. To renounce ownership of one's life, and submit to Christ is by no means easy.

But it is *good*.

It is in the loss of our life that we find true life (Matt 16:25). The life that Jesus promises is unrivaled; it is full, abundant, and eternal (Jn 10:10). While there are moments along the path that make it feel anything but abundant (by earthly standards at least), we are also promised that we do not trudge through it alone (Matt 28:20). In the moments where life has dealt suffering and disappointment and brought you face to face with the ugliness of your sin, Jesus is there. His invitation remains the same: come, and follow me. It is on this path that we are made whole and made holy. It is on this path that we are formed for His praise and for His glory.

This journey finds its roots in the Garden. God created humanity in His image so that we might glorify Him and enjoy eternal, intimate, loving relationship with Him (Gen 1:27). This truth establishes that our identity is connected to the divine, setting the stage for the continuous work of spiritual formation in our lives. Being made in God's image carries profound implications. It means that every person carries within them the imprint of their Creator. Thus, the work of spiritual formation is not about acquiring something new but about renewing and restoring what was always intended: an ability to display, reflect, and communicate who he is, how great he is, and what he is like as well as enjoying deeply satisfying communion with the one who formed us.

This process of restoration and transformation is described in Romans 8:29, where Paul writes, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters." Here, Paul introduces a key element of spiritual formation: conformity to the image of Christ. This passage reveals that God's purpose for us is to be shaped into the likeness of his Son so that we reflect and embody Christ's character, love, and holiness. The imagery of transformation is further developed in 2 Corinthians 3:18, where Paul explains, "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." Paul insists that we become like what we behold. As we turn our gaze to Christ and orient ourselves towards all that is good, true, and beautiful in Jesus we become like him. This verse captures the dynamic nature of spiritual formation. It is not a one-time event but a continual and ongoing process.

Spiritual formation is not something we accomplish through willpower or self-discipline; it is the result of the Spirit's work in our lives (Gal 3:3). At the same time, it is not something that is passive. Spiritual formation requires both yielding to the Spirit and an active participation. As one engages in spiritual disciplines (Scripture reading, prayer, worship, and community fellowship to name a few) we position ourselves before God's grace, allowing the Holy Spirit to use these means to shape our character and desires, aligning them more closely with the heart of God.

At times this journey feels daunting, but our hope is anchored in the future promise revealed in 1 John 3:1-3: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure." These verses beautifully reveal the culmination of spiritual formation – the moment when we will fully and perfectly reflect Christ and be with him face to face. This future glorification gives us the motivation to pursue holiness and purity now, knowing that our efforts are part of a greater process that will one day be fully realized when we see Christ face to face.

In summary, spiritual formation is the lifelong journey of being conformed to the image of Christ, rooted in our creation in the image of God and carried out by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. It is a process that involves ongoing transformation, often through challenging experiences, but always with the hope of becoming more like Christ. This journey, marked by both struggle and grace, ultimately leads to the fulfillment of our identity as children of God, where we will fully reflect His image in glory. It is not a path of immediate perfection but one of continual progress, faithfully moving toward the ultimate goal of being like Christ and being with him.

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Pray

Oh Holy God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

May all that I learn in this time increase in me

a love of wisdom, a hunger for justice, a thirst for righteousness,

a habit of peace, an instinct for mercy, an appetite for truth, a taste for goodness,

a longing for beauty, and a willingness to be gracious in all things.

May I love you in this study, not only with all my mind,

but also with all of my heart, soul, and strength.

May all that I study lead to a greater love for my neighbor,

both near and far, both friendly and hostile, both like and unlike me.

And by your grace may I become someone who

prays in and through all my studies

so that worship might become the the natural outcome of my study of this passage,

resulting in joyful praise and thanksgiving of you, Oh Triune God:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

May this be so for

my growth in Christlikeness,

for the good of others,

and for your fame. Oh Triune God:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Adapted version of “Liturgy – Beginning of Study” by W. David O. Taylor, Every Moment Holy, Rabbit Room Press.

Week 1/James 1:1-4

James 1

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

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

Look, Learn & Contemplate

LOOKING AT THE TEXT

- Who wrote this letter?
 - How does he describe himself?
- Who is James writing to?
 - What do we learn about his original audience?
- What is James instructing his listeners to do?
 - Why?
 - What is the end result he is pointing to?

LEARNING WHAT IT SAYS

Who is James?

- Read Mark 6:3 and John 7:1-5.
 - Write down what you learn about James in these passages.
- Read James 1:1.
 - What stands out to you in the way James describes himself.
 - What must have happened between the time of Mark 6:3 & John 7:1-5 to the time of James writing this letter, if this is how James describes himself?

Considering what, joy?

- Read Romans 5:1-5.
 - Write out the sequence of events listed starting at verse 1.
 - What do we learn about God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in this passage?
 - What do we learn about suffering in this passage?
- Read 1 Peter 1:6-7.
 - How does Peter describe our current reality?
 - How does Peter describe our future hope?
 - What does Peter say is the purpose of our trials?
 - Why does Peter instruct us to rejoice?
- Read Hebrews 12:1-2
 - How is Jesus described in this passage?
 - What was his disposition towards suffering?
 - What are we commanded to do in this passage?

Notes

CONTEMPLATING WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR LIFE

- James commands us to consider trials as “pure joy”. What is a trial / hardship that you are facing right now, and how are you feeling about it?
 - Write out why it is challenging for you to consider it as “pure joy”?
 - Pray to God and be honest about your feelings towards your current circumstances/ trial/hardship. Tell him what you are struggling with and express what you are hopeful for.
 - After you share honestly with the Lord, ask God to help you to consider the current suffering as Joy because of what it is producing in you.

“Lord, stamp eternity on my eyeballs.”

– Jonathan Edwards

For Further Study

LOOKING DEEPER AT THE TEXT

- Read or listen to James 1-5. It should take you 15-20 minutes. As you read, take note of repeating words, themes, ideas from each chapter.
 - Chapter 1:
 - Chapter 2:
 - Chapter 3:
 - Chapter 4:
 - Chapter 5:
- Summarize what you think James’ main reasons are for writing this letter.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS

Mature | Complete | Lacking in Nothing

- Read Romans 8:28-30
 - According to verse 29, why did he predestine people? What was the purpose of this action?
- Read Philippians 2:12-13
 - In verse 12, what does Paul command us to do?
 - In verse 13, what does he say about God?
 - According to this passage - summarize what we are commanded to do, and what God promises to do.
- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
 - What is Paul asking God to do in this passage?
 - How does this passage challenge or encourage you?

Notes

Notes

Week 2 / James 1:5-18

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

9 Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. 10 But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they 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 will fade away even while they go about their business.

12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

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 person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

16 Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 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

Look, Learn & Contemplate

LOOKING AT THE TEXT

- James 1:5-8
 - Summarize what James teaches in this paragraph.
 - What illustration does he use to describe the one who doubts?
- James 1:9-11
 - James repeats the phrase “take pride” twice in this paragraph. Who should “take pride”? In what situations should we “take pride”.
 - How does he illustrate his point?
- James 1:12
 - How is the person described in this verse? What do they do?
 - What will happen to them?
- James 1:13-15
 - What does James tell us not to say? Why not?
 - Write out the sequence of events listed in verses 14 & 15.
- James 1:16-18
 - What does James command in this section?
 - How does James describe God? What does God do?

LEARNING WHAT IT SAYS

Trials | Testing vs Temptation

- Trials:
 - Look back at last week’s homework and write out what a trial is.
- Testing:
 - Compare James 1:3 and 1:12. What seems to be the purpose of the test?
 - Look at 1 Peter 1:6-7. What does this text say happens during trials?
- Temptation:
 - Who is the source of temptation in James 1:13-15?
 - Look at Genesis 6:5 and Colossians 3:5. What do these texts say about the reality of our human nature?
- How does James describe God in these passages?
 - 1:5
 - 1:13
 - 1:17
 - List any questions you may have about God’s character in light of what we learned about Trials, Testing and Temptation. What are you challenged by? What are you encouraged by?

Notes

CONTEMPLATING WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR LIFE

- Consider the situations in your life where you feel like you lack wisdom. In the space below, write down the area(s) of your life where you desire more wisdom and ask God for it. Choose to trust that he “gives generously to all without finding fault” (1:5).
- What does it practically look like to persevere in the midst of a trial?
 - Reflect on previous hardships in your life: What did you learn? What would you do differently?
 - How would you encourage a brother or sister if they walked through something similar?
- This passage teaches us that we are tempted by our own evil desires.
 - Have you ever felt like God was the one who was tempting you? Why did you feel that?
 - How does knowing that temptation comes from our own evil desires challenge or encourage you?
 - Spend some time in prayer - ask God to change your desires and to help you as you experience temptation.

Notes

For Further Study

LOOKING DEEPER AT THE TEXT

- James describes different kinds of people throughout this passage (James 1:5-18). Look at the following references and write down their descriptions and whether any instructions/rebukes are given to them.
 - 1:5-6
 - 1:6-7
 - 1:9
 - 1:10-11
 - 1:12
 - 1:13
 - 1:16
 - 1:18
- As James describes current realities, he also promises what will happen in the future. Look at these references and note what he says:
 - 1:5
 - 1:10
 - 1:11
 - 1:12

LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS

- “Blessed is the one...” (1:9)
 - Read Matthew 5:1-12. How does Jesus describe those who are Blessed in the Kingdom of God?
 - Read Revelation 2:8-11. What do you learn about trials, testing and the crown of life?
- James 1:18 says, “He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.”
 - Read John 1:10-12
 - What happens to those who believe in the true light?
 - Read Ephesians 1:13-14
 - What is the word of truth? What happens when one believes the word of truth?
 - What do you think it means to “be a kind of first fruits of all he created”?

Notes

Week 3 / James 1:19-2:26

19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. 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.

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 someone 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 whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their 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.

James 2

1 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. 2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old 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?

5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: 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 dishonored 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 blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

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. 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, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

12 Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, 13 because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

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

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 my deeds. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our father 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 considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

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.

Look, Learn & Contemplate

LOOKING AT THE TEXT

- James 1:19-27
 - What does James tell us to take note of?
 - Why?
 - What additional commands does James give in this text?
 - 1:21
 - 1:22
 - How does James define religion?
- James 2:1-4
 - How does James begin this section of text?
 - How does he describe the one who shows favoritism?
- James 2:5-13
 - How does James describe the poor in this section?
 - How does he describe the rich?
 - What is the royal law?
 - What do you learn about the law in this section?
 - What do you learn about judgment?
- James 2:14-26
 - What question does James begin this section with?
 - How does James describe faith?
 - James mentions two people from the Old Testament. Who are they, and how do they help prove his point?

LEARNING WHAT IT SAYS

Faith & Deeds

- Look at Exodus 19:1-6
 - What did God do for the Israelites? Where did he bring the people?
 - What does he instruct the Israelites to do in verse 5?
 - What kind of possession will Israel be to God?
 - Did God command the Israelites to listen to his voice and obey him before or after he delivered them from the Egyptians?
- Look at Romans 3:23-25
 - What happened to allow us to be saved by God?
 - According to this passage, what does the disciple of Jesus have faith in?

Notes

- Look at Romans 6:1-4, 6:15-19
 - How does Paul describe the disciple's reality with sin?
 - What does Paul instruct the disciple to do in this passage? (v. 4, 12-13)
- Look at Matthew 7:24-27
 - How does Jesus' teaching compare with the teaching of Paul and James?

CONTEMPLATING WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR LIFE

- Reflect on the differences between these two phrases: "A disciple of Jesus is saved because of their works" and "A disciple of Jesus works because they are saved"
 - In what circumstances do you feel the temptation to believe that God saved you because of your good works?
 - Do you think God loves you more when you are doing good works? Why or why not?
 - Ephesians 2:8-10 says: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
 - What do you think the good works that God has prepared in advance for you to do are?
- Reflect on James' teaching of the sin of partiality.
 - Who in our society are we likely to put "beneath" others, and who in our society are we likely to put "above" others?
 - When were you tempted this past week to show partiality to the rich/influential above the poor/lowly?
 - James 1:3 says " .. you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." Consider if the Lord is testing your faith in the way that you engage with the influence / wealth of others around you.
 - Repent of your desires to show partiality to others and ask God to grow your affections for those who are often overlooked.

Notes

For Further Study

LOOKING DEEPER AT THE TEXT

- A few words are repeated multiple times in this section. Make a list for each word with the text references and what is said.

Righteous/Righteousness	
Law	
Deeds/Actions	
Faith	
Deceive	

LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS

- James 1:21-25 gives us three commands: “get rid of ...” , “humbly accept...” and “do what it says”
 - Read Eph 4:31-32 and Col 3:5-8 and compare those passages with James 1:21.
 - Why do you think we are commanded to “get rid of all moral filth and evil”?
 - What does that practically look like?
 - Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. What do we learn about the word (law) of God in this passage?
 - How does James 1:21 describe the word of God? What can it do?
- James 2 gives a clear rebuke of the way the church was interacting with the rich and the poor.
 - Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and Romans 2:11. How do these passages contrast with what James is referencing in chapter 2?
 - Read Matthew 25:31-46. How does Jesus instruct us to treat the poor?
 - Why are these commands so hard for us to obey? Why are we so quick to show favoritism?

Notes

Notes

Week 4 / James 3:1-12

James 3

1 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

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 body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

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

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

Look, Learn & Contemplate

LOOKING AT THE TEXT

- James 3:1-2
 - What does James say about teachers? Why does he say this?
 - How does James describe the one who is never at fault in what they say?
- James 3:3-8
 - Write out the 3 illustrations James gives us.
 - In verse 3-4, what impact does the bit have on the horse and the rudder on the ship?
 - How does James describe the tongue in this section?
 - Look at verse 2 - what impact does the tongue have on our bodies?
- James 3:9-12
 - What are the two things we do with our tongue?
 - What does James say about this reality?
 - Write out the 2 illustrations James gives us.

LEARNING WHAT IT SAYS

Our Heart & Tongue

- Read Romans 3:9-24.
 - Write out what you learned about the state of our hearts & words without the grace of God.
- Read Isaiah 6:1-7.
 - What is Isaiah's response when he encounters the holiness of God?
 - Why do you think he responds this way?
- Read Matthew 15:10-20 & Luke 6:45.
 - What does Jesus say about the connection between our heart and our words?
- Read Proverbs 12:18 & 16:27-28.
 - How is the one who has not tamed their tongue described?
 - What are the consequences of their words?

Notes

CONTEMPLATING WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR LIFE

- Read Psalm 19 & pray using the following prompts:
 - **Praise** God for the majesty of his creation and what it communicates about who he is. Consider the perfection of his law and the true satisfaction that his words bring.
 - **Repent** of your inability to tame your tongue, and your unclean lips. Seek forgiveness for the destruction and pain you have caused due to your foolish words.
 - **Ask** God to change your heart and desires, so that the “words of your mouth” and “meditation of your heart” would be pleasing to him (19:14).
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to increase your self control and to help you to tame your tongue.
 - Consider if there are certain circumstances or experiences where this is most difficult for you - ask God for help!
 - **Yield** and remember that your God is “[your] Rock and [your] Redeemer” (19:14).
 - Praise God that HE is the one who redeems, sanctifies, and makes our hearts and words more Christlike.
 - Take a deep breath and remember his love and his complete forgiveness for you.

Notes

For Further Study

LOOKING DEEPER AT THE TEXT

- Reread the text and mark every reference to “we” in this text. What do you learn about what “we” do?
- Go back and look at what James has taught about words so far - both our’s and God’s.
 - James 1:18
 - James 1:19
 - James 1:21
 - James 1:22-23
 - James 2:12
- Make a list of everything you learn about the tongue in this section.
- In your own words, write a sentence summarizing this section of James.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS

The Role of a Teacher

- Read the following verses to learn about the importance of the role of a teacher:
 - Titus 2:1
 - Titus 2:3-5
 - Titus 2:6-8
- Read Titus 2:11-14.
 - What does faithful teaching of God’s word produce in both the teacher and the listener?
- Read Mark 12:38-40.
 - How does this passage help us understand Jesus’ warning about wanting to become a teacher?

Notes

Notes

Week 5 / James 3:13-4:12

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their 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, demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

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 reap a harvest of righteousness.

James 4

1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

4 You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? 6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

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.

11 Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them 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?

Look, Learn & Contemplate

LOOKING AT THE TEXT

- James 3:13-18
 - How does James describe earthly wisdom in this section?
 - How does James describe the wisdom that comes from above?
 - What are people who are wise & understanding to do?
- James 4:1-10
 - What does James say about fights and quarrels?
 - What is the cause of them?
 - List the sins and their consequences mentioned in 4:2-3
 - What does James say about friendship with the world?
 - How does he address the listener in verse 4?
 - Why do you think he chooses this adjective?
 - What does James teach us about God?
 - What does James teach us about the devil?
 - What commands does James give us?
- James 4:11-12
 - What command does James give us in this section?
 - What does he say about judgment?
 - What does he teach us about the “Lawgiver and Judge”?

LEARNING WHAT IT SAYS

- Read Jeremiah 17:5-8.
 - List what you learn about the man who trusts in man.
 - List what you learn about the man who trusts in the Lord.
 - How do you see this passage relate to James 4:4-6.
- Read Proverbs 1:1-7.
 - How does one grow in wisdom and knowledge (1:5-7)?
- Read Proverbs 2.
 - Who is the one who gives wisdom?
 - List what the wise one understands in 2:1-15.
- Read Jeremiah 9:23-24.
 - What should the wise man boast about?

Notes

CONTEMPLATING WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR LIFE

- James reminds us in this passage that “God gives us more grace” (4:6).
 - When you read this statement, what are your initial thoughts? Do you believe it? Do you question it?
 - Why is it sometimes hard to trust that God continues to give us more grace?
 - Write down your honest thoughts and share them with the Lord.
 - Ask God to increase your faith so that you may take him at his word when he declares, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 2:19).
- James also gives us various commands after he teaches us on earthly and heavenly wisdom. Next to each command, write one way that you can obey the command.
 - Submit yourself to God:
 - Resist the devil:
 - Draw near to God:
 - Cleanse your hands:
 - Purify your heart:
 - Be wretched, mourn and weep (over your sin):
 - Humble yourself before the Lord:

Notes

For Further Study

LOOKING DEEPER AT THE TEXT

- Reread this section and take note of all the contrasts that James uses.
- In your own words, summarize the idea of “earthly” wisdom from this passage.
- In your own words, summarize the idea of wisdom from above.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS

Friendship & Enmity

- Read John 3:16-18.
 - How does God feel towards the world?
 - What happens to those who believe in God? How about those who chose not to believe in God?
- Read Romans 8:5-8.
 - List all that you learn about those who are in the flesh.
 - List all that you learn about those who are in the Spirit.
- Read Isaiah 45:5 and Jeremiah 3:20.
 - What illustration does God use to describe our relationship with him?
 - If we (disciples of Jesus) are considered the bride of Christ, how then should we act?
 - Read Matthew 6:19-24, Mark 8:34-38, Romans 12:1-2, 9-21 & summarize what the disciple’s relationship ought to be with both God and the world.

Notes

Week 6 / James 4:13-5:20

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 in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. 17 If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.

James 5

1 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on 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 workers 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 the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. 9 Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! 10 Brothers and sisters, 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 count as 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.

12 Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.” Otherwise you will be condemned.

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them 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 them up. If they have sinned, they 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 person is powerful and effective.

17 Elijah was a human being, even as we are. 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.

19 My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Look, Learn & Contemplate

LOOKING AT THE TEXT

- 4:13-17
 - What is James' rebuke for the reader?
 - What is James' saying we ought to do instead?
- 5:1-9
 - Who are the two groups of people James addresses in this section?
 - Write out the warnings & descriptions of the last days 5:1-6.
 - Write out the exhortation & description of the last days in 5:7-9.
- 5:10-11
 - Who is mentioned as an example "of patience in the face of suffering" (5:10)?
 - What do you learn about them?
- 5:12
 - What does James say we ought not to do?
- 5:13-20
 - List the questions & instructions James gives to those who are suffering.
 - What do you learn about prayer in this section?
 - What do you learn about the practice of confession, repentance & restoration in this section?

LEARNING WHAT IT SAYS

Living in the Last Days

- Read Luke 12:13-21.
 - What does Jesus tell us to be on guard against?
 - What is the rich man doing in this parable?
 - Why is Jesus rebuking the rich man? Is it because he simply has a storage space for his extra crops?
- Read Matthew 6:19-24
 - What does Jesus tell his believers to seek first? Why?
- Read Psalm 37:3-7, 23-31.
 - What are disciples instructed to seek after?
 - Why are we to live this way?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-19.
 - What are disciples commanded to do in this passage?
 - What similarities do you see between this passage and James 5:13-20?

Notes

CONTEMPLATING WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR LIFE

- This final section of James gives us instructions for how to live in the “last days.” What section/paragraph did you find most challenging?
 - Take some time to journal/ pray to the Lord about what you are wrestling with.
 - What is the reason that this is challenging for you? Do you have an unfulfilled desire? Are you wrestling with a particular sin? Are you struggling to have faith in one of God’s attributes?
 - Ask God to help you humbly accept his comfort and correction.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the path forward, increasing your wisdom and faith so that you may obey him by being one who is a doer of the word, and not a hearer only.

Notes

For Further Study

LOOKING DEEPER AT THE TEXT

- Highlight / mark every reference to God (or the Lord) in this section and make a list of what you observe in this section.
- Highlight / Mark every reference to sin (or sinner) in this section and make a list of what you learned.
- Highlight / every reference to brothers and sisters in this section and make a list of what you learned/

LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS

Warnings to the Rich

- Read Luke 12:22-34.
 - Summarize Jesus' teaching on worldly/pagan pursuit of possessions vs a disciples pursuit of possessions.
 - Summarize what a disciple ought to do from 12:32-34.
- Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19
 - Where are the rich not to set their hope and why?
 - What are they to be rich in?
 - How does this tie into what James has already said in his letter?

Instructions for Prayer & Healing

- Read Mark 5:34.
 - What is the basis given for her healing?
- Read Matthew 20:33-34.
 - What is the basis given for their healing?
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.
 - How does Paul pray in this passage?
 - How did God respond to Paul's request in this passage?
- Write down any additional thoughts or questions you have about God's work of healing through prayer.

Notes

Notes

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