



JAMES

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WINDOWS, MIRRORS, PICTURES

Every time we come to the Scriptures we should seek to learn about God, learn about ourselves, and come away with practical ways we can live differently in light of what we have read. At the end of each week's study will be a series of questions for Bible reading that were created with those goals in mind; they are not a formula, but a suggestion for more thoughtful and intentional time in the Word. Whether you are reading the Bible for the first time, or you have been reading it for 50 years, we pray you find these questions helpful for cultivating a more biblically oriented life.

1. WINDOWS

What does this teach me about God?

How does the text show God's attributes, character, cares/concerns, tendencies, etc.? What does this reveal about what He's like and how He acts?

2. MIRRORS

What does this teach me about myself?

Look for ways the text may reveal your own character, tendencies, mindset, likes/dislikes, etc.

3. PICTURES

Today, how should I ...think? ...feel? ...act?

What are practical ways you can live in light of these truths about God and yourself? Be specific.

EXAMPLE RESPONSE

Read Mark 10:42-45.

WINDOWS What does this teach me about God? How does this text show God's attributes, character, cares/concerns, tendencies, etc.? What does this reveal about what He is like and how He acts?

This shows that Jesus values selflessness and desires for His followers to be people marked by their service to others.

MIRRORS What does this teach me about myself? How does this text show my own attributes, character, likes/dislikes, tendencies, etc.?

I know my tendency is to do the opposite of what Jesus says here. Often I act as if everyone else should serve me, not vice versa.

PICTURES What does this teach me about the way God and mankind should interact? Look for ways we are to live and respond to God for his glory, our good, and the good of others. Specifically...

Starting today, how should I...think?

Today I will meditate on the grace He showed in saving me and consider ways to humbly serve others.

...feel?

Today I should feel humbled and blessed that Jesus came down from His place in heaven to serve and save me.

...act?

Today, instead of lording my opinion over others, I will be quick to listen, value input from others, and serve them in whatever way I can.

READING PLAN

- | | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| 01 | James 1:1-8
Proverbs 2:1-15
1 Kings 3:1-15
Romans 5:1-11 | 08 | James 3:13-4:3
Proverbs 1:1-4; 11:2; 29:23
Colossians 3:1-17
1 John 3:11-24 |
| 02 | James 1:9-11
Proverbs 10:2; 11:4
Ecclesiastes 5:8-20
Luke 12:13-21 | 09 | James 4:4-10
John 15
1 John 2:7-17
1 Peter 5:1-11 |
| 03 | James 1:12-18
Proverbs 7
1 Corinthians 9:24-10:13
Matthew 7:7-11 | 10 | James 4:11-12
Romans 2:1-16
Romans 14:1-13
Matthew 7:1-5 |
| 04 | James 1:19-27
Proverbs 10:19; 15:1-4
Deuteronomy 8:10-18
Matthew 7:21-27 | 11 | James 4:13-17
Proverbs 3:27-28; 27:1
Psalm 90
Luke 10:25-37 |
| 05 | James 2:1-13
Galatians 3:19-29
Matthew 5:17-20; 22:34-40
Matthew 18:21-35 | 12 | James 5:1-6
Proverbs 11:28; 15:16
Jeremiah 9:17-26
Luke 12:13-21 |
| 06 | James 2:14-26
Luke 10:25-37
Romans 3:21-31
Matthew 7:13-29 | 13 | James 5:7-12
Psalm 37
2 Peter 3:1-13
Luke 6:20-35 |
| 07 | James 3:1-12
Proverbs 12:18; 18:21; 21:23
Romans 12
Matthew 12:33-37 | 14 | James 5:13-20
Proverbs 15:8, 29; Psalm 54
2 Kings 20:1-11
Luke 15 |



WEEK 01 JAMES 1:1-8

READING PLAN

James 1:1-8
Proverbs 2:1-15

1 Kings 3:1-15
Romans 5:1-11

INTRODUCTION

First, read through James 1:1-8 in its entirety. If you have time, try to also read its surrounding section or the entire letter for greater context to prepare you for study.

The believers James was originally addressing in his letter were facing troubles and trials of various kinds simply because they were Christians. Although the difficulties they faced were painful, James encouraged them to rejoice – not because pain itself is pleasant but because it is by going through trials that their perspective and faith would be refined. There is joy to be had in troubling times because difficulty gives us the opportunity to become more mature, more like Christ.

James encourages his readers to remember that the key mark of a Christian's life should be that they trust God rather than self – even when life seems unbearably hard. Thus the believer's heart should be inclined to ask God for wisdom rather than relying on his own understanding. His words should strengthen our faith that God has a purpose to go with our pain and embolden us to approach the God who gives wisdom generously to all those who ask for it in faith. James makes the case that the way in which we respond to and understand life's trials has everything to do with our faith.

REFLECTION

1. TRIALS, JOY, AND ENDURANCE (1:1-4)

²*Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.* **JAMES 1:2-4**

The ESV renders the word “troubles” in verse 2 as “trials.” What qualifies as a trial? What trials are you currently experiencing?

What is your immediate reaction to the comment to rejoice in trials? How do you tend to react to difficulties and personal pain in your life?

How do unbelievers you know try to make it through difficult and painful circumstances? How does the way you persevere in trouble look different from their approach?

How does our culture teach us to respond to troubles and suffering? Does your response tend to match what the culture says or what James is saying here?

Follow James' argument in these verses. What do trials do to your faith (v. 3)? What does that experience produce within you (vv. 3-4)?



Read Romans 8:28-29. This tells us that God works all things (even difficulties) together for our good (v. 28), and ultimately the goal is that we become like Jesus (v. 29). With that in mind, take a moment to reflect on your own response to difficulties. Do your own goals in your trials match God's goals?

List some ways your painful circumstances and unanswered questions can actually strengthen your faith.

2. WISDOM FROM GOD (1:5-8)

⁵If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. ⁶But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do. **JAMES 1:5-8**

James' encouragement in verse 5 to ask God for wisdom is closely related to the theme of enduring in times of trouble. Read Proverbs 2:1-15. How would you define wisdom? What is the source of wisdom? What are the benefits of wisdom?

What does James 1:5 show about God's character? What is His attitude towards those who desire wisdom?

Does your life's pattern reveal a tendency to rely on God for wisdom or to rely on your own wisdom?

IMPLICATIONS

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MIRRORS What does this teach me about myself? How does this text show my own attributes, character, likes/dislikes, tendencies, etc.?

PICTURES What does this teach me about the way God and mankind should interact? Look for ways we are to live and respond to God for his glory, our good, and the good of others. Specifically...

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