



JAMES

CONTENTS

02	Windows, Pictures, Mirrors
03	Reading Plan
04	Week 01 James 1:1-8
07	Week 02 James 1:9-11
10	Week 03 James 1:12-18
13	Week 04 James 1:19-27
16	Week 05 James 2:1-13
19	Week 06 James 2:14-26
22	Week 07 James 3:1-12
25	Week 08 James 3:13-4:3
28	Week 09 James 4:4-10
31	Week 10 James 4:11-12
34	Week 11 James 4:13-17
37	Week 12 James 5:1-6
40	Week 13 James 5:7-12
43	Week 14 James 5:13-20

WINDOWS, PICTURES, MIRRORS

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.* ³*For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.* ⁴*So 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

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's like and how He acts?

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...

Starting today, how should I...think?

...feel?

...act?



WEEK 02

JAMES 1:9-11

READING PLAN

James 1:9-11
Proverbs 10:2, 11:4

Ecclesiastes 5:8-20
Luke 12:13-21

INTRODUCTION

Through the writing of James, the Holy Spirit seeks to challenge the preconceived notions that fill our mind; this passage is just one example of Scripture's power to challenge and reverse our thinking and values in favor of God's thinking and values. Here James introduces one of the major themes that we see throughout his letter: riches and poverty. But why, in the middle of a section talking about trials, would James write about wealth?

Having already spoken about single-minded devotion and rejoicing in trials, James is turning to more specific language for how this can apply to believers. Poverty and riches both put pressure on a person to focus on the world rather than Christ, and thus serve as trials in their own way. Each of us must ask ourselves: will my life be built upon the material resources of money, wealth, and prosperity on earth, or on the spiritual resources that God alone provides?

REFLECTION

⁹*Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. ¹⁰And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field.*

¹¹*The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements. **JAMES 1:9-11***

As you read these verses, do you self-identify as one of the "rich" or the "poor"? James says that each group of believers have something different to boast in – what are those things?

What other things besides God do you have the tendency to rely on for your sense of security and well-being (ex: spouse, children, job, wealth, approval from others, etc.)? What in your life would bring you devastation if you lost it?

Read Jeremiah 9:23-24. What would you say it is that you "boast" in most? How does that compare with what God's word compels us to "boast" in?

Have you ever gone through a season in which God has removed or kept something from your life, and later you were grateful that he did?

How does the fact that your life here will "fade away" impact the way you view and handle your wealth and resources? Do you feel freedom to be open-handed with your money?

Read Matthew 23:12. In what ways are you actively exalting yourself or humbling yourself? Based on Jesus' words here, are you one who will ultimately "be exalted" or one who will "be humbled"?

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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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*James 1:9-11 highlights the idea of a future reversal of fortunes – that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, while those who humble themselves will be exalted. In God's economy, those who make much of themselves will in the end be brought low. We traced this theme extensively through our previous sermon series on the Gospel of Luke, called "Luke: Rise & Fall," **available online and on the Grace Church teaching app.***



WEEK 03

JAMES 1:12-18

READING PLAN

James 1:12-18
Proverbs 7

1 Corinthians 9:24-10:13
Matthew 7:7-11

INTRODUCTION

Expect God's reward. Living in expectation of God's reward is vital for every believer who hopes to endure to the finish line of their life's race. But this critical piece of the Christian life goes hand-in-hand with looking to God for his goodness, wisdom, and help in times of trouble. Having established that God is sovereign over our trials and that we can actually find joy in trials, James moves on to a word of warning. After encouraging his readers to endure various troubles and difficult circumstances with steadfastness, James wants believers to be careful to not begin believing that God is the source of their temptations. Instead, he helps us get a clear look at sin's anatomy – its source, the way it comes to influence us, and where it ultimately leads. In the end the question becomes one of source: what is the true source of my temptation – is it external or internal? In light of the truths about temptation and God's goodness, believers should seek to be people who "patiently endure testing and temptation" with God's help, because when the test is finished, eternal reward awaits.

REFLECTION

¹²God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. ¹³And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. ¹⁴Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. ¹⁵These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. ¹⁶So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹⁷Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. ¹⁸He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession. JAMES 1:12-18

Who is it that Scripture says God will bless (v. 12)? How does your own need for strength and endurance play into your relationship with God?

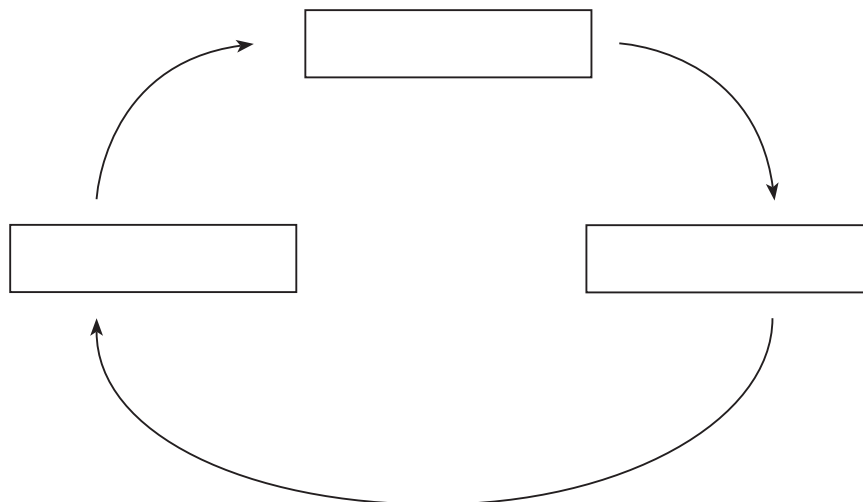
The Bible tells us that those who love God are the faithful and obedient (Deut. 7:9; 1 John 5:2). What outlets or avenues have you established in your life to evaluate yourself in these areas? In what ways are you providing that accountability for others?

How should the promise of reward motivate us in our walk with Christ? Do you think being motivated by reward is wrong? Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and 2 Corinthians 4:17. What perspective does the apostle Paul seem to have on rewards?

Earlier in this chapter, James talked about the spiritual benefit that can come from trials; we also know from the life of Abraham that God does test believers (Gen. 22). If God does sometimes ordain that his people will face trials, then what is James saying in verse 13 that God does not do? What's the difference between being tested and being tempted?

Look at verse 14. What does James say is the source of temptation? Is the cause of temptation internal or external? Does the fact that God is sovereign mean we are not at fault when we choose to sin?

How have you seen this process (being tempted, enticed, and pulled away by sinful desire) play out in your life?



Why might James shift in verse 16 to emphasize God's goodness and faithfulness to believers? What are Christians in danger of deceiving themselves about regarding the trials and temptations that they face in life?

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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...

Starting today, how should I...think?

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...act?



WEEK 04

JAMES 1:19-27

READING PLAN

James 1:19-27
Proverbs 10:19; 15:1-4

Deuteronomy 8:10-18
Matthew 7:21-27

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be not only *defined* by Scripture, but truly have our lives *directed* by Scripture as well? That's the question James has in mind in these verses as he connects the importance of not only listening to God's Word but living in light of what it says. Truth be told, many of us may know a great deal about the Bible, but ultimately it is our actions that will evidence what we truly believe. It is not enough to simply know Scripture or sit under godly teaching. Knowledge alone, without action, is useless. We must strive to live a life that shows our faith in action.

Though he may seem stern at times, James is speaking the truth in love – having had an up-close experience with Jesus' teaching and ministry, he is convinced of the importance of believers acting in a way that puts their beliefs on display. As Christians, if we say we accept and believe God's Word, we need to be living by it too – otherwise, James says, we deceive ourselves and our faith is "worthless." It's not enough for us to be simply defined by the Word; we must be directed by it as well.

REFLECTION

¹⁹Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. ²⁰Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. ²¹So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. ²²But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. ²⁴You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. ²⁵But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. ²⁶If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. ²⁷Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you. JAMES 1:19-27

Would you consider yourself quick to listen and slow to speak? What does it say about our hearts that we are more concerned with expressing ourselves than listening to others and/or God's Word?

In v. 20, what does it say God desires? If human anger does not produce this, what is the thing James is focusing on in this section that can produce it?

To James, receiving God's Word goes hand-in-hand with getting "rid of all the filth and evil" in your life. How does the sin in your life affect your ability to receive God's Word? Do you approach times of reading or hearing God's Word casually or with an awareness of your need?

What does James say we are doing to ourselves if we merely listen to the Word without obeying (v. 22)? Why do you think this is true? In what ways can you try to prevent and expose this in your life?

List some ways you're not actively obeying God's Word where you know you should be. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How does the gospel free you to move forward in these areas despite prior disobedience?

The rest of James' letter will unpack this same idea (not just hearing the Word but doing it as well) by looking at a number of different issues. Here, in vv. 26-27, he mentions three examples of what it means to live out the Word. What are they? To what degree does your own life reflect these ideas?

Write down three ways you have seen your own faith and spiritual growth evidenced through your actions over the past 6-12 months.

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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...

Starting today, how should I...think?

...feel?

...act?

WEEK 05

JAMES 2:1-13

READING PLAN

James 2:1-13
Galatians 3:19-29

Matthew 5:17-20; 22:34-40
Matthew 18:21-35

INTRODUCTION

When reading through the Scriptures, one of the things that becomes clear is that there is a great gap between the world's values and God's values. One area where this is particularly notable is in the way we view and treat those who are poor. In the Old Testament, God shows a special interest in the poor (Deut. 15) and in the New Testament Jesus is seen making them the focus of his gospel proclamation (Luke 4:18). Knowing this while living in a world that highly values riches and material wealth makes the Christian's treatment of the poor a very important discipleship issue.

Here we find James writing at length about the rich, the poor, and the sin of partiality (favoritism). Favoritism was then—and is now—one of the most common ways the church aligns itself more with the world than with God. As Christians, do we honor some people more than others simply because of their external appearance, social standing, or economic status? Worldliness would have us place the most value on those who can personally benefit us the most, but God's desire is for our life to be guided by love for our neighbor (Matt. 22:39) and the mercy we would want to be shown to us.

The amount of space James devotes to this topic here gives us a hint at how prevalent this issue may have been for the early church. But it would be unwise for us to assume that we aren't riddled with the same issues. As God's people, we must be vigilant and take time to examine ourselves for the sin of partiality because it is so subtle that it often goes unnoticed.

REFLECTION

¹My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? ²For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting[b] dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. ³If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor"—well, ⁴doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives? ⁵Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? ⁶But you dishonor the poor! Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? ⁷Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear? ⁸Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ⁹But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. ¹⁰For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who

*has broken all of God's laws. ¹¹For the same God who said, "You must not commit adultery," also said, "You must not murder." So if you murder someone but do not commit adultery, you have still broken the law. ¹²So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free. ¹³There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you. **JAMES 2:1-13***

James begins by reminding us that Jesus is "our glorious Lord." Then he points out that claiming a commitment to Christ is incompatible with what particular behavior (v. 1)? Have you ever examined your life for behaviors that may be incompatible with your claim to Christ?

Favoring the rich over the poor is just one way we might discriminate or judge between people. What types of people do you tend to show special attention to or entirely disregard? What does this say about your heart's motives (v. 4)?

Read the following verses—Psalm 35:10; Proverbs 19:17; Luke 4:18; Luke 6:20. How does James describe those God has chosen "to be rich in faith" and "inherit the Kingdom" (v.5)? Based on God's focus on the poor, would you say you judge people more like the world does, or more like God does?

Read Mark 12:28-31. In what ways does showing favoritism violate Jesus' command to love your neighbor as yourself?

Read Matthew 18:21-35. Do you tend to magnify others' wrongs against you, or extend grace and mercy to them? What does James say about the relationship between mercy and judgment (v. 13)?

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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...

Starting today, how should I...think?

...feel?

...act?

WEEK 06

JAMES 2:14-26

READING PLAN

James 2:14-26
Luke 10:25-37

Romans 3:21-31
Matthew 7:13-29

INTRODUCTION

Integrity. It's the state of being whole or undivided, having a thorough consistency throughout. It's about more than just honesty – it's about conduct, direction, and action. You could define integrity quite simply as "doing what you say you will do." So what does it mean for a Christian to have spiritual integrity? Here, in perhaps the most controversial passage in his letter, James will make the case that true, saving faith does not only involve intellectually believing the right things – it's about doing what Jesus says we should do.

Many of us are well-acquainted with people who talk much about being believers yet have lives that bear little evidence of that claim. And, if we're honest, a lot of the time we are those people. James is writing to a group of people like that – who were much more concerned with the talk than they were with the walk. And just as it was a huge problem for people in James' day, this is a monumental issue for the church today.

Elsewhere in Scripture, we are told that it is God's grace alone that saves us (Ephesians 2:8-9). Yet here James appears to say that our works – the good things that we do – play some kind of role in our salvation as well. How are we to understand the connection between faith and works? James wants us to see that our actions are not the basis for our salvation, but they do serve as a window into what we truly believe. It is important to remember that our works do not save us, but they do expose the integrity of our faith and serve as important evidence of our salvation.

REFLECTION

¹⁴What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? ¹⁵Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, ¹⁶and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? ¹⁷So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. ¹⁸Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds." ¹⁹You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. ²⁰How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless? ²¹Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete.

²³And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." He was even called the friend of God. ²⁴So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. ²⁵Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. ²⁶Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works. **JAMES 2:14-26**

Look at verse 14. Circle the words "say" and "show." What do you believe is the relationship between saying you have faith and showing that faith? Do you personally feel the responsibility to act differently because of what you say you believe?

Read Matthew 7:15-20. What is Jesus saying about people's actions? How does that relate to what James writes in this passage?

What "good deeds" (v. 17) are you tempted to rely on as the reason for your right standing with God?

Read Ephesians 2:8-10. How is a believer's relationship with God made right – by his works or by faith? How can what James is saying here and what Paul writes in Ephesians both be true?

In what ways (personally and in community) can you discern whether your faith is marked by mere intellectual agreement or genuine, active faith?

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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...

Starting today, how should I...think?

...feel?

...act?

Abraham – “The Test”

When God calls Abraham to leave everything and follow Him, he doesn't just say he believes with his words, he demonstrates it through his actions. Over and over Abraham answers the call to demonstrate his faith through his actions, most poignantly when God calls him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac (Genesis 22).

WEEK 07

JAMES 3:1-12

READING PLAN

James 3:1-12

Proverbs 12:18; 18:21; 21:23

Romans 12

Matthew 12:33-37

INTRODUCTION

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Ouch. Jesus's words from Matthew 12 apply just as much to us as they did to the Pharisees who first heard them – perhaps even more so. Our sinful hearts make it tricky to navigate communication in a loving, tactful, and edifying way. And thanks to advanced technology, a myriad of relationships, and a frantic pace of work and home life, we find ourselves living in a day and age when communication is easier and more prominent than ever before. As we come to James' well-known passage on taming the tongue and the way we wield words, it is safe to say his difficult words will expose and convict many of us of where we have been lax with our words, where we have spoken too much (or not said something when we know we should have!), and ways our wounding words simply reflect our spiritual brokenness. In the end, James wants us to see, a transformed tongue comes only through a transformed heart.

REFLECTION

*¹Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. ³We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. ⁴And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. ⁵In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. ⁶And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. ⁷People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, ⁸but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. ¹⁰And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! ¹¹Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? ¹²Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring. **JAMES 3:1-12***

In vv. 1-2, James warns that not many should become teachers. Why might people want to become teachers? Why is it appropriate that teachers be judged with greater strictness?

Does James seem to be changing the subject in this section from what he discussed previously? How might the topic of controlling the tongue build on his discussion of the relationship between faith and works?

What imagery does James use in describing the tongue in this passage? Which of these images resonates with you the most?

VERSE	DESCRIPTIVE IMAGE
3:3	
3:4	
3:6	
3:7-8	
3:11	
3:12a	
3:12b	

Read Matthew 12:33-37 and compare it with James 3:8-12. Who is speaking in the passage from Matthew? What similarities are present between the two passages? Do the words spoken by Jesus add to your understanding of James' words?

Look at v.9. What is especially corrupt about cursing another human being? What types of speech do you think are included under the category of cursing here?

Look up the following verses and note what each says about the tongue:

Proverbs 6:16-17

Proverbs 10:19

Proverbs 12:22

Proverbs 17:27-28

Proverbs 18:6-7,13

Proverbs 26:20

Proverbs 28:23

In what ways do James' instructions apply to social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), texts, and emails? How might these outlets provide opportunity to sin with your tongue?

Both Romans 10:14-15 and Colossians 3:15-17 provide direction for more positive uses of the tongue. Take time to read those two passages and make a note of one way you would like for God to change your heart in this area.

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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...

Starting today, how should I...think?

...feel?

...act?

WEEK 08

JAMES 3:13-4:3

READING PLAN

James 3:13-4:3

Proverbs 1:1-4; 11:2; 29:23

Colossians 3:1-17

1 John 3:11-24

INTRODUCTION

When you think of the word wisdom, what comes to mind first? Is there someone in your life that you consider to be wise and understanding? In this section of his letter, James distinguishes the wisdom that comes from God from the wisdom the world offers, describing their different characteristics and effects. Lives marked by the way of worldly wisdom, with selfish ambition and bitter jealousy, lead to strife and conflict; that's exactly what was happening within the church, and James writes to believers with that in mind. Rather than sowing conflict and strife rooted in ambition and radical self-interest, believers are to emulate the wisdom which comes from God alone and which promotes peace with others and leads to righteous living.

REFLECTION

1. WISDOM FROM ABOVE (3:13-18)

*¹³If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. ¹⁵For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. ¹⁸And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. **JAMES 3:13-18***

Look back at James 1:5. How does James say we can get wisdom? Now look at James 3:13. How does he say we can recognize true wisdom and understanding in ourselves and in others?

Much of the book of Proverbs is an appeal to pursue and seek wisdom. Look up the following verses in your Bible and make a note of what each adds to your understanding of wisdom:

- Proverbs 1:7
- Proverbs 2:1-6
- Proverbs 3:5-8
- Proverbs 8:10-12
- Proverbs 8:32-36

In 3:14, we learn that the opposite of the humility that comes with wisdom is selfish ambition and bitter jealousy.

- Read 1 Peter 2:1. What are we to do with our jealousy? How do we do this?
- Read Philippians 2:3 and Matthew 20:25-28. What are we to do with selfish ambition? What do Jesus’ words say we are to pursue rather than radical self-interest?

Compare the two very different types of wisdom James describes in 3:15-17.

	Where does it come from?	What are its characteristics?	What are its outcomes?
Wisdom A (vv. 15-16)			
Wisdom B (v. 17)			

Read Galatians 5:22-26. What similarities do you see between Paul’s writing about the Holy Spirit and James’ writing about wisdom?

True wisdom leads not to disorder, but to the making of peace (3:18). Read Matthew 5:9. Why do you think Jesus and James both emphasize the importance of not just keeping peace, but making peace? Would you characterize yourself as a peacemaker?

2. CONFLICT WITHIN (4:1-3)

*¹What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? ²You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. ³And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. **JAMES 4:1-3***

According to v. 1, what is the source of the conflicts and strife amongst believers? Do you tend to blame your circumstances for relational difficulties, or take a look at your own internal motives?

Does it seem extreme to you that James would link murder to coveting and quarreling to get your way? At their core, what do these things all have in common?

As you read vv. 2-3, consider whether James is implying that we do not have the things we covet simply because we haven't asked God for them. Is our lack of asking the only thing James identifies as a problem?

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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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WEEK 09

JAMES 4:4-10

READING PLAN

James 4:4-10
John 15

1 John 2:7-17
1 Peter 5:1-11

INTRODUCTION

Throughout our study in James' letter to the early church, we have seen a constant reminder of our fickle, double-minded nature. While God is true, steadfast, and enduring in his devotion to us, we are easily led astray by our sinful desires to pursue those desires and the love of this world. When we forget God and give other people or things a greater position of honor in our hearts, the Bible says we are committing spiritual infidelity. It's the equivalent of telling God we aren't content with our relationship with him and will seek fulfillment elsewhere. That is what James is talking about when he brings up the issue of friendship with the world and what that means for our relationship with God. But, as we will see, God will ultimately not tolerate our love for the world and its things. He yearns jealously for our spirit because he created us and adopted us out of our lost spiritual state in order to be his people and worship him with an undivided devotion.

REFLECTION

*⁴You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. ⁵Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him. ⁶And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁷So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. ⁹Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor. **JAMES 4:4-10***

Do you think it's possible that the meaning of friendship has changed since James wrote these words in the 1st Century A.D.? If you had to guess, would you say today our definition of "friendship" is deeper or more superficial? Why?

In v. 4, James makes it clear that friendship with the world makes us an enemy of God. In your mind, what does it truly mean to become a friend of the world? Read the following related verses and make a note of what they add to your definition of being a friend of the world:

- Luke 16:13
- Romans 8:5-8
- 1 John 2:15-17
- 1 John 5:1-5

After considering the verses above, return to v. 4 and look at the first two words. What do these words reveal about how God views our divided loyalty between him and the world?

What point do you think James might be making in v. 5? Try restating the verse in your own words below. What steps can you take to gain understanding from a hard-to-understand verse such as this one?

In v. 6, what does James say is the right remedy to our evil desires? Why is it a hopeful thing that when God calls us to humble ourselves, he also reminds us of the grace he has for us?

In vv. 7-10, James exhorts believers to do seven applications, or things to do, in response to the pride, evil desires, and sinfulness in their lives. List those seven applications, with a short phrase describing what it would look like for you to put them into practice:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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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WEEK 10

JAMES 4:11-12

READING PLAN

James 4:11-12
Romans 2:1-16

Romans 14:1-13
Matthew 7:1-5

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest challenges many Christians will face as they begin to grow in godliness and maturity of faith will be what to do with their words as they relate to other believers. As one grows in his faith, it becomes easier to recognize sin in his own life – but at the same time, it becomes easier to see the sin in others' lives as well. Along with that growing awareness can often come a growing sense of self-righteousness and the temptation to put others down and slander their reputation. Clearly, James is concerned with the way believers treat one another, especially as it pertains to what they say about one another (as we have seen already in 3:1-12). Here, James helps us understand how the way we judge and defame one another ultimately reveals arrogance in the way we view others, the law, ourselves, and God himself.

REFLECTION

¹¹Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. ¹²God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor? JAMES 4:11-12

What does James specifically command us not to do in v. 11? Do you think "speak evil" includes saying things that are false, true, or both?

What specific commandment did James quote in 2:8 as a summary of the whole law? How is it that speaking evil against a fellow believer violates that commandment?

In v. 11, how is it that criticizing or judging another believer is equivalent to criticizing or judging the law? (Hint: What does James say in the second half of this verse is our responsibility regarding the law?)

Read Matthew 7:1-5. Who is speaking in these verses? Whose sin should we be concerned with primarily, ours or others'? Are there any particular ways, relationships, or environments in which you tend to be more judgmental of others?

In v. 12, James writes that "God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge" – implying that there can only be one judge. What does our tendency to be judgmental of others reveal about how we view God's ability to judge?

Is James implying that we are not supposed to hold our fellow believers accountable for the sin we recognize in their lives?

In your own words, summarize what James is saying in 4:11-12.

In these verses, James appears to be ending a section of his letter that began in 3:1. Look back through the three previous sections – what was the main idea with each, and how does this section tie them all together?

- 3:1-12
- 3:13-4:3
- 4:4-10
- 4:11-12

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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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WEEK 11

JAMES 4:13-17

READING PLAN

James 4:13-17
Proverbs 3:27-28; 27:1

Psalms 90
Luke 10:25-37

INTRODUCTION

"It's my life, I'll live how I choose." Though very few Christians would have the audacity to actually vocalize such an attitude, most – if not all – functionally live as though we believe it is true. Often we plan days, weeks, months, and even years out into the future with a great deal of presumption, not stopping to put our plans before God and consider his plans for our lives. In the midst of an autonomous, individualistic culture, we live out of a sense that we are in control of our time and activities.

Here James gives a strong warning to those who think they are in control of their own lives: living in presumption is dishonoring to God and reveals the pride within us. We take God's will for granted by rarely acknowledging him in our life plans, and James will help us see why this is dishonoring to God and exhort us, in light of that, to do what is right.

REFLECTION

¹³Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." ¹⁴How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone. ¹⁵What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil. ¹⁷Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. **JAMES 4:13-17**

Look at v. 13. What kind of attitude is James honing in on and addressing in this verse? Would you say it is an attitude that is characteristic of our culture? Does this attitude characterize you?

In v. 14, James addresses the way we view our own life. Do you function as if you do “know what your life will be like tomorrow”?

What point is James making by comparing your life to a “morning fog”? Do you live as though this is true of your life?

In v. 15, why does James tell us to preface our plans by saying “If the Lord wants us to...”? Is the problem with planning for the future primarily a surface issue (the way we phrase our plans) or something deeper?

How are we able to determine whether God wills something in our lives or not? Do you think we can know God’s will with some level of certainty?

How does v. 17 connect with and complete the idea that James has unpacked in vv. 13-16? In light of what he has already said, what would be the thing you “ought to do”?

Have you ever stopped to evaluate your future plans in light of God's will for your life? Take a moment to make a list of some of your future plans – for this week, this year, or even the next five years. How can you begin to evaluate these plans in light of God's will?

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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

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WEEK 12

JAMES 5:1-6

READING PLAN

James 5:1-6
Proverbs 11:28; 15:16

Jeremiah 9:17-26
Luke 12:13-21

INTRODUCTION

That James' original audience had developed an infatuation with the wealthy is clear from the many passages in which he offers warnings to the rich or criticizes the church for giving deference to those with great means (1:9-11; 2:1-13; 4:13-17). In the face of great trials, it seems that many in this audience either placed great hope in their own wealth or had an inordinate longing to run in the same circles that the wealthy did. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Regardless of whether the rich people James condemns are believers or not, we all must also pay close attention to James' warning. His warning is given to those who use their superior resources (wealth, power, status, etc.) to oppress others and will ultimately stand accountable before God. The earthly wisdom that looks to money for security will fail in the last day, for when Christ returns, all that is not of eternal value will be destroyed.

REFLECTION

*¹Look here, you rich people: Weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. ²Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. ³Your gold and silver are corroded. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh like fire. This corroded treasure you have hoarded will testify against you on the day of judgment. ⁴For listen! Hear the cries of the field workers whom you have cheated of their pay. The cries of those who harvest your fields have reached the ears of the Lord of Heaven's Armies. ⁵You have spent your years on earth in luxury, satisfying your every desire. You have fattened yourselves for the day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and killed innocent people, who do not resist you. **JAMES 5:1-6***

What audience is James addressing in this section (v.1)?

- Compare the opening words of 5:1 and 5:7 – does he appear to be directing his words towards believers in 5:1-6, or not?

- Do you identify yourself in this category of people? If not, why?

Read the following Old Testament passages and make a quick note about what each has to say about handling money:

- Leviticus 19:13
- Deuteronomy 15:7-11
- Deuteronomy 24:14-15
- In what ways do the rich oppressors described in 5:1-6 show obedience to these commands? In what ways do they show disregard for them?

Read 5:2-3 and note the descriptions of the rich person's wealth:

- Wealth: _____
- Fine clothes: _____
- Gold and silver: _____
- "Wealth you were counting on": _____
- "Treasure you have accumulated": _____
- Is there a common theme to what James is saying about their wealth?

In verse 4, highlight each of the three distinct groups/people that are mentioned, and list them below:

- the victims:
- the oppressors:
- the one who will bring justice:

What is the significance of saying the workers' cries have reached the ears of "the Lord of Heaven's Armies," rather than simply saying "God"?

Do you think James is condemning the wisdom of financial savings? Based on what we see here between the rich and their workers, at what point might saving become sinful?

Do you view money, wealth, and resources as your own, or as things that God has entrusted to you to use for a specific purpose? In what ways are you tempted to hoard or indulge in self-centered ways?

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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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...feel?

...act?



WEEK 13

JAMES 5:7-12

READING PLAN

James 5:7-12
Psalm 37

2 Peter 3:1-13
Luke 6:20-35

INTRODUCTION

After already warning those who have oppressed believers with their vast wealth and resources about the coming judgment, James now directs his attention to the church and what the response of faith should look like. He will make the case that in the face of adversity and injustice, it is only those whose hope is grounded in the coming justice of God who can look to the future in confidence. He calls the church to live patiently and to endure in light of the faithful loving kindness of the Lord. The way we respond to difficulty and injustice should reflect the reality of our profession of faith.

REFLECTION

BE PATIENT IN SUFFERING (VV. 7-9)

*⁷Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the farmers who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. ⁸You, too, must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Don't grumble about each other, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. For look—the Judge is standing at the door! **JAMES 5:7-9***

Who is James writing to specifically in these verses? Highlight everywhere in verses 7-12 where James references his audience.

Go back and read James 5:1-6. In light of what was said there, why do you think James turns to the topic of patience?

What illustration does James use to show his readers the meaning of patience in verse 7?

What does James say is “near” in verses 8-9? How does that relate to the following verses?

- Matthew 3:2
- Matthew 4:17
- Matthew 10:7

EXAMPLES OF PATIENCE (VV. 10-12)

¹⁰For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy. ¹²But most of all, my brothers and sisters, never take an oath, by heaven or earth or anything else. Just say a simple yes or no, so that you will not sin and be condemned. **JAMES 5:10-12**

Who does James point us toward as examples of patience? Are these biblical examples people who were ordinary and like us, or extraordinary and quite unlike us? How can we use examples from the Bible to live the way God wants us to live?

In the last sentence of verse 11, James gives us a reason that should give believers comfort and encouragement to endure their trials with hope. What is that reason?

In verse 12, James warns us to not swear oaths. Read Matthew 5:34-37. How does what Jesus says there compare with what James says here? Are they telling us we should never swear an oath under any circumstance?

Look up the following passages and note what you learn about swearing oaths. Ask: Who swears the oath? Is it sinful to do so?

- Exodus 22:10-11
- Deuteronomy 6:13
- Deuteronomy 10:20
- Isaiah 65:16
- Hebrews 7:20-22

IMPLICATIONS

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's like and how He acts?

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WEEK 14

JAMES 5:13-20

READING PLAN

James 5:13-20

Proverbs 15:8, 29; Psalm 54

2 Kings 20:1-11

Luke 15

INTRODUCTION

As we come to the end of James' letter, we see that his emphasis on the communal aspect of faith becomes more apparent as he encourages believers to contend for one another in mutual confession, prayer, and looking out for one another. In the varying range of human experience, believers are to respond in prayer, looking to God for both physical and spiritual healing. God uses the prayers of his saints as the means of accomplishing his will, and ultimately, as James concludes his letter, has in mind the forgiveness and spiritual well-being of his church.

REFLECTION

¹³Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises.

*¹⁴Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. ¹⁶Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. ¹⁷Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! ¹⁸Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops. ¹⁹My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, ²⁰you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins. **JAMES 5:13-20***

Why in verse 13 does James mention such opposite examples ("suffering hardships ... happy") when encouraging believers to respond to God in prayer/praise? On the one hand he encourages us to pray out of dependence, and on the other, to express gratitude. Do you think it's possible to truly be grateful without also being dependent?

Who does James say the sick should call for to pray with them in their affliction? Why should the sick ask for these people to pray with them – is their prayer more effective or powerful, or is there something important about the position they hold?

In verse 15, James says “a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick.” Does this mean that when the sick aren’t healed, their prayers didn’t have enough faith?

Why do you think James mentions forgiveness of sin in relation to healing? How might sin affect our health? Read John 9:1-3. Are health problems always related to sin in our lives?

What does James say believers should do for one another in verse 16? Are these two things a regular part of your Christian community experience?

How does verse 17 say Elijah prayed? Consider each of the following verses and summarize how each relates to what James says about Elijah’s praying:

- Luke 18:1
- Acts 1:14
- Romans 12:2
- Colossians 4:2

Look at 5:19-20. How do you know when someone has “wandered away from the truth”? Is it determined by what they believe, how they think, or the way they live?

What does it mean for someone who has wandered away to be “brought back”? Is this more likely to happen when one is well-connected and in community? What two things does James say in verse 20 will result when this happens?

IMPLICATIONS

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’s like and how He acts?

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

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