

JAMES

Author: James, Jesus' brother
Audience: 1st Century Jewish Christians in Gentile communities outside Palestine; All Christians everywhere.
Purpose: To expose hypocritical practices & to teach right Christian behavior

Blueprint:
I. Genuine Religion (1:1-27)
II. Genuine Faith (2:1-3:12)
III. Genuine Wisdom (3:13-5:20)

Megathemes:

Living Faith → it makes a difference. Faith is more than a statement; it should result in action.

Trials → Don't resent when troubles come. Pray for wisdom; God will supply all we need to face persecution and adversity. He will also give us patience and keep us strong in trials.

Law of Love → Keeping the law of love shows that our faith is vital & real. We overcome selfishness.

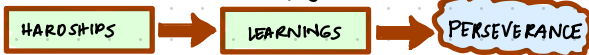
Wise Speech → Accepting God's wisdom will affect our speech. Our voices will convey true humility and lead to peace. Thinking before we speak and allowing God to take control of everything.

Wealth → All of us are accountable for how we use what we have. Do not hoard wealth, be generous towards others.

chapter 1

Rome, Alexandria, Cyprus, and cities in Greece, etc.

- James was written because of the thriving Jewish-Christian communities. These early believers did not have the support of established Christian churches.
- James was sure of the trials that a Christian may face. It's okay not to be okay but keep a positive outlook ("consider it all joy")



- We cannot really know the depth of our character until we see how we react under pressure. Can we still be kind to others even though they are not treating us fairly?

wisdom → means practical discernment
→ not just about knowledge
→ ability to make wise decisions in difficult circumstances

- we usually pray for wisdom but it is actually given to us when our hearts are God-centered and not self-centered.
- "ASK IN FAITH without doubting" put confidence in God and that we'll be aligned (our desires) to His purposes.

temptation → comes from our evil desires inside us.

- This begins with an evil thought and you allow it to dwell on your thoughts and it will eventually become an action. → SIN
- the best time to stop a temptation is before it is too strong or moving fast to control.
- Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 2:22 are verses of how to escape from temptation.
- God tests people but does not tempt.
- God sometimes allows temptation to enter our minds to refine our faith and help us to grow in holiness depending on Christ.

flee temptation

- it is easy to blame others or the circumstances and make excuses for evil thoughts & actions. Excuses may include:

- 1) It's the other person's fault.
- 2) I couldn't help it
- 3) everybody is doing it
- 4) it was just a mistake
- 5) nobody is perfect
- 6) the devil made me do it
- 7) I was pressured to do it
- 8) I didn't know it was wrong
- 9) God is tempting me → great deceit

- Whenever we talk too much, we listen less. We often times think that our ideas & thoughts are better than them.
- While it is important to be rooted in God's words, we also must apply all those teachings from the Bible. OBEDIENCE is equally important with reading God's words.
- The effectiveness of our quiet time & Bible studies by the effect it has on our behavior & attitudes.
- 1 Peter 2:16 we are saved by God's grace & salvation frees us from the sin's control & bondage. We are created to live freely but it doesn't give us the license to do anything we want that is unglorifying to God.
- To keep ourselves unstrained by the world, we must commit ourselves to Christ's values & moral system. We must not conform to the world's values system.
→ based on money, power, & pleasure
- True Faith is not allowing yourself to conform to the ways of the world.

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chapter 2

→ Favoritism. *prejudice*

→ James condemns acts of favoritism.

→ 3 Principles of Faith according to James:

① Commitment is an essential part of faith. One cannot simply affirm and/or agree on doctrines and biblical facts; we must commit our minds and hearts to Christ.

② Right actions are natural by-products of true faith. A genuine Christian shall have a changed life.

③ Faith without good works is dead and useless.

→ We should never judge / partial others based on their economic status. Riches and fame are not signs of God's blessings & approval. God does not promise us earthly rewards & riches. He calls us to be ready to suffer for Him & give up everything in order to hold on to eternal life. (Matt. 6:19-21; Matt. 19:28-30; Luke 12:14-34; Romans 8:15-21; 1 Timothy 6:17-19)

→ What God promises us are untold riches in eternity if we are faithful in our present life. (Luke 6:35; John 12:23-25; Galatians 6:7-10; Titus 3:4-8)

→ We cannot be selective on the law. If we break one of the laws, that is already breaking everything else. We must not be Buffet Christians.

measure yourself, not others against God's standards

→ God's grace doesn't cancel our duty to obey Him. Salvation does not give us the license to sin. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

→ Only God's mercy can forgive our sins. We cannot earn forgiveness by forgiving others. But when we withhold forgiveness when we have received it ourselves, it only shows that we either did not understand or appreciate God's mercy towards us. (Matt. 6:14-15; 18-21; Ephesians 4:31-32)

true faith ALWAYS transforms ❤️

→ True faith always results in good works; but good works doesn't justify us. Faith brings salvation; Active obedience demonstrates genuine faith.

chapter 3

TAMING THE TONGUE

→ James 3:8 But no one can control the tongue.

→ James reminded us *imperfection & flaw as humans* that we ultimately are responsible for each and every word that we are saying or about to say.

→ our words reflect our spiritual life.
→ What we say & don't say matters. Right words, right time.

→ An uncontrollable tongue can do terrible damage. *→ to cause division within & inter-teams*

→ A few words spoken in anger can destroy relationships that took years to build.

→ Always ask for the Holy Spirit to monitor & control our responses.

→ one cannot say that He/she is a follower of Christ but lives life in complete opposite.

true wisdom

→ measured by the depth of one's character

→ We can evaluate our wisdom in the way we act.

→ Never feel envious nor bitter towards others.

→ James 3:17-18 God loves us equally and shows no favorite parts of the exile.

chapter 4

warnings & things to avoid

→ Swears & conflicts are the end-results brought by jealousy & selfish ambitions. In Romans 6:6-8 & in Galatians 15:17-21 we are reminded on our human tendencies toward jealousy & discontent.

→ Most common problems in Praying according to James:

① not asking

② asking the wrong things

③ asking for the wrong reasons

1 John 3:21-22

Priests must be

Glorifying to God

→ While it is not wrong to want a pleasurable life, we must remember not to allow it to keep you away from God. Anything that keeps you away from God is a sin.

→ makes us self-centered & pride. self-righteous. It creates grudge in our hearts.

→ Humility always defeat

→ How to draw near to God?

① Submission (James 4:7) ② Sincerely mourn (J. 4:9)

③ Resist the devil (James 4:7) ④ Humility (4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6)

⑤ Cleanse your hands...purify hearts (James 4:8)

→ Humility = Recognizing that everything comes from God and nothing from our own strength / efforts

→ Life is short. We have to live today for Christ!

→ Two kinds of SIN:

① sin of commission: doing the sin

② sin of omission: not doing what you should do

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chapter 5

- money is worthless when Christ returns.
- we must put our money for God's works like for missionaries, churches, and to our brothers & sisters who are in need.
- money is not evil but the love of it is the source of evil (1 Timothy 6:10)
- Romans 12:1-2 Christians are warned not to conform to worldly standards rather than God's standards.
 - we must be patient for the fruits of our labors just like the farmers.
 - farmers don't just sit & wait until harvest season, they continue working.
- We must not wait for Christ to return and obey His commandments then. We must continue contributing to the church (time, talent, treasure) while waiting for Christ's return.
- Continue spreading the Gospel and create the opportunity for it instead of being idle.



live by faith → with the rewards in the future in mind

- when things go wrong, it is easier to complain than get the fair share of the blame. Lack or absence of responsibility and accountability can be destructive and sinful.
- Matthew 7:1-5; 25:31-46 Christ is the judge to evaluate each of us.
- Christians must uphold their representation of Christ and avoid confusion. Let your YES be YES and your NO be NO. This shall avoid white lies, half-truths, omission of truth, and you shall become trustworthy.
- People of the Church are not alone. Members of Christ's body must continue to support one another through prayer.
- Christ made it possible to go directly to God for our prayers. Prayer is how we communicate to God. A Christian's most powerful resource is communion with God through prayer.

YES/NO

- Confessing our sins to one another and praying for one another play an important role in the life of the church.
- 1 Peter 2:9 In Christ's Kingdom, every believer is a priest to other believers.
- James urges Christians to help backsliders to return to God. We must take initiative, pray for the person, and act out of love.
- The book of James emphasizes faith in action. Right living is the evidence and result of faith.
- If we truly believe God's word, we must LIVE it day by day. We should let God's words be simply learned, read, and heard. It must be put into application.

faith in action

This you know,
my beloved
brethren.

But everyone must
be quick to hear,
slow to speak
&

slow to anger;
JAMES 1:19

prayer comes first