

BOOK OF JAMES

LESSON 1 – TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS (7:49)

Video Message by: Pastor Chris Hodges
(Founding Pastor of Church of the Highlands)

TRIALS:

(James 1:1-2) James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:

Greetings. Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, **whenever** you face trials of many kinds . . .

A trial is something that happens in life that has the potential to teach us something. God will allow trials; a testing of your faith. God is more interested in your character than your comfort.

(Proverbs 17:3) The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.

Tucked in that trial/test, there is another lesson to be learned.

1. Recognize what's really going on.

Sometimes the problem itself high-jacks the learning experience. Sometimes you have to get past the trial/test to learn the lesson.

(James 1:2-3) Consider it pure joy my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith **develops** perseverance.

Perseverance – patient endurance. God is trying to develop something inside us.

2. Cooperate with God's growth process.

(James 1:4) Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be **mature** and **complete**, not lacking anything.

Suffering and trials create perseverance. No pain, no gain. There is value in suffering.

(Romans 5:3-4) Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering **produces** perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

(1 Peter 1:6-7) In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of **trials**. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

The best things in your life can come from your worst times, so we have to value the trial/suffering.

3. Ask for God's help.

(James 1:5) 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.

Wisdom is the ability to apply what you probably already know.

The better prayer: Lord, what are you teaching me. What should I be learning right now. The let God give you wisdom.

You can actually speed how quickly you go through the trail by asking God what I should be learning and to develop it in me.

4. Keep a good attitude.

(James 1:6-8) But when he asks, he should believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

Faith and attitude are almost interchangeable—it's your outward look of something

That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

(James 1:12) Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.

TEMPTATIONS:

1. Recognize the source of temptation.

The devil does not make you do it; he just gives you the opportunity.

(James 1:13) When **tempted**, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.

Temptation is like a customized lure—it’s packed full of promise but inside is evil to destroy your life.

2. Understand the process of temptation.

(James 1:14-15) But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

First stage: Temptation.

Never associate the amount of temptation with your spirituality, because being tempted doesn’t mean you are far from God.

If you’re never butting heads with the devil, you must be walking with him.

Second Stage: Fantasy.

Your eyes – it’s what you’re looking at, thinking about, contemplating—lure you away.

(Matthew 6:22-23) The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

If you control the eye you win the game—have filters and accountability partners.

Third State: Moving toward sin.

The grass is not green on the other side; and if it is, the water bill is higher.

Flee from sin. Run!

(1 Corinthians 6:18) Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

(2 Timothy 2:22) Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Forth Stage: Act of sin.

(Proverbs 24:16) For a righteous man falls seven times, but they rise again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes.

God always gives you a second chance.

(Hebrews 4:15) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet He did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

God sympathizes with your weakness. Jesus intercedes on your behalf to God the Father. So approach the throne of grace and find mercy in our time of need.

Fifth Stage: Death.

(Proverbs 14:12) There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death.

Magnify the consequences of sin.

3. Learn how to overcome temptation.

(James 1:16-17) Don't be deceived, my dear brothers, Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

God obligates Himself to help you out in two ways: One, I will never give you more than you can handle, and two, and I will always give you a way to escape.

(1 Corinthians 10:13) No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Avoid harmful influences.

Counter temptation with the Word.

Develop healthy relationships.

4. Fall in love with Jesus.

(James 1:18) He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prize possession.

(John 14:15) If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Temptation is not a test of your self-control—it's a test of your relationship with Jesus.

LESSON 2 – LISTENING AND DOING (4:00)

Message by: Pastor Rick Bezet
(New Life Church, Little Rock, AR)

(James 1:22) Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

(1 Timothy 4:1) The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

(James 1:23-25) Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 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.

Jordan River is full of life – it receives and it gives away. The Dead Sea has no life because it only receives.

Faking it can quickly become being deceived.

(Matthew 13:14-15) In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.

Being spiritually deceived:

(Luke 14:16-23) Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.' "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and

ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' 'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.

1. He is ready now.

You are invited NOW. Come to the table now; don't let business of life deceive/distract you.

2. Listen and obey without excuse.

(James 1:23-24) Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

Don't forget who you are in Christ. Prioritize the invitation.

3. Remember how desperate we are.

Jesus invited the desperate; just like me. Remember that you are broken; none of us deserve an invitation. Remember the Prodigal Son). Times when we pull away from God, are times we have forgotten how much God loves us.

The Word without Christ, is rules without forgiveness and grace. Jesus does not condemn us, but saves us.

(Psalm 34:18) The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

4. Don't forget the big picture.

Keep your eyes on the Father and carry the Word.

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LESSON 3 – FAVORITISM

Video Message by: Pastor Layne Schranz
(COTH Associate Pastor of Campuses)

(James 2:1-11) My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. If 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, doesn’t this discrimination show that your **judgements** are guided by evil motives? Listen 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? But you dishonor the poor! Isn’t it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? Aren’t they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear? Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God’s laws. For 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.

(Matthew 7:1-5) Do not judge, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging others is the standard by which you will be judged. And why worry about the speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

Dr. Jim Richards: “Judgment is when you assume to know why someone did what they did or said what they said”.

Judgment creates pain in us more than it creates pain in the person that we are judging. Knowing what happened is an observation. Trying to figure out why something happened is when we go into judgment. We judge God too, as well as ourselves, but that puts the pain on us. Assuming we know why—that's where we create junk and pain in ourselves. Asking "Why" adds to the pain.

God's only motive is love.

Human nature is to ask why.

1. Value people.

(Philippians 2:3) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but with humility consider others better than yourself.

Judgment is the opposite of humility. God values every single person. Every person is that way for a reason—when grace goes up, judgment goes down.

(1 Samuel 16:7) The Lord does not look at the things that man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Your location doesn't change your value to God.

Your condition doesn't change your value to God.

Your history doesn't change your value to God.

Valuing people is not about their worth to you, but their worth to God.

2. Accept people.

(Romans 15:7) Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Jesus accepts us as-is. Jesus accepted every single person He came in contact with. He made them feel comfortable even in their sin without accepting their sin. We can't confuse acceptance with approval.

(Romans 2:11) For God does not show favoritism.

Accepting people is not about what you would do but about what God would do.

3. Forgive people.

If we do not forgive, we will stay covered up in that pain.

(Matthew 6:14-15) If you forgive those who sin against you, your Heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Forgiveness is not restoration of trust.

Forgiveness is not approval.

Forgiveness releases the weight of judgment off our hearts.

4. Get close to people.

To step away from judgment, we have to step into relationships.

Isolation is a breeding ground for more judgment.

(Luke 6:38) Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

(Luke 6:37) Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

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LESSON 4 – DYNAMIC FAITH (2:45)

Video Message by: Pastor Steve Blair
(COTH Grants Mill Campus Pastor)

Faith needs corresponding action. Action doesn't save us, just identifies that we believe in something.

(Ephesians 2:8-9) The sinner is saved by faith.

(2 Corinthians 5:7) The believer must walk by faith.

(Hebrews 11:6) It is impossible to please God without faith.

(Romans 14:22) Whatever we do apart from faith is sin.

(James 2:14) What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?

If faith does not have actions, it is not complete; it is a balance.

Illustration: Bicycle

(2 Corinthians 13:5) Examine yourself to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

God is not looking to fail you or make it impossible.

1. Faith that is dead.

(James 2:17) In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

John Calvin said, "It's faith alone that justifies, but faith that justifies is never alone."

- Lip service not lifestyle
- Leaves and no fruit.

2. Faith that is deceived.

(James 2:19) You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons **believe** that—and shudder.

- Knowledge with no change.
- No love for Jesus.
- Rebellion with no repentance.

3. Faith that is dynamic.

(James 2:22) You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. (Talking about Abraham.)

Faith is not believing in spite in evidence. Faith is believing in spite of consequence.

(James 2:17-18) In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

Charles Spurgeon, “Faith that does not change my life will not change my soul.” If my life is not different that there might not be anything different on the inside.

- Dynamic faith steps out.

(James 2:21) Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the alter?

- Dynamic faith speaks out.

(James 2:25) 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 location?

(Joshua 2:9) . . . and she said to them, "I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us . . .

- Dynamic faith works out.

(James 2:26) As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

(Philippians 2:12) What I'm getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I am separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God.

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LESSON 5 – TAMING THE TONGUE (2:50)

Video Message by: COTH Associate Pastor Dino Rizzo
(Executive Director of Association of Related Churches (ARC))

(James 3:1-12) Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 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. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as 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. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider that a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 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. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

(Psalm 141:3) Help me, Lord to keep my mouth shut and my lips sealed.

1. The tongue is small but disproportionately powerful.

- The tongue is a bridle.

A powerful horse is completely controlled by a small bit. The powerful tongue, likewise, controls our lives.

- The tongue is a rudder.

A small rudder directs the ship, likewise, our tongue can change the direction of our lives.

- The tongue is a spark.

A small spark can create a massive, destructive wildfire. The tongue is a spark that impacts even beyond the comment.

2. The tongue has been a problem since the day we were born.

- The tongue is humanly untamable.

The tongue may be humanly untamable but it is divinely tamable.

- The tongue is twisted.

We can bless and curse; we can help and hurt.

(Psalm 19:14) Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

1. Pause.

(James 1:19) My brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

Slow down, pause. Maybe it's best not to say anything. You will never get in trouble in your words if you don't say anything.

2. Ponder.

Think before you speak:

T – is it True?

H – is it Helpful?

I – is it Inspiring?

N – is it Necessary?

K – is it Kind?

3. Pray.

Loose lips sink ships. Praying lips save lives.

(Matthew 12:34) Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

(1 Corinthians 5:17) Therefore anyone who is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away; all things are new.

Taming the tongue is a matter of the heart.

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LESSON 6 – WISDOM FROM ABOVE (4:00)

Video Message by: Pastor Chris Hodges

(James 3:3-18) 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. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 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. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

(Proverbs 14:12) There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

Knowledge is in the head; wisdom is in the heart. A wise man can have knowledge, but a knowledgeable man doesn't necessarily have wisdom. It takes knowledge to build a house; but it takes wisdom to make a home.

By the deed you do in humility that come by wisdom, I can tell (without you telling me) that you are a Christian.

Our relationships and home life are a good indication of the condition of our heart.

Characteristics of Earthly Wisdom:

1. It is worldly.

(1 Corinthians 1:20) Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

2. It is sensual.

Our feelings are not a good barometer of truth. Feelings-based philosophy.

(Titus 3:3-5) At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us.

3. It is demonic.

The same foolish, selfish, ambitious spirit is what got Lucifer cast from heaven in the first place.

(John 8:44) You are of your father, the devil, and it is your will to practice the lusts and gratify the desires [which are characteristic] of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a falsehood, he speaks what is natural to him, for he is a liar [himself] and the father of lies and of all that is false.

(Proverbs 4:7) Wisdom is supreme; therefore, **get wisdom**. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.

Characteristics of Godly Wisdom:

1. It springs up from Godly principles.

(1 John 3:3) All who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure.

Pure doesn't mean perfect. This is talking about purity in the integrity standpoint. Integrity means whole—live life wholesomely. It means you've bought into truth and honesty.

(Proverbs 10:9) Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.

2. It acts with Godly motives.

(Philippians 2:1-5) Therefore if any of you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing of the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

- Peace-loving
- Considerate
- Submissive (willing to yield)
- Full of mercy and good fruit
- Impartial and sincere

3. It is intent on serving Godly purposes.

(Matthew 5:9) Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

(Matthew 5:16) In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

How to get Godly Wisdom:

(Psalm 111:10) How can man be wise? The only way to begin is by **reverence to God**.

Get close to God. Knowledge looks around, wisdom looks up.

Knowledge comes from education;

Wisdom comes from God

(Colossians 2:2-3) I want to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have a complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

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LESSON 7 – FIND GOD’S WILL (4:00)

Video Message by: Pastor Greg Surratt
(Head Pastor Seacoast Church, Charleston South Carolina
and President, Association of Related Churches (ARC))

Life-Defining Will of God:

He’s at work on the solution even before you know there is a problem. If you will allow the crisis you are in now, it may be your defining moment.

(Acts 7:6) God began by making one person and from him came all different people who live all over the world. God decided exactly when and where they must live. So that some may come to know Him.

You were born for a purpose.

Life Encompassing Will of God:

What is the Current Will of God or Purpose for Your Life:

1. Acknowledge the fact that you need some help.

(James 4:1-3) What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but you do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don’t get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

God love you just the way you are, but God love you too much to let you stay there.

(James 4:6) And He gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, “God opposes the proud but give grace to the humble.”

When you feel a road block, you might need to humble yourself.

(James 4:7a) Give yourselves completely to God . . .

James 4-8, 10) Come close to God and He will come close to you, wash your hands, you sinners, purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up in honor.

(John 10:10) Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life and have it in full."

The way up is down – humility. You can humble yourself or what and let Him do it for you.

2. Believe the best about everyone you meet.

- It's not your responsibility to judge others.

Stress comes when you take responsibility for something that you don't have authority for. In life, we don't have the responsibility or authority to judge other people.

(James 4:11) Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters . . . God alone, who gave the law, is the judge. He alone has the power to save or destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

We have the responsibility to LOVE one another.

- When you judge others, you are wrong most of the time.

(1 Corinthians 4:5) So don't get ahead of the Master and jump to conclusions with your judgments before all the evidence is in. When He comes, He will bring out in the open and place in evidence all kinds of things we never even dreamed of –

- When you believe the best, it allows you to engage in the law of reciprocity.

Law of Reciprocity: When someone does something nice for you, you have a psychological response to want to do something nice for them.

(Luke 6:37-38) Do not judge others and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and it will be forgiven. Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

3. Consult with God before you do anything.

Ronald Wayne – Original investor in Apple.

(James 4:13-15) And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, “Today -- at the latest, tomorrow – we’re off to such and such a city for the year. We’re going to start a business and we’re going to make a lot of money.” **You don’t know the first thing about tomorrow.** Instead, make a habit to say, “If the Master wills it and we’re still alive, we’ll do this or that.”

Q: Will this honor God?

(Proverbs 3:5) Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.

(Matthew 6:31-33) So don’t worry about these things, saying, “What will we eat? What will be drink? What will be wear? These things dominate the thoughts of the unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all of your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need.

CHALLENGE: For the next week, believe the BEST about EVERYBODY.

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LESSON 8 – THE LIFE GOD REWARDS (2:20)

Video Message by: COTH Associate Pastor Dino Rizzo
(Executive Director of Association of Related Churches (ARC))

(James 5:1-6) Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 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. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourself in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

James is not condemning wealth, but reminding us of the responsibility that comes with wealth and the perils that come with wealth. Be careful not to adopt the world's standards of value, worth and identity.

Attitudes of a Giving Life:

1. Don't hoard it greedily, but steward it wisely.

Effects of Hoarding – anxiety, depression, separation, especially Isolation.

2. Don't handle it deceitfully, but distribute it honestly.
3. Don't spend it selfishly, but share it generously.

(Luke 12:15) Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

There is nothing wrong with having possessions. The problem is when the possessions have us.

(Proverbs 11:24-25) One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

(James 5:7-12) See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and springs rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider 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. Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No" no, or you will be condemned.

Actions of a Giving Life:

1. Be patient.

*Be patient with yourself, others, God's time, God's plan.
Being patient allows for clarity.*

2. Perseverance.

3. Be consistent.

4. Show compassion.

Putting our stuff in circulation for the cause of Jesus Christ with no strings attached.

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

Mother Teresa

Take our faith into action and cast it into humanity to create ripples for Jesus.

LESSON 9 – MAKING FAITH WORK (9:00)

Video Message by: Pastor Chris Hodges
(Founding Pastor of Church of the Highlands)

(James 5:13-15) Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 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. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; and the Lord will raise them up. If they've sinned, they will be forgiven. 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.

God always does the right thing. His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not His thoughts.

- God still heals people.

(Hebrews 13:8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- God is also concerned about my soul.

(Matthew 10:28) Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

(Luke 10:19-20) I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

- God wants me to grow in faith.

(Hewbrews 11:6) And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

(James 5:17-18) 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. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Faith is a Journey:

1. Faith begins with a Word from God.

We get a promise from God's Word.

(Romans 10:17) Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

*(1 Kings 17:1) Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahad, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my **word**."*

Elijah actually heard the sound of rain. He had a vision of rain in his heart. God's promises always come to pass.

(Isaiah 55:11) So I my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

2. Faith continues when you hold on to what He said.

(1 Kings 18:43-44) “Go and look toward the sea,” he told his servant. And he went up and looked. “There is nothing there,” he said. Seven times Elijah said, “**Go back.**” The seventh time the servant reported, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” So Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.’”

(Galatians 6:9) “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

3. Faith goes from a small beginning to a grand finale.

(1 Kings 18:45-46) Meanwhile the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

(Zechariah 4:10) Do not despise these **small beginnings**, for the Lord rejoices to see the work **begin . . .**

The Lord likes to see the work begin in us. We like the grand finale, but God likes the process, because He knows in the process is when we are the closest in relationship to Him.

The process is the point.

From promise, to process, to payoff – to perspective.

(James 5:19-20) My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

***THE BOOK OF JAMES IS REALLY ALL
ABOUT ETERNAL LIFE.***

THE BOOK OF JAMES

The New Testament falls into various sections, each dealing with specific themes. A last section, introduced by the book of Hebrews, is concerned with the single theme of faith. The whole drive of these letters of the New Testament is to explain to us what faith is and how it works, and each letter makes its unique contribution to that theme.

James is the second book in this section that deals with faith. This letter is of unique and particular significance to us because it comes from the one who probably knew more about the Lord Jesus than any other human being. James, the brother of our Lord, was raised in the same home in Nazareth, grew up with the Lord Jesus, saw him through all those silent years of which we have no record, and joined with his three other brothers (Joseph, Simon, and Judas) in opposition to the Lord Jesus during the early days of his ministry. James was finally converted by the resurrection of the Lord. The Apostle Paul tells us that after the resurrection, the Lord appeared to James (*1 Corinthians 15:7*).

Many of us would give a lot to know what happened during that time when James had looked upon Jesus as nothing more than his brother. He was one who had grave doubts that Jesus was indeed the Son of God as he claimed. In fact, once he had regarded him as a madman, and came with his mother and brothers to have him locked up, or at least to go home with them and get him out of the public view. But finally, by the resurrection, he was convinced that here indeed was God manifest in the flesh "*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*" (John

1:14), and James, too, saw "*his glory as of the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,*" (John 1:14)

So here we have the book of James being a compact, hard-hitting letter about practicing the faith. It reads like a collection of sermons. In fact, except for a brief introduction, it bears none of the traits of an ancient letter. Each of its five chapters are packed with pointed illustrations and reminders designed to motivate the wills and hearts of relatively prosperous believers. James wanted them to grasp a truth taught by Jesus: "*A tree is known by its fruit.*" (*Matthew 12:33; compare James 1:9–11, 3:12–18; 5:7–8, 17–18*)

For James, religion is not about church membership, financial contributions, or even teaching in the Sunday school. The acid test of true religion is doing the truth, not just hearing it or speaking it.

PART 1 – TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

Video Message by: Pastor Chris Hodges
(Founding Pastor of Church of the Highlands)

TRIALS:

*(James 1:1-2) James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, **whenever** you face trials of many kinds . . .*

(Proverbs 17:3) The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.

1. Recognize what's _____.

*(James 1:2-3) Consider it pure joy my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith **develops** perseverance.*

2. Cooperate with God's _____.

*(James 1:4) Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be **mature** and **complete**, not lacking anything.*

*(Romans 5:3-4) Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering **produces** perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope . . .*

*(1 Peter 1:6-7) In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of **trials**. These have come so that the proven genuine-ness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

3. Ask for _____.

*(James 1:5) 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.*

4. Keep a _____.

(James 1:6-8) But when he asks, he should believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

(James 1:12) Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.

TEMPTATIONS:

1. Recognize the _____ of temptation.

*(James 1:13) When **tempted**, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone.*

2. Understand the _____ of temptation.

(James 1:14-15) But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

- First stage: _____.

- Second Stage: _____.

(Matthew 6:22-23) The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

- Third State: _____.

(1 Corinthians 6:18) Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

(2 Timothy 2:22) Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

- Forth Stage: _____.

(Proverbs 24:16) For a righteous man falls seven times, but they rise again, but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes.

(Hebrews 4:15) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet He did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

- Fifth Stage: _____.

(Proverbs 14:12) There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death.

3. Learn how to _____ temptation.

(James 1:16-17) Don't be deceived, my dear brothers, Every good and perfect give is from above, coming down from heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

(1 Corinthians 10:13) No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are temped, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Avoid _____.

Counter temptation with _____.

Develop healthy _____.

4. _____ with Jesus.

(James 1:18) He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prize possession.

(John 14:15) If you love me, you will obey what I command.

PART 1 – TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS
HOME STUDY
James 1:1-18

One of the best tests of Christian maturity is tribulation. When God’s people go through personal trials, they discover what kind of faith they really possess. Trials not only reveal our faith; they also develop our faith and Christian character. The Jews to whom James was writing were experiencing trials, and he wanted to encourage them. The strange thing is that James tells them to rejoice! The word “greeting” in v. 1 can mean “rejoice!” How is the Christian able to have joy in the midst of troubles? James gives the answer in this first chapter by showing the certainties Christians have in times of tribulation. James teaches that God’s purpose is to develop Christians who are mature and complete. If it were up to us, that process probably wouldn’t include times of stress, hardship, or testing. But God knows us well, and as our loving Father He knows that our faith and character are developed only through trials and testing. The apostle Paul’s teaching in Roman’s 8:28 makes such a practical difference when we face difficult trials. *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* Although we might be tempted to turn away from God and run during our trials, knowing God’s love and remembering His purpose in them can help us even trust Him more.

Read James 1:1-4. Answer the Following Questions

1. How do you normally feel and respond when you have to face a trial?

2. Suffering is the way in which God produces perseverance and maturity in us. Why do you think that nothing seems to be as effective as trials at this? (See 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, 12:7-10)

Read James 1:5-8

3. What does wisdom have to do with facing trials?

4. What does Proverbs 9:10-12 tell you about wisdom?

5. Describe a time when God's wisdom helped you through a problem.

Read James 1:9-12

6. What does James 1: 9-11 have to do with the theme of enduring trials?

7. How should James 1:10-11 affect your attitude toward your career and possessions?

8. What reward awaits the person who perseveres under trial?

Read James 1:13-18

9. When temptation comes, why do people tend to blame others and excuse themselves instead of taking responsibility for their sin and their action?

10. What can you do to prevent yourself from falling into temptation?

11. Think of one particular area of your life where you are being tempted and led into sin. How can you stop excusing yourself? What can you do to prevent this from happening?

12. From James 1:1-18 how would you summarize the difference between trials and temptations?

13. What do you believe God is trying to teach you this week through the trials and situations you are experiencing?

Here are Some Great Scriptures to Discuss and Bring to Memory:

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28)

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. (Galatians 6:1)

This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. (Ephesians 6:11-13)

PART 2 – LISTENING AND DOING

Video Message by: Pastor Rick Bezet
(Founding Pastor of New Life Church, Little Rock, AR)

(James 1:25) Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 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.

(1 Timothy 4:1) The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

(Matthew 13:14-15) In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.

(Luke 14:16-23) Jesus replied: A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them

out. Please excuse me.’ “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’ ‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.

1. He is ready _____!

2. Listen and obey _____.

(James 1:23-24) Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

3. Remember how _____ we are.

(Psalm 34:18) The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

4. Don't forget _____.

**PART 2 – LISTENING AND DOING
HOME STUDY
James 1:19-27**

As important as it is to read the Bible, James teaches us that it is not helpful unless we do what it says. It's been said that it's not enough to "talk the walk" we must "Walk the talk". That's the concern James has for us. As important it is to know God's Word, to be eager learners in personal Bible study and in church, it is equally important to be living out what we believe. Genuine faith will evidence itself in some very practical ways: in righteous living, godly speaking, and compassionate care. Does your life style reflect your Christian faith? Whether you are at church, at a neighborhood gathering, or in the marketplace, people should see a consistency between what you say and how you live. Revelation demands response! Don't fall into the trap of reading or listening to the Bible and then not putting it into practice. The proof of religious conversation is to demonstrate that we have both added a relationship with Christ and we have subtracted sin (repentance). And we multiply proof to a weary world by what we do, our deeds, and our obedience. What we do must confirm what we say. Our deeds are the proof of our repentance. A changed life is one that has added Christ and subtracted sin that attracts a world weary of worn out words. Obedience is the proof.

Read James 1:19-21 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. What instruction did James give about the relationship between speaking, listening, and anger?

2. How do displays of anger and temper affect the witness of a Christian?

3. In what sense is God's Word planted in us? How does this implanting take place?

Read James 1:22-24

4. How do believers deceive themselves by just listening and not acting on God's message?

5. What might be the effects in the life of a person who reads the Bible week after week but never puts any of the truths into practice?

Read James 1:25-26

6. What promise did James give to the person who studies God's Word and practices it?

7. What does it mean to be blessed in what you do?

8. How does our speech reflect our relationship with God?

Read James 1:27

9. What does it mean to "keep oneself unspotted from the world"?

10. What is so significant about having a desire to care for orphans and widows? Why would James highlight it as a mark of genuine faith?

11. Which of the following is most difficult for you: listening intently to people, being slow to speak, or being slow to get angry? What can you do to grow in this area of your life?

Here are Some Great Scriptures to Discuss and Bring to Memory

*Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God.
(2 Corinthians. 7:1)*

*For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.
(2 Corinthians 9:13)*

Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. (Titus 3:1)

*So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."
(1 Peter 1:14-16)*

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. (James 1:22)

PART 3 – FAVORITISM

Video Message by: Pastor Layne Schranz
(COTH Associate Pastor of Campuses)

*(James 2:1-11) My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. If 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, doesn’t this discrimination show that your **judgements** are guided by evil motives? Listen 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? But you dishonor the poor! Isn’t it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? Aren’t they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear? Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God’s laws. For 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.*

Assumptions from fact:

- Judgment creates pain _____ than the pain it creates for the person we are judging.
- We much _____ from the presumed motive.

(Matthew 7:1-5) Do not judge, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging others is the standard by which you will be judged. And why worry about the speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.

- When we make assumptions “why” that is when _____ all the trouble.
- When making assumptions about God, know that God's only motive is _____.
- Human nature is to ask _____.

Combat judgment in our lives:

1. _____ people.

(Philippians 2:3) Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but with humility consider others better than yourself.

(1 Samuel 16:7) The Lord does not look at the things that man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Your _____ doesn't change your value to God.

Your _____ doesn't change your value to God.

Your _____ doesn't change your value to God.

_____ people is not about their worth to you, but their worth to God.

2. _____ people.

(Romans 15:7) Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

(Romans 2:11) For God does not show favoritism.

_____ people is not about what you would do but about what God would do.

3. _____ people.

(Matthew 6:14-15) If you forgive those who sin against you, your Heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Forgiveness is not _____.

Forgiveness is not _____.

Forgiveness releases the _____ off our hearts.

4. _____ people.

(Luke 6:38) Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

(Luke 6:37) Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

PART 3 – FAVORITISM
HOME STUDY
James 2:1-13

Not only is the mature Christian to be patient in testing, but he also practices the truth. This is the theme of James 2. Immature people talk about their beliefs, but the mature person lives his faith. Hearing God's Word and talking about God's Word can never substitute for doing God's Word. Every believer has some statement of faith or personal expression of what he believes. Most churches have such statements and members are asked to subscribe to the statement and practice it. Most churches also have a "covenant" that they read publicly, often when they observe the Lord's Supper. Statements of faith and church covenants are good and useful, but they are not substitutes for doing God's will. We are not simply to have faith; we are to practice it in our daily lives. James wanted to help us practice God's Word, so he gave us a simple test. He sent two visitors to a church service, a rich man and a poor man; and he watched to see how they were treated. The way we behave toward people indicates what we really believe about God! We cannot separate human relationships from divine fellowship. "If a man says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20) All Christians have received undeserved mercy from God and are called by God to express mercy to those in need. That's why favoritism to the rich is so unacceptable. It values that which God says as unimportant. Be very careful in your personal life and in your church to treat people according to God's values rather than by the values of the world.

Read James 2:1-4 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. What practical example did James use to illustrate how favoritism was practiced in the church?

2. Why is favoritism to the rich inconsistent with believing in Christ?

3. In what ways do adults continue to play favorites at home, at work or in Government?

Read James Chapter 2:5-7

4. What has God promised to the poor of this world?

5. Why do you think God gives such a priority to the poor? Why doesn't God just simply bless them with more material things?

6. How does God's view of wealth compare with your view? In what specific areas do you need to align your thinking about wealth and poverty with God's?

Read James Chapter 2:8-13

7. Think of someone who God has brought into your life who is unattractive or seems to have little to offer you. Perhaps you have been guilty of ignoring this person in the past. Ask God to help you see this person more clearly from his or her perspective. List at least three specific actions that you can take to reach out to this person with God's love.

8. What will happen to those of us who have not shown mercy to the needy? (See James 2:13, Matthew 5:7, and Luke 6:38)

9. What is James main point in 2:1-13?

10. What one truth from 2:1-13 impresses you as something you need to apply?

11. How can you apply this truth to your walk practically?

12. In the context of 2:1-13 what kind of mercy is James saying we should practice?

13. Study how Jesus treated the poor and the working class in Luke 5:27-31, 14:12-14, 15:1-7. How is this model for you? What can you do to follow that model?

Here are Some Great Scriptures to Discuss and Bring to Memory

You must not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you are called to testify in a dispute, do not be swayed by the crowd to twist justice. And do not slant your testimony in favor of a person just because that person is poor. (Exodus 23:2-3)

Do not twist justice in legal matters by favoring the poor or being partial to the rich and powerful. Always judge people fairly. (Leviticus 19:15)

I solemnly command you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus and the highest angels to obey these instructions without taking sides or showing favoritism to anyone. (1 Timothy 5:21)

If someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their Christian brothers and sisters. (1 John 4:20)

PART 4 – DYNAMIC FAITH

Video Message by: Pastor Steve Blair
(COTH Grants Mill Campus Pastor)

(James 2:14) What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?

Lifestyles of Faith:

(2 Corinthians 13:5) Examine yourself to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

1. Faith that is _____.

(James 2:17) In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

- _____ not lifestyle.
- _____ and no fruit.

2. Faith that is _____.

*(James 2:19) You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons **believe** that—and shudder.*

- Knowledge with no _____.
- No love for _____.
- Rebellion with no _____.

3. Faith that is _____.

(James 2:22) You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. (Talking about Abraham.)

Dynamic Faith:

(James 2:17-18) In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

- Dynamic faith _____ out.

(James 2:21) Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the alter?

- Dynamic faith _____ out.

(James 2:25) 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 location?

(Joshua 2:9) . . . and she said to them, "I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us . . .

- Dynamic faith _____ out.

(James 2:26) As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

(Philippians 2:12) What I'm getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I am separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God.

PART 4 – DYNAMIC FAITH HOME STUDY James 2:14-26

Faith is a key doctrine in the Christian life. The sinner is saved by faith (Eph. 2:8-9), and the believer must walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6), and whatever we do apart from faith is sin (Rom. 14:23).

Someone has said that faith is not “believing in spite of evidence, but obeying in spite of consequence.” When you read Hebrews 11, you meet men and women who acted on God’s Word, no matter what price they had to pay. Faith is not some kind of vague feeling that we work up; faith is confidence that God’s Word is true, and conviction that acting on that Word will bring His blessing. In this section of Scripture, James will discuss the relationship between faith and works. This is an important discussion, for if we are wrong in this matter, we jeopardize our eternal salvation. What kind of faith really saves a person? Is it necessary to perform good works in order to be saved? How can a person tell whether or not he or she is exercising true having faith? James answers these questions and more by explaining to us the true meaning of saving faith. Being a Christian is not a matter of what we say with the lips; it involves what we do with the life. The whole matter of faith and works is summed up in Eph. 2:8-10: **(1) the work God does “for us” (salvation)** “For by grace you have been saved...not of works”; **(2) the work God does “in us” (sanctification)** “For we are His workmanship”; **(3) the work God does “through us” (service)** “created...for good works.”

Read James 2: 14-17 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. What does James teach about the relationship between faith and deeds?

2. What illustration did James use to explain how real faith affects a person's deeds?

3. How did James describe faith that has no accompanying deeds?

Read James 2:18-20

4. What might be some consequences for believers who are not clear on the relationship between faith and works?

Read James 2:21-26

5. In what ways are Abraham and Rahab different? In what ways are they similar?

6. Why do you think Abraham was called God's friend? What did Jesus mean when He called those who follow Him "My friends" (See John 15:14)

7. James offers Abraham and Rahab as two examples of genuine faith. What did Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac prove? (See Genesis 22:12, James 2:22-23)

8. Abraham showed faith by holding nothing back from God, not even his most valued treasure, his son. Are you holding anything back from God? Is there anything in your life that you wouldn't sacrifice for Him?

9. What do you consider the greatest example of faith you have ever seen? Why?

10. What were some of the victories enjoyed by faithful Old Testament believers? (See Heb. 11:32-34)

11. With what do you need to trust God even though you can't see what the future holds? How can you show this trust?

Here are Some Great Scriptures to Discuss and Bring to Memory

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. (Hebrew 1:1-2)

How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless? (James 2:20)

I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. (John 14:12)

And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. (1 Peter 1:5-7)

So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of his call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

PART 5 – TAMING THE TONGUE

Video Message by: COTH Associate Pastor Dino Rizzo
(Executive Director of Association of Related Churches (ARC))

(James 3:1-12) Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. 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. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as 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. Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider that a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. 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. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Tongue Facts:

(Psalm 141:3) Help me, Lord to keep my mouth shut and my lips sealed.

- The tongue is _____ but disproportionately powerful.

- The tongue is a _____.
- The tongue is a _____.
- The tongue is a _____.
- The tongue has been a _____ since the day we were born.
 - The tongue is _____.
 - The tongue is _____.

How to Tame the Tongue:

(Psalm 19:14) Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

1. _____.

(James 1:19) My brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

2. _____.

Think before you speak:

T – is it _____?

H – is it _____?

I – is it _____?

N – is it _____?

K – is it _____?

3. _____.

(Matthew 12:34) Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

(Philippians 4:8) Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

(2 Corinthians 5:17) Therefore anyone who is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away; all things are new.

Taming the tongue is a matter of the _____.

PART 5 – TAMING THE TONGUE
HOME STUDY
James 3:1-12

Through our study so far, we have identified mature Christians by their attitude toward suffering (Chapter 1) and by their obedience to the Word of God (Chapter 2). Now James tells us that a Christian's speech is another test of maturity. We read and hear many words every day and forget what a wonderful thing a word is! When God gave us the gift of speech, He gave us a tool to build with; but it can also become a weapon of destruction. Will we ever be able to control what we say? James says that the tongue corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of life on fire, is a restless evil, and cannot be tamed. Yet we should not give up trying. James indicates in 3:2-6 that Christians should work on controlling their tongue. The difficulty with the tongue is that it is connected to the heart. As Jesus said in Matthew 12:34, *"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"* **A tongue problem is really a heart problem.** But here's the good news! God specializes in heart problems, giving each Christian a new heart, one that is alive to God's Spirit and sensitive to His leading. Then, as we turn from sin and learn to turn to God in faith and trust, God changes us on the inside, making us like Christ. Apart from God, no person can control the tongue, but with a new heart we can find a new strength to use our tongue to glorify God and build up people around us.

Read James 3:1-4 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. Why is it so difficult for us at times to say the right thing instead of the wrong thing?

2. Why isn't the tongue problem solved when people become Christians? In what ways do you struggle with the tension between "the old man" and "the new man?"

3. James uses some practical examples to explain why controlling our tongues is a key to maturity. He also compares the tongue to a horses bit and a ships rudder. What do these images have in common?

Read James 3:5-8

4. How can a person be hurt by the words of others?

5. What practical advice would you give someone who wanted to control his or her tongue better?

Read James 3:9-10

6. What are the ways we sin with our speech?

7. What kind of damage does an uncontrolled tongue do to a family? To a marriage? To children? To a church?

Read James 3:11-12

8. What illustrations from nature did James use to condemn cursing?

9. What can a spring or a fruit tree teach us about speech?

10. What weaknesses in our lives does our speech often expose?

11. How can we submit our tongues to the control of God's Holy Spirit? What would be the result?

Here are Some Great Scriptures to Discuss and Bring to Memory

Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous? Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies! (Psalm 34:12-13)

Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything. (Proverbs 13:3)

Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. (Titus 3:1-2)

If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. (James 1:26)

For the Scriptures say, "If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies. (1 Peter 3:10)

PART 6 – WISDOM FROM ABOVE

Video Message by: Pastor Chris Hodges

(James 3:13-18) 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. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 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. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Characteristics of Earthly Wisdom:

(Proverbs 14:12) There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

1. It is _____.

(1 Corinthians 1:20) Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

2. It is _____.

(Titus 3:3-5) At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us.

3. It is _____.

(John 8:44) You are of your father, the devil, and it is your will to practice the lusts and gratify the desires [which are characteristic] of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a falsehood, he speaks what is natural to him, for he is a liar [himself] and the father of lies and of all that is false.

Characteristics of Godly Wisdom:

*(Proverbs 4:7) Wisdom is supreme; therefore, **get wisdom**. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.*

1. It springs up from _____.

(1 John 3:3) All who have this hope in Him purify themselves, just as He is pure.

(Proverbs 10:9) Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.

2. It acts with _____.

(Philippians 2:1-5) Therefore if any of you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any common sharing of the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

3. It is intent on serving _____.

(Matthew 5:9) Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

(Matthew 5:16) In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

How to get Godly Wisdom:

*(Psalm 111:10) How can man be wise? The only way to begin is by **reverence to God**.*

- Knowledge comes from _____;
- Wisdom comes from _____.

(Colossians 2:2-3) I want to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have a complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

PART 6 – WISDOM FROM ABOVE
HOME STUDY
James 3:13-18

Wisdom was an important thing to Jewish people. They realized that it was not enough to have knowledge; you had to have wisdom to be able to use that knowledge correctly. All of us know people who are very intelligent, perhaps almost geniuses, and yet who seemingly are unable to carry out the simplest tasks of life. They can run computers but they cannot manage their own lives. *“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom. And in all your getting, get Understanding.”* (Proverbs 4:7)

James continued to exhort the people in the assembly who wanted to be teachers of the Word (James 3:1). **It is not enough simply to stand before the people and say words; you must have something to say.** This is where spiritual wisdom comes in. Knowledge enables us to take things apart, but wisdom enables us to put things together and relate God’s truth to daily life. All of us have heard preachers and teachers who say many good things, but who somehow miss the heart of God’s message and fail to relate truth to everyday life. It is this kind of “knowledge without wisdom” that James is writing about.

Read James 3:13-14 and Answer the Following Questions:

1. How can a person demonstrate wisdom and understanding?

2. How can we tell when a person is wise?

3. Jesus encouraged people to come learn from Him because He was “*gentle and lowly in heart*” (Matt. 11:29). Paul declared his authority as an apostle and teacher after pleading “*the meekness and gentleness of Christ*” (2 Corinthians 10:1). Why do you think humility or meekness is such an essential sign of wisdom?

Read James 3:15-16.

4. How would you describe “worldly wisdom”?

5. What damage can bitter envy or selfish ambition do to a person?

6. How do bitter envy and self-ambition affect a person's ministry?

Read James 3:17.

7. What are the qualities of the wisdom that comes from heaven?

8. All the good traits of James 3:17 spring from acquiring heavenly wisdom and ridding ourselves of devilish wisdom. How can you cultivate heavenly wisdom and its fruits this week?

9. How can we get or experience heavenly wisdom?

Read James 3:18

10. In light of James 3:13-18, what do you think it means to be a peacemaker?

11. What are practical ways we can sow seeds of peace during our life?

12. According to verse 18, sowing in peace produces a harvest of righteousness. Why do you think peacemaking and righteousness are connected like this?

13. List some practical ways you can bring peace to a conflict?

Here are Some Great Scriptures to Discuss and Bring to Memory

And this is what he says to all humanity: The fear of the Lord is true wisdom; to forsake evil is real understanding. (Job 28:28)

"I, Wisdom, live together with good judgment. I know where to discover knowledge and discernment. (Proverbs 8:12)

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. (Romans 8:5-8)

How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word, I have tried hard to find you don't let me wander from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. I praise you, O LORD; teach me your decrees. I have recited aloud all the regulations you have given us. I have rejoiced in your laws as much as in riches. I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word. (Psalm 119:9-16)

PART 7 – FINDING GOD’S WILL

Video Message by: Pastor Greg Surratt
(Head Pastor Seacoast Church, Charleston South Carolina
and President, Association of Related Churches (ARC))

God’s will is that you . . .

1. Acknowledge the fact that you need _____.

(James 4:1-2) What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but you do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight . . .

(James 4:2-4) You don’t have what you want because you don’t ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don’t get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

(James 4:6) And He gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, “God opposes the proud but give grace to the humble.”

(James 4:7a) Give yourselves completely to God . . .

James 4-8, 10) Come close to God and He will come close to you, wash your hands, you sinners, purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up in honor.

(John 10:10) Jesus said, “I have come that you might have life and have it in full.”

2. Believe the _____ about everyone you _____.

Three reasons:

- It's not your responsibility to _____.

(James 4:11) Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters . . . God alone, who gave the law, is the judge. He alone has the power to save or destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

- When you _____ others, you are wrong _____ of the time.

(1 Corinthians 4:5) So don't get ahead of the Master and jump to conclusions with your judgments before all the evidence is in. When He comes, He will bring out in the open and place in evidence all kinds of things we never even dreamed of –

- When you believe the best, it allows you to engage in the _____.

(Luke 6:37-38) Do not judge others and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and it will be forgiven. Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

3. Consult with God before you do _____.

*(James 4:13-15) And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, "Today -- at the latest, tomorrow -- we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and we're going to make a lot of money." **You don't know the first thing about tomorrow.** Instead, make a habit to say, "If the Master wills it and we're still alive, we'll do this or that."*

Ask yourself: Will this _____ God?

(Proverbs 3:5) Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. Seek His will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.

(Matthew 6:31-33) So don't worry about these things, saying, "What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear? These things dominate the thoughts of the unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all of your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need.

CHALLENGE: For the next week, believe the BEST about EVERYBODY.

PART 7 – FINDING GOD’S WILL
HOME STUDY
James 4:1-17

This chapter makes it clear that there were carnal divisions and disputes among these believers. One cause was the selfish desire of many to be teachers, but the basic cause was disobedience. There was a lack of true separation in the lives of the people. It is tragic when brethren dwell together in conflict instead of unity. *“Can two walk together except they be agreed?”* (Amos 3:3) James doesn’t paint a pretty picture of life in the church. It sounds much like life anytime people are together: quarreling, fighting, slandering, and judging. The difference is that there is hope for real change in the church. These problems arise when Christians exchange friendship with God for that of the world. As with all of Satan’s treacheries, the world’s friendship might sound good at first, but it will soon bring a harvest of sin, jealousy, hatred, and self-centeredness. The good news is that Christians have an alternative, to return to God in confession and dependency. God never tires of welcoming home His wayward children and of lifting them up when they humble themselves before Him. If you find yourself constantly engaged in disagreements and arguments, take a close look at your heart, and come home to friendship with God.

Read James 4:1-3. Answer the Following Questions:

1. What does the Bible mean when it says a war is waging inside of us?

2. When we ask God for things, why do we often not get what we want?

3. What are the wrong motives for prayer?

Read James 4:4-5

4. What is the connection between our relationship with God and our relationship with people?

5. Why is it impossible to be a friend of the world and a friend of God at the same time?

6. From your own personal experience and your knowledge of the Word, what are some of the symptoms of friendship with the world?

Read James 4:6

7. How does pride show up in our work? Home? Church? Community?

8. Why does God oppose people who are proud?

9. What is the difference between pride and a sense of accomplishment?

Read James 4:7-8

10. What is involved in humbling yourself before God?

11. Have you ever wondered why at times you might not feel God near you? According to James 4:8, is this a failure on God's part or on our part? What should we do when God seems so far away?

Read James 4:9-10

12. How did James describe the way we should come to God?

13. What can you do this week to help you bring more humility into your life?

Read James 4:11-12

14. When we speak against a fellow believer, what attitude are we having toward God and His law?

Here are Some Great Scriptures to Discuss and Bring to Memory

O my people, trust in him at all times. Pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge. (Psalm 62:8)

Let me hear of your unfailing love each morning, for I am trusting you. Show me where to walk, for I give myself to you. (Psalm 143:8)

In that day the people will proclaim, "This is our God! We trusted in him, and he saved us! This is the LORD, in whom we trusted. Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings. (Isiah 25: 9)

The LORD is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. He is close to those who trust in him. (Nahum 1:7)

As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced. (Roman 10:11)

"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged. "And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye, ' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye. (Matthew 7:1-5)

PART 8 – THE LIFE GOD REWARDS

Video Message by: COTH Associate Pastor Dino Rizzo
(Executive Director of Association of Related Churches (ARC))

(James 5:1-6) Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. 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. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourself in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

Attitudes of a Giving Life:

1. Don't _____ it greedily, but _____ it wisely.
2. Don't _____ it deceitfully, but _____ it honestly.
3. Don't _____ it selfishly, but _____ it generously.

(Luke 12:15) Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

(Proverbs 11:24-25) One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

(James 5:7-12) See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and

springs rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider 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. Above all, my brothers, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No" no, or you will be condemned.

Actions of a Giving Life:

1. Be _____.
2. _____.
3. Be _____.
4. Show _____.

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." ~Mother Teresa

PART 8 – THE LIFE GOD REWARDS HOME STUDY James 5:1-12

Here in James chapter 5, James lists several sins and shows that the rich were only preparing themselves for coming judgment. If money talks said a popular comedian, “all it ever says to me is good-bye!” But money was not saying “good-bye” to the men James addressed in this section of his letter. These men were rich, and their riches were sinful. They were using their wealth for selfish purposes, and were persecuting the poor in the process. Jesus spent a lot of time talking about money because there is a close connection between the heart and material possessions. In Matthew 16:26 Jesus asked what it would benefit a man if he gained the whole world and lost his soul. In this passage, James makes the same point using powerful and dramatic images.

It is nothing less than foolishness to value and pursue things that don't satisfy and won't last beyond the grave. When material possessions become most important, people become expendable. If you have been blessed with riches, guard your heart so they don't become your god. If you find yourself being caught up in the pursuit of material possessions, hear the words of warning and perspective offered by James. Finally if you have suffered under the hand of rich oppressors (even other believers), know that God has heard your cry and will distribute judgment in His time.

The rich person faces a fierce temptation, a temptation so intense that it will consume him unless he lives ever so close to the Lord. What is the temptation that so fiercely attacks the rich? The temptation to bank and hoard money instead of using it to meet the needs of the desperate and dying in the world. The Bible never condemns all rich persons. It only condemns the rich who store up their wealth instead of using it to reach the lost, feed the hungry, cloth the naked, shelter the cold and homeless, nurse the sick and sound the glorious news of

salvation around the world. God knows that we are without excuse. This is the reason for this passage. To warn all the rich of this world, all those who keep more than what they need. A question that we might ask ourselves personally is: Do you have your possessions, or do your possessions have you?

James was still addressing the suffering saints when he wrote, "Be patient." This was his counsel at the beginning of his letter, and his counsel as his letter came to a close. God is not going to right all the wrongs in this world until Jesus Christ returns and we believers must patiently endure and wait expectedly. Three times James reminds us of the coming of the Lord (James 5:7-9). We do not expect to have everything easy and comfortable in this present life. "*In the world ye shall have tribulation*" (John 16:33). Paul reminded his converts that "*we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*" (Acts 14:22). We must patiently endure hardships and heartaches until Jesus returns. James used two different words for patience.

In James 5:7-10, it was the word "*long-tempered*." The words "*endure*" and "*patience*" in James 5:11 literally mean "*to remain under*" and speak of endurance under great stress. Patience means "*to stay put and stand fast when you'd like to run away*." Many Greek scholars think that "*longsuffering*" refers to patience with respect to persons, while "*endurance*" refers to patience with respect to conditions or situations. But the question we must answer is: How can we as Christians experience this kind of patient endurance as we wait for the Lord to return?

Read James 5:1-6 Answer the Following Questions:

1. How does James describe the lifestyle of the rich?

2. What is the effect of their lifestyle on others; themselves?

Read James 5:1-3

3. What attitude does God have toward hoarding wealth?

4. How does the love of money and riches affect our relationship with God?

Read James 5:4-6

5. Why does James speak so strongly against self-indulgence? What kinds of self-indulgent activities are “in now”? Why is this inappropriate for believers?

6. Are you investing time and money in anything that is not really worth much from an eternal perspective? If so what?

Read James 5:1-6:

7. It has been said that one of Satan's strategies is to change the price tags while no one is looking so that people value the wrong things. In the light of this, what do people tend to pursue that has little eternal value?

8. How can you invest yourself even more in what will matter forever?

Read James 5:7:

9. Why should believers be motivated to patiently endure?

10. How does the illustration of a farmer show the importance of patience?

11. Patience is not a quality we naturally possess. How can we acquire it? (See Galatians 5:22-23)

Read James 5:8-9

12. Why should expecting the Lord's coming make you patient?

Read James 5:10-11

13. What is the difference between patience and perseverance? Which is more difficult for you?

14. Why does a God “*full of tenderness and mercy*” allow His people to experience suffering?

Read James 5:12

15. Think of a time when you persevered in spite of difficult circumstances. What were the rewards of your perseverance?

Here are Some Great Scriptures to Discuss and Bring to Memory

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. (Romans 5:3)

Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. "For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. (Hebrews 10:36-37)

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. Instead, "If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads." (Romans 12:19-20)

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. (James 1:19)

The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, 12 looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. (2 Peter 3:9-12)

PART 9 – MAKING FAITH WORK

Video Message by: Pastor Chris Hodges
(Founding Pastor of Church of the Highlands)

Devine Healing:

(James 5:13-15) Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. 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. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; and the Lord will raise them up. If they've sinned, they will be forgiven. 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.

- God still _____.

(Hebrews 13:8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

(2 Timothy 4:18) The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- God is also concerned about _____.

(Matthew 10:28) Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

(Luke 10:19-20) I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the

spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

- God wants me to _____.

(Hebrews 11:6) And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek Him.

(James 5:17-18) 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. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Making Faith Work:

1. Faith begins with a _____.

*(1 Kings 17:1) Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my **word**."*

(Isaiah 55:11) So I my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

2. Faith continues when you _____ to what He said.

*(1 Kings 18:43-44) "Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked. "There is nothing there," he said. Seven times Elijah said, "**Go back**." The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea." So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"*

(Galatians 6:9) "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

3. Faith goes from a _____ to a grand finale.

(1 Kings 18:45-46) Meanwhile the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the Lord came upon Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

*(Zechariah 4:10) Do not despise these **small beginnings**, for the Lord rejoices to see the work **begin** . . .*

The _____ is the point.

The Greatest Miracle of All:

(James 5:19-20) My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

THE BOOK OF JAMES IS REALLY ALL ABOUT _____.