

# James

LIVING A LIFE  
OF  
GENUINE FAITH



# James

{ living a life of genuine faith }

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# Foreword:

## How Should We Approach God's Word?

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### our purpose

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The Bible study you are about to begin may be different than studies you have done in the past. It will not cover a specific topic from all angles. It will not have poetry or stories that leave you laughing, crying, or inspired. It will not focus on answering the question "What does the Bible say about me?" It will not aid you in self-discovery, at least not as its primary intent.

What it will do is teach you an important passage of the Bible in a way that will stay with you for years to come. It will challenge you to move beyond loving God with just your heart to loving Him with your mind. It will focus on answering the question "What does the Bible say about God?" It will aid you in the worthy task of God-discovery.

You see, the Bible is not a book about self-discovery: it is a book about God-discovery. The Bible is God's declared intent to make Himself known to us. In learning about the character of God in Scripture we *will* experience self-discovery, but it must not be the focus of our study. The focus must be God Himself.

This focus changes the way we study. We look first for what a passage can teach us about the character of God, allowing self-discovery to be the byproduct of God-discovery. This is a much better approach because there can be no true knowledge of self apart from knowledge of God. So when I read the account of Jonah, I see first that God is just and faithful to His Word: He is faithful to proclaim his message to Nineveh no matter what. I see second that I, by contrast (and much like Jonah), am unjust to my fellow man and unfaithful to God's Word. Thus knowledge of God leads to true knowledge of self, which leads to repentance and transformation. This is what Paul meant when he wrote that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2).

Women are good at loving God with their hearts. We are good at engaging our emotions in our pursuit of God. But the God who commands us to love with the totality of our heart, soul, and strength also commands us to love Him with all of our minds. Because He only commands what He also enables his children to do, it must be possible for us to love Him well with our minds or He would not command it. I know you will bring your emotions to your study of God's word, and that is good and right. But it is your mind that I want to engage. God intends for you to be a good student, renewing your mind and thus transforming your heart.

### our process

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Being a good student entails following good study habits. When we sit down to read, most of us like to read through a particular passage and then find a way to apply it to our everyday lives. We may read through an entire book of the Bible over a period of time, or we may jump around from place to place. I want to suggest a different approach, one that may not always yield immediate application, comfort or peace, but one that builds over time a cumulative understanding of the message of Scripture.

## Reading in context and repetitively

Imagine yourself receiving a letter in the mail. The envelope is hand-written, but you don't glance at the return address. Instead you tear open the envelope, flip to the second page, read two paragraphs near the bottom, and set the letter aside. Knowing that if someone bothered to send it to you, you should act on its contents in some way, you spend a few minutes trying to figure out how to respond to what the section you just read had to say. What are the odds you will be successful?

No one would read a letter this way. But this is precisely the way many of us read our Bibles. We skip past reading the "envelope" – who wrote this? To whom is it written? When was it written? Where was it written? – and then try to determine the purpose of its contents from a portion of the whole. What if we took time to read the envelope? What if, after determining the context for its writing, we started at the beginning and read to the end? Wouldn't that make infinitely more sense?

In our study we will take this approach to Scripture. We will begin by placing our text in its historical and cultural context. We will "read the envelope". Then we will read through the entire text multiple times, so that we can better determine what it wants to say to us. We will read repetitively so that we might move through three critical stages of understanding: comprehension, interpretation and application.

### Stage 1: Comprehension

Remember the reading comprehension section on the SAT? Remember those long reading passages followed by questions to test your knowledge of what you had just read? The objective was to force you to read for detail. We are going to apply the same method to our study of God's Word. When we read for comprehension we ask ourselves "What does it say?" This is hard work. A person who *comprehends* the account of the six days of creation can tell you specifically what happened on each day. This is the first step toward being able to interpret and apply the story of creation to our lives.

### Stage 2: Interpretation

While comprehension asks "What does it say?" interpretation asks "What does it mean?" Once we have read a passage enough times to know what it says we are ready to look into its meaning. A person who *interprets* the creation story can tell you why God created in a particular order or way. They are able to imply things from the text beyond what it says.

### Stage 3: Application

After doing the work to understand what the text says and what the text means, we are finally ready to ask "How should it change me?" Here is where we draw on our God-centered perspective to ask three supporting questions:

- What does this passage teach me about God?
- How does this aspect of God's character change my view of self?
- What should I do in response?

A person who *applies* the creation story can tell us that because God creates in an orderly fashion, we too should live well-ordered lives. Knowledge of God gleaned through comprehension of the text and interpretation of its meaning can now be applied to my life in a way that challenges me to be different.

## some guidelines

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It is vital to the learning process that you allow yourself to move through the three stages of understanding on your own, without the aid of commentaries or study notes. The first several times you read a passage you will probably be confused. This is actually a good thing. Allow yourself to feel lost, to dwell in the “I don’t know”. It will make the moment of discovery stick.

Nobody likes to feel lost or confused, but it is an important step in the acquisition and retention of understanding. Because of this, I have a few guidelines to lay out for you as you go through this study:

1. **Avoid all commentaries** until *comprehension* and *interpretation* have been earnestly attempted on your own. In other words, wait to read commentaries until after you have done the homework, attended small group time, and listened to the teaching. And then, consult commentaries you can trust. See the church website for suggested authors.
2. For the purposes of this study, **get a Bible without study notes**. Come on, it’s just too easy to look at them. You know I’m right.
3. Though commentaries are off-limits, here are some **tools you should use**:
  - **Cross-references**. These are the Scripture references in the margin or at the bottom of the page in your Bible. They point you to other passages that deal with the same topic or theme.
  - **An English dictionary** to look up unfamiliar words.
  - **Other translations** of the Bible. We will use the English Standard Version (ESV) as a starting point, and the New International Version (NIV) as our secondary translation. You can easily consult other versions online. I recommend the NASB or NKJV in addition to the ESV and NIV. Reading a passage in more than one translation can expand your understanding of its meaning. Note: a paraphrase, such as the NLT or the Message, can be useful but should be regarded as a commentary rather than a translation. Paraphrases are best consulted after careful study of an actual translation.
  - **A printed copy of the text**, double-spaced, so you can mark repeated words, phrases, or ideas. A complete copy of the ESV text of James is provided in the back of your workbook for you to mark.

## storing up treasure

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Approaching God’s Word with a God-centered perspective, with context, and with care takes effort and commitment. It is study for the long-term. Some days your study may not move you emotionally or speak to an immediate need. You may not be able to apply a passage at all. But what if ten years from now, in a dark night of the soul, that passage suddenly opened up to you because of the work you have done today? Wouldn’t your long-term investment be worth it?

In Matthew 13, we see Jesus begin to teach in parables. He tells seven deceptively simple stories that leave his disciples struggling for understanding - dwelling in the “I don’t know”, if you will. After the last parable he turns to them and asks “Have you understood all these things?” Despite their apparent confusion, they answer out of

their earnest desire with “Yes”. Jesus tells them that their newfound understanding makes them “like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

A storeroom, as Jesus indicates, is a place for keeping valuables over a long period of time for use when needed. Faithful study of God’s Word is a means for filling our spiritual storerooms with truth, so that in our hour of need we can bring forth both the old and the new as a source of rich provision. I pray that this study would be for you a source of much treasure, and that you would labor well to obtain it.

Grace and peace,

*Jen Wilkin*

## how to use this study

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This workbook is designed to be used in a specific way. The homework in the workbook will start you down the process of comprehension, application and interpretation. However, it was designed to dovetail with small group discussion time and the audio teachings. You can use the workbook by itself, but you are likely to find yourself with some unresolved questions. The audio teaching is intended to resolve most, if not all, of your unanswered questions from the homework and discussion time. With this in mind, consider using the materials as follows:

- If you are going through the study **on your own**, first work through the homework and then listen to the corresponding audio for that week.
- If you are going through the study **in a group**, first do your homework, then discuss the questions your group decides to cover, and then listen to the teaching. Some groups listen to the teaching before they meet, which can also work if that format fits best for everyone.

**Note:** For week 1, there is no homework. The study begins with an audio introduction. You will find a fill-in sheet on page 2 that you can use as you listen to the introductory material.

## acknowledgement

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I’m grateful to Anne Lincoln Holibaugh and Colleen Searcy for their editorial help and contributions to the workbook on weeks 6 and 8.

# James

living a life of genuine faith

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

## Introduction

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1. Who wrote the book of James?
2. When was it written?
3. To whom was it written?
4. In what style was it written?
5. What are the central themes of the letter?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 2

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*Last week we learned some valuable background information about the book of James. It is time to put our knowledge to work. Read through the entire book of James, keeping in mind the author, purpose, style and historical context of the letter. Then go back and take a closer look at **James 1:1-12**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions.*

Look at **James 1:1-4**.

1. James will cover many topics of importance in his letter to the twelve tribes. Which one does he choose to start with first?

Why do you think James chooses to start with this topic?

2. What term of endearment does James use when addressing his readers? (1:2)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. At the end of this workbook is a copy of the book of James for you to make notes on. With a yellow highlighter, mark every occurrence of the term “brother” in the book of James. How many times does it occur? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the frequent use of this endearment tell you about James and about those to whom he writes?

4. What do you think James means when he says to “count it all joy” when we meet trials?

5. What if James had written verse 2 as follows: “*Feel joyful* when you meet trials of various kinds...”? How is his meaning different than the meaning expressed above?

6. **Apply: What makes it hard for us to find joy in the midst of difficulty? Is James telling us that we are sinful for finding trials to be difficult? Explain your answer.**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 2

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7. According to **1:3**, what is the purpose of trials?

8. What word does the NIV use for *steadfastness*? (**1:3**) \_\_\_\_\_

*From time to time during the study, we will look up the meaning of words from the text in the dictionary. A good online dictionary can be found at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>.*

9. Look up *persevere* and *steadfast* in the dictionary and write definitions for them below that best fit the way they are used in James 1:

**persevere:**

**steadfast:**

10. What do you think it means to be made perfect through suffering? What does it not mean?

11. Look up “perfect” in the dictionary and note which definition best fits the context of **1:4**:

**perfect:**

Based on the word definitions you have looked up, rewrite **1:2-4** in your own words:

**12. Apply: How would developing steadfastness and perseverance change the way you live your life? How would it affect your relationships with those around you?**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 2

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13. Look up the following verses and note what each teaches about trials or suffering:

**John 16:33**

**Romans 5:3-5**

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

**Hebrews 12:11**

What can you conclude from these verses?

14. Now read **1 Peter 1:6-7**. How do trials prove our faith is genuine?

**15. Apply: How is having faith in what we “have not seen” a critical tool for persevering in times of trial? Describe a time of trial in which you have found this tool to have been needed.**

Now look at **James 1:5-7**.

16. In **1:5-6**, what does James assure us we can ask for? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Look up the word *wisdom* in the dictionary and write a meaning for it below that fits with the context of **James 1:5**:

**wisdom:**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 2

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18. How certain is James that our request for wisdom will be granted?

**19. Apply:** When you are in a time of trial, is wisdom the first thing you ask for? Why or why not? What other requests do you tend to make first?

20. What warning does James give in 1:6?

21. What word picture does James use to illustrate what a doubter is like? How is this an accurate illustration?

22. James says that the one who doubts is *double-minded*. What do you think he means by this? Fill in the chart below with what you think fills each of the double-minded man's minds:

Mind 1:	Mind 2:

23. Read **Proverbs 3:5-6**. How do its words offer a wise way to avoid double-mindedness?

**24. Apply:** Is there an area of your life in which you are double-minded, wavering between your own agenda and God's agenda? How can you apply Proverbs 3:5-6 to that situation?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 2

Now look at **James 1:9-12**.

25. In **1:9-11**, James points out two specific kinds of trials we can face: the trial of possessing little and the trial of possessing much. In what ways can each of these circumstances be trials? Write your thoughts below:

The trial of lowliness	The trial of wealth

What “exaltation” can the lowly brother boast in? (**1:9**)

What “humiliation” can the rich brother boast in? (**1:9**)

26. In **1:12**, how does James describe the one enduring trials? \_\_\_\_\_

27. Whose teachings do you think James is remembering when he says this? Look up **Matthew 5:11-12** to help with your answer.

28. Look up the word “blessed” in the dictionary and write a meaning or synonym for it below that fits with the context of **James 1:12**:

**blessed:**

29. What is our promised reward for remaining steadfast? \_\_\_\_\_

30. **Apply: For the believer who is steadfast, the crown of life awaits. What “lesser crowns” do we seek to wear now, rather than waiting for the better crown to come? Specifically, how do women seek glory in this life? How is crown-chasing out of place in the life of the believer?**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 2

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## Wrap-up

What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is \_\_\_\_\_ shows me that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

*Close in prayer. Ask God to cultivate in you a desire for a crown of life – a treasure in heaven, rather than the earthly treasure of comfort, safety, wealth, or wellness. Ask Him for steadfastness and wisdom. Thank Him that “He who has promised is faithful.”*

# Notes

Week 2

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 3

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Last week we learned that **genuine faith perseveres in trial**. We acknowledged the certainty of facing trials, and that we can rejoice in the knowledge that God is teaching us steadfastness. We also saw that those facing trials will always receive wisdom when they ask for it.

This week James teaches us a further way to recognize genuine faith: in the way a believer responds to temptation. Read through the entire book of James. Then re-read **James 1:2-18**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions. (Our focus this week will be 1:13-18, but we'll set it in its context by looking back at last week's passage as well.)

Look at James 1:13-15.

1. What do you think is the key difference between *trials* (v 2, 12) and *temptations* (v 13)?

2. **Apply: Think of a temptation you have faced unsuccessfully. What was the outcome? In hindsight, how would you handle the temptation differently?**

3. In 1:13, what do we learn about the character of God? Look up 1 John 1:5, 4:8-10 and note how it reinforces this idea.

4. God cannot be the source of temptation. Of what *is* He the source?

1:5 \_\_\_\_\_

1:17 \_\_\_\_\_

1:18 \_\_\_\_\_

What is the actual source of temptation? (1:14)

What is the certain result of giving into temptation? (1:15)

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 3

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5. In the book of Job, we see Job wrestle not just with trials but with temptations to sin. Read his words about temptation in **Job 31:1**.

“I have made a covenant \_\_\_\_\_ .”

How seriously did Job take the issue of temptation? Whose responsibility did he believe it was to protect his heart from sin?

6. What role do you think the eyes play in the committing of sin?

7. **Read Genesis 3:1-6**. What process does Eve go through in verse 6?

1. She \_\_\_\_\_ the apple
2. She *desired* the apple
3. She \_\_\_\_\_ the apple
4. She \_\_\_\_\_ the apple
5. She \_\_\_\_\_ the apple to Adam.

8. When Joshua is commanded to take the city of Jericho, God gives specific instructions about what to do with the spoils (**Joshua 6:18-19, 7:1**). Achan, one of his commanders, disobeys these instructions. Read **Joshua 7:19-25**, and note the similarities between Achan's story and Eve's.

9. Read **2 Samuel 11:1-5, 14, 26-27**. What similarities can you find in David's story to those you have just studied?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 3

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10. Read each of the following passages and note what each teaches about our eyes:

**2 Corinthians 4:18**

**Hebrews 12:2**

**1 John 2:15-17**

**Matthew 6:22-23**

11. **Apply: What have your eyes looked on this week that has placed you in the path of temptation? List several examples below.**

**What would Job tell you to do? How, practically, could you follow his advice?**

12. Match the following reference to its main thought:

Mark 8:34	Put to death the misdeeds of the body
Romans 8:12-14	Put to death immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed
Galatians 5:24-25	Deny yourself and take up your cross
Colossians 3:1-5	Crucify the sinful nature's passions and desires

13. What are some examples of ways we can crucify our flesh daily?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 3

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14. How did Jesus instruct his disciples to deal with temptation? **Matthew 26:41** (see also **Matthew 6:13**).

15. When does Jesus instruct his disciples to pray about temptation? Check your answer:

- before being tempted
- in the midst of temptation
- after being tempted

**16. Apply: Is this your approach to dealing with temptation? Think of a specific temptation you battle and write it below. How you will face the temptation *before* it presents itself?**

17. Now read **2 Timothy 2:22**. What further advice does Paul give to Timothy with regard to dealing with temptation?

**18. Apply: When temptation presents itself, do you flee or do you linger? How can you be better at fleeing from the temptation you wrote for question 16? What physical or mental steps can you take to remove you from the temptation?**

Now look at **James 1:16-18**.

19. What is James warning his brothers not to be deceived about?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 3

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20. What are some good and perfect gifts you have received from God?

21. What name is given for God in **1:17**? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think James chooses to describe God in these terms? Think about the role light plays in our lives as you construct your answer.

**22. Apply: Not all good and perfect gifts appear to be so at first. Not all gifts that initially appear to be good and perfect turn out to be so in hindsight. Think of a personal example that fits each of these scenarios and write it below. How can we learn to discern what is a good and perfect gift, versus what only appears to be?**

23. In **1:18**, what does James say God chose to do? (NIV)

How did he choose to do it?

Why did he choose to do it? (see **Leviticus 23:9-14** for a description of the firstfruits offering)

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 3

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24. Read **John 15:16**. Note the similarities between the words of Jesus and the words of James in **1:18**. What do both passages want us to know?

25. Rewrite **1:18** in your own words:

## Wrap-up

What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is \_\_\_\_\_ shows me that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

*Close in prayer. Ask God to give you the wisdom to resist and flee from temptation. Thank Him for giving that which is good and perfect. Praise Him for being the Father of lights, unchanging. Ask Him to bring about spiritual fruitfulness in you through the word of truth. Thank Him that He chooses those who do not choose Him, that they might "bear fruit that abides."*

# Notes

Week 3

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 4

Last week we learned that **genuine faith resists and flees from temptation**. We examined the progression of temptation illustrated throughout Scripture: see-want-take-share-suffer. We learned that all good gifts and perfect gifts have only one source – our heavenly Father.

This week James teaches us yet another way to recognize genuine faith: in the way a believer responds to the Word of truth. Read through the entire book of James. Then re-read **James 1:19-27**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions.

Scan back through **1:19-27**

1. In the passage, note below everything James instructs us to do and not to do:

Do:	Don't (stop doing or reject):

Now look at **James 1:19-20**.

2. In **1:19**, to what or whom should we be quick to listen?
3. James tells us to be “slow to speak” (**1:19**). Read the following verses from Old Testament wisdom literature and note what they say about our words:

**Proverbs 10:19**

**Proverbs 17:27, 28**

**Proverbs 18:2, 4-7**

**Ecclesiastes 5:2**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 4

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4. **Apply:** What steps could you take to become better at listening? Which of your relationships in particular would benefit from your becoming a better listener?

**What steps could you take to become better at guarding your words? Which of your relationships would benefit the most from your becoming slower to speak?**

5. Read **Ephesians 4:26**. Do you think it is a sin to be angry? What is the difference between sinful anger and “un-sinful” anger? Give an example of each.
6. Can you think of a story in Scripture that would prove whether or not it is always a sin to be angry?
7. How would you define “righteous anger”? What is its motive?
8. Look up the following verses and note how they reinforce what James teaches about anger:

**Proverbs 16:32**

**Proverbs 19:11**

**Proverbs 14:17**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 4

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9. **Apply:** Think of a time you have gotten angry too quickly. What were you really angry about? How did your anger affect the outcome of the situation?

**What steps could you take to become better at controlling your anger? Which of your relationships would benefit the most from your becoming slower to become angry?**

Now look at **James 1:21-25**.

10. What does it mean to “receive the implanted word” (1:21)? With what attitude are we to receive the Word of God? Why is this attitude key?
11. In what way does James warn us not to be deceived in 1:22?
12. How is Scripture like a mirror (1:23)? What does it show us about ourselves?
13. **Apply:** James describes the Word of God as the “perfect law that gives freedom” (1:25 NIV). Many people think of God’s law as something that takes away our freedom. James says the opposite is true. How does God’s law give us freedom? Give an example from your own experience.

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 4

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14. Read **Psalm 19:7-11** and note below each of the ways the law sets us free.
15. How does it make logical sense that the one who hears and does will be blessed in what he does (**1:25**)?
16. Look up the following verses and note how they reinforce what James says about God's law:

**Psalm 1:1-2**

**Luke 11:27-28**

Now look at **James 1:26-27**.

17. In **1:26**, what do you think James means by the term *religious*? What would be an appropriate synonym you could substitute there?
18. What does James tell us is a sure indicator that someone's outward religious practice is false?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 4

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19. Look up the following verses and note how they reinforce what James says about controlling our speech:

**Proverbs 10:19**

**Proverbs 17:27**

**Psalm 39:1**

**Psalm 141:3**

20. Sum up **1:26-27**. What three tests of true religion does James give?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

21. **Apply:** Based on this definition, do you practice true religion or false religion? For each of the three tests, write one concrete way you will strive to demonstrate true religion this week:

- Do you control your tongue?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Do you demonstrate active concern for others?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Do you pursue personal holiness?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 4

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## Wrap-up

What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is \_\_\_\_\_ shows me that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

*Close in prayer. Confess to God times in which you are too quick to speak, too slow to listen, and too quick to become angry. Ask God to give you ears to hear and hands to act. Ask Him to place in your path people in need. Ask him to help you forsake religious behavior for the true religion that acts on what it has been shown to be true. Bless Him for His steadfast love toward you, that He has given you a mirror of truth in His Word.*

# Notes

Week 4

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 5

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Last week we learned that **genuine faith is actively obedient to the Word**. We examined the importance of not merely listening to the Word, but being changed by it. We learned that those who act on God's Word will be blessed in what they do, and we examined the difference between true and false religion.

This week James expands our understanding of genuine faith by examining the way we treat those around us. Read through the entire book of James. Then re-read **James 2:1-13**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions.

Look back at **question 18** in your homework from last week.

1. What three tests of true religion did James give in **1:26-27**?
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
2. Which one does he expand on in **2:1-13**?

Now look at **James 2:1-7**.

3. In **2:1**, how does James describe Jesus? "the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_." How does this particular title fit with what James is going to discuss in **2:1-13**?
4. What does it mean to show favoritism or partiality? What are some ways favoritism can occur in the church?
5. In **2:2-4**, how were those James addresses discriminating between rich and poor? What clues did they focus on? Are these clues always reliable? Why or why not?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 5

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6. Based on the context of James's comments, do you think the early church consisted mostly of wealthy people or poor people? Explain how you reached your answer. Look up **Acts 2:45** to see how you did.

7. What motivates a person or group to treat rich people better than poor ones?

8. **Apply:** Describe a time you were treated with positive favoritism. How did it feel?

**Describe a time you were treated with negative discrimination. How did it feel?**

**Why is it so important for believers not to discriminate among those who enter the doors of our churches?**

9. What segment of the population is James most likely referring to in **2:6-7**? Who was most likely oppressing and blaspheming against early Jewish Christians? Choose one:

- poor Jews
- poor gentiles
- wealthy Jews
- wealthy gentiles

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 5

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10. Based on your knowledge of Scripture, to whom did Jesus show favoritism?

- the scribes and Pharisees
- rulers
- the sick
- poor people
- children
- “sinners and tax collectors”
- rich people
- John the Baptist
- the disciples
- Mary, Joseph, and his family
- other \_\_\_\_\_

11. **Apply:** Is there anyone to whom you show favoritism? Why have you singled out that person for your favor? How does showing favoritism toward them damage your ability to love them as you should?

Now look at **James 2:8-13**.

12. In **2:8**, what is the “royal law”? Why is it royal? Can you find another place in Scripture where it occurs?

13. How do the following excerpts from Old Testament law confirm the truth of **2:9**?

**Deut 1:17**

**Deut 16:19**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 5

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14. What do verses **2:10-11** tell us about being a lawbreaker? Does it seem fair to you? Why or why not?

15. Look up **Romans 13:8-10**. How do Paul's words reinforce the principles in **2:9-11**?

**16. Apply:** How should the idea that we will be “judged under the Law of liberty” impact our words and actions? List some specific examples for each area below:

In our home	
In our place of work	
In our church	
In our community	

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 5

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17. Read **Matthew 6:14-15** and compare it to **2:13**. Why do you think our treatment of others affects God's treatment of us?

Look up *judge (verb)* and *mercy* in the dictionary and write definitions or synonyms for them below that best fit the way they are used in **James 2:12-13**:

**judge:**

**mercy:**

Now, based on your definitions, rewrite **2:12-13** in your own words:

18. **Apply:** Is there a person in your life to whom you need to extend mercy instead of judgment? What is holding you back from doing so?

19. Glance back though **2:1-13** and try to summarize what James says in into one sentence.

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 5

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## Wrap-up

What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is \_\_\_\_\_ shows me that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

*Close in prayer. Praise God for His son, Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory. Ask God to show you how discrimination has touched your relationships. Ask Him to reveal to you where you have sought to glorify yourself by glorifying others. Ask Him to reveal to you where you have sought to elevate yourself by devaluing others. Thank Him that mercy has triumphed over judgment in His dealings with you. Ask Him to help you demonstrate mercy as it has been shown to you.*

# Notes

Week 5

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 6

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Last week we learned that **genuine faith does not discriminate**. We saw that where there is genuine, humble, faith-filled love for others, there will not be partiality or judgment, but rather mercy.

This week James gives us a litmus test for genuine faith: whether or not it bears the fruit of good works. Read through the entire book of James, and as you do, underline every occurrence of the word "faith" in **red**. Then re-read **James 2:14-26**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions.

Look at **James 2:14-16**.

1. What do you think James means by *faith* in **2:14**? What kind of faith? Look back at **2:1** for a hint.

What do you think James means by *works*?

2. **Apply: People can place faith in many things. How is faith in Christ different than faith in other things, like elevators, spouses, or savings accounts? How is faith in Christ a genuine, saving faith?**

3. Look up the following verses. How does Jesus tell us we are shown to be His disciples?

**John 13:34-35**

**John 15:8**

4. According to **John 15:3-5**, to whom must we be connected in order to bear fruit?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 6

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5. James gives an example in **2:15-16** of lifeless, empty faith. What kind of action would have accompanied genuine faith in this situation?

6. Where else in his letter has James spoken of how believers are to treat the poor?

Are the poor he now discusses in **2:15-16** the same group or a different group? Explain how you reached your answer.

7. **Apply:** Have you ever offered pious words of encouragement or sympathy without doing anything practical to help a brother or sister in need? Has anyone ever done so to you? What motive lies behind such statements?

8. Last week we noted that the early church was probably not made up of predominantly wealthy members. Look back again at **Acts 2:42-45**. How did believers in the early church respond to needs within the church?

Why do you think they were so willing to sacrifice for the sake of fellow believers?

9. **Apply:** How willing are you to sacrifice in order to care for and help meet the needs of those within the community of believers? What keeps you from doing so? What does this reveal about your faith?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 6

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Now look at **James 2:17-20**.

10. Note the three ways James describes faith without works in these verses.

**2:17**

**2:19**

**2:20**

11. James challenges those who would separate faith and works in **2:18**. What problem does he point out in their argument?

12. According to **2:19**, what do demons believe about God?

What is wrong with this kind of faith? How is it like human faith that produces no good works?

13. Why is faith apart from works *useless*, as James states in **2:20**?

Now look at **James 2:21-26**.

14. Who are the two people James offers as examples of genuine faith?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 6

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15. Abraham is perhaps the most significant person in the Old Testament. Read part of his story in **Genesis 22:1-18**. What do you learn about Abraham in this passage? What do you learn about his son Isaac?

How did Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac prove the authenticity of his faith?

16. Now learn about Rahab by reading **Joshua 2:1-21**. What stands out to you about this woman? How was her faith proven to be true?

The word "*justified*" is an important term in this passage, and it is crucial that we have a correct understanding of what James does and does not mean by it. Look back through **2:21-26** and circle the word "*justified*" in **blue** each time you see it. There are two definitions that will help us as we look at this idea.

1. **justified**: to be *declared* righteous or in right standing
2. **justified**: to be *shown* as righteous or in right standing

17. Read the words of Paul in **Romans 3:27-28**. Look back at the two definitions of "*justified*". Which definition does Paul have in mind in these verses? Rewrite **Romans 3:28** below, substituting the definition you chose for the word "*justified*".

18. Which definition does James have in mind in **James 2:24**? (Look back at **2:14** to help with your answer.) Rewrite **James 2:24** below, substituting the definition you chose for the word "*justified*".

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 6

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19. **Apply:** Describe the thinking of someone trying to gain right standing before God by works. How is this kind of thinking not aligned with the gospel?

Describe the thinking of someone who believes faith in God means we don't need to worry about obeying the law any more. How is this kind of thinking also not aligned with the gospel?

20. **Apply:** How have you trusted in your good works to justify yourself before God? In what area of your life do you believe you're doing a pretty good job with the whole righteousness thing? What would Paul say to you?

In what ways have you neglected to pursue obedience because "God's grace is big enough"? What would James say to you?

21. Summarize the message of **James 2:14-26** in one sentence:

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 6

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## Wrap-up

What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is \_\_\_\_\_ shows me that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

*Close in prayer. Confess to the Lord places where you know your faith has not been followed by obedient good works. Ask Him to show you where you have neglected the needs of fellow believers. Praise God for the gift of saving faith and that we are justified before Him by that faith alone. Praise Him that we have been rescued from darkness instead of being required to work our way into light. Ask Him to reveal and purify the heart behind your good works.*

# Notes

Week 6

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 7

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Last week we learned that **genuine faith bears the fruit of good works**. We considered the inconsistency of saying we believe in God but living as if there is no God. We discovered that there is no such thing as a fruitless faith – that all genuine faith bears the fruit of good works.

This week James tackles the most prominent area where our actions reveal the state of our faith: our speech. Nothing gives away the state of our hearts faster than our words. Read through the entire book of James. Then re-read **James 3:1-12**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions.

Our lesson this week may hit a bit close to home. Take a minute to pray and ask God to soften your heart to hear His Word without anger, denial, or misplaced guilt. Ask Him to speak to your conscience. Ask Him for courage to look into the mirror of His Word this week.

Look at **James 3:1-2**.

1. James warns that not many should become (NIV: *presume to be*) teachers. Why might many want to become teachers?
2. Read **Romans 12:6-7**. What do you learn about teaching in these verses?
3. Based on the context of **3:1-2**, what potential pitfalls await those who teach?
4. Why is it appropriate that teachers be judged with greater strictness?
5. **Apply: Do you think that teachers in the church today take seriously the warning that they will be judged with greater strictness? Why or why not?**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 7

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6. Does James seem to be changing the subject in chapter 3 from what we covered last week? How might the topic of pure speech build on his discussion of the relationship between faith and works?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. In the margin of your printed copy of the text, draw a bracket in **orange** to highlight each section of the book of James that deals with some aspect of our speech. Of the five chapters, how many make mention of this topic? \_\_\_\_\_ What can you conclude from this?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What does James mean when he says that one who controls his tongue is “a perfect man”? (3:2)

Now look at **James 3:3-12**.

9. What imagery does James use to describe the tongue and its role?

verse	descriptive image
3:3	
3:4	
3:5-6	
3:7-8	
3:11	
3:12a	
3:12b	

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 7

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10. Apply: Which of these images can you most relate to? Why?

11. Read **John 8:44**. What title is given for Satan? How does this tie in with the imagery in **3:6**?

12. Rewrite **3:6** in your own words:

13. Look up **Matthew 12:33-37** and compare it to **3:8-12**. Answer the following questions:

- Who is speaking in Matthew?
- What similarities do you find between the two passages?
- What do Jesus' words add to your understanding of James's words?

14. Why is it especially wrong to curse a human being (**3:9**)? What types of speech do you think are included under the category of cursing?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 7

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

**Proverbs 6:16-17**

**Proverbs 10:19**

**Proverbs 12:22**

**Proverbs 17:27-28**

**Proverbs 18: 6-7, 13**

**Proverbs 26:20**

**Proverbs 28:23**

16. What kind of speech are you characterized by? Think about your speech over the last week and evaluate how well you have controlled your tongue:

	yes	no
Bragging/boasting		
Lying		
Flattering		
Slandering		
Gossiping		
Verbal abuse of others		
Cursing/profanity		
Making off-color remarks		
Talking behind someone's back		
Passing on rumors		
Arguing		
Raising your voice in anger/frustration		
Using sarcasm or cutting remarks		

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 7

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17. Apply: Which of the above sins of the tongue is most often a problem for you? Why?

18. Apply: How might the following things provide opportunity to sin with your tongue?

- Cell phone
- Facebook/Twitter/Instagram
- Email/Texting
- Prayer request time at Bible study
- Small group discussion time at Bible study
- Meeting with an accountability partner
- Praying in public/in a group
- Giving an educated opinion on a topic you love

19. Is there ever a time that we sin with our tongues by remaining silent? Think of an example from your own life and write it below.

20. What positive uses of the tongue can you find in the following verses?

**Romans 10:14-15**

**Colossians 3:15-17**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 7

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**21. Apply: What are two ways you can avoid sins of speech this week? What are two ways you can practice positive speech?**

## Wrap-up

What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is \_\_\_\_\_ shows me that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

*Close in prayer. Confess to God any specific sins of the tongue that He has been showing you. Ask Him to guard your heart and mind from the thought patterns that result in improper speech. Ask Him for the strength to resist the temptation to sin with speech. Ask Him to help you through the study of His Word to gain control of your words. Bless Him that every word He speaks is profitable and good. Thank Him for the Word Made Flesh, Jesus Christ, through whom there is forgiveness of sins*

# Notes

Week 7

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 8

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Last week we learned that **genuine faith chooses words with care**. We examined the dangers of being “double-tongued” in our habits of speech.

This week, James wants to show us another “double jeopardy” we must avoid, this time in the area of wisdom. Read through the entire book of James. As you read, use a pink highlighter to mark every occurrence of the term “wisdom”. Then re-read **James 3:13-4:10**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions.

Look at **James 3:13-18**.

1. Look back at the definition you wrote for the word *wisdom* in the week 2 homework (p.6) and rewrite it below. You can refine it if your definition has grown or changed.

**wisdom:**

2. Much of the book of Proverbs is an appeal to pursue and seek wisdom. Look up the following verses and note what each adds to your understanding about wisdom.

**Proverbs 8:10-12**

**Proverbs 8:32-36**

**Proverbs 1:7**

**Proverbs 2:1-6**

**Proverbs 3:5-8**

3. Look back at **James 1:5**. Specifically, what do we learn about wisdom in this verse?
4. James begins with a question in **3:13**. How can we recognize wisdom and understanding in ourselves and in others?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 8

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5. How do many people attempt to “show” they are wise? (Look back at **3:5**.) When we are attempting to “show” ourselves to be wise, what is often the motive?
6. In contrast, in what way are we called to show that we our wise according to **3:13**? (Look at the NIV as well.)
7. When you hear the word *meek* what other words come to mind?

Look up the word *meek* in the dictionary and write a definition that best fits the context of **3:13**:

**meek:**

8. In the NIV, a different phrase is used in **3:13** rather than “in the meekness of wisdom”. Fill in the statement below.  
  
*“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the \_\_\_\_\_ that comes \_\_\_\_\_.”*
9. Look up **Matthew 11:29**. How does Jesus describe Himself? What does He ask us to do?
10. Why do you think humility/meekness is such an essential sign of wisdom?
11. Complete **James 3:14**.  
  
*“But if you have \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in your hearts, do not \_\_\_\_\_ and be false to the  
\_\_\_\_\_.”*

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 8

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12. What can bitter jealousy and selfish ambition look like within community of believers?

13. Compare **3:14** in the NIV. What truth does James imply is being denied when we harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition?

14. James describes two types of wisdom in **3:15-17**. Contrast them in the chart below:

	Where does it come from?	What are its characteristics?	What are its outcomes?
Wisdom #1			
Wisdom #2			

15. In contrast to the maker of disorder is the maker of peace mentioned in **3:18**. Read **Matthew 5:9**. Why do think Jesus and James use the word *peacemaker* rather than *peacekeeper*?

16. What crop is sown in peace by the peacemaker (**3:18**)?

“a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_”

What do you think James means by this phrase? Look up **Galatians 5:22-23** to help with your answer.

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 8

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17. Read **3:13-18** again. Within the context of the whole passage, where do the good fruits listed in verses **17-18** come from?
18. **Apply:** Which of the evidences of Godly wisdom would you like to see more of in your life? Which relationships in particular would benefit from your operating out of Godly wisdom?

## Now look at James 4:1-10

19. What does James say causes quarrels among people? \_\_\_\_\_  
How does his answer differ from the one a quarrelsome person would give?
20. Is James addressing quarreling in general, or quarreling within a specific setting or group? **(4:1)** Explain your answer.
21. In **4:2-3**, does James mean to imply that we do not have *the things we covet* because we haven't asked God for them? Summarize what you think he is saying about prayer in these verses.
22. In **4:4-10**, James characterizes the behaviors of **4:1-3** as friendship with the world. How would you define "worldliness"? What do you think it means to have "friendship with the world"?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 8

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It is important to note that James is warning against loving the fallen world, a way of thinking and living that seeks self-gratification and self-exaltation. This is not the same thing as having a love for the lost. Loving the lost is a moral imperative for the believer.

**23. Apply: What outward behaviors do Christians typically associate with having “friendship with the world”? List as many as you can think of below. It may help to think of your five senses to prompt ideas.**

**Are any of these behaviors more of a problem for you than others? What about the attitudes (desires/passions) that lie behind them?**

24. In **4:4**, why do you think James uses the term “adulterous” to describe people who practice friendship toward the world? Look up **Ephesians 5:25-32** to help with your answer.

25. In **4:5**, of what is the spirit intensely envious (NIV)? Why?

26. In **4:7**, James offers a solution to the problem he outlines in **4:1-6**. What is it?

“\_\_\_\_\_ yourselves, therefore, \_\_\_\_\_.”

Look up *submit* in the dictionary and write a definition for it below that best fits the way it is used in **4:7**:

<p><b>submit:</b> (intransitive verb)</p>
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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 8

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27. In **4:7b-10**, what are the five instructions James gives to bring about submission? List them below, along with what you think they mean:

	steps	meaning
1.	(v 7b)	
2.	(v 8a)	
3.	(v 8b)	
4.	(v 9)	
5.	(v 10)	

28. Now let's try an exercise that can help bring home the meaning of a passage. It's a little like doing a "mad lib". Fill in all the blanks below before looking at the next page. Use a thesaurus if you need help. Then turn to the next page and fill your answers into the appropriate spaces.

1. 3-letter name for The Father of Lights: \_\_\_\_\_
2. The Father of Lies: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Opposite (antonym) of "cleanse" \_\_\_\_\_
4. Opposite of "purify" \_\_\_\_\_
5. Opposite of "grieve" \_\_\_\_\_
6. Opposite of "humble"(verb) or "abase" (verb) \_\_\_\_\_

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 8

## A Formula for Worldliness

Submit yourselves therefore to friendship with the world. Resist (1) \_\_\_\_\_, and he will leave you to your own devices. Draw near to (2) \_\_\_\_\_, and he will draw near to you. (3) \_\_\_\_\_ your hands, you sinners, and (4) \_\_\_\_\_ your hearts, you double-minded. (5) \_\_\_\_\_ your sinfulness. Let your shame be turned to laughter. (6) \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves above the Lord, but He will bring you low.

29. Read your “inverted” paraphrase of **James 4:8-10** from start to finish. Now read **Romans 6:16**. How does it reinforce what we have just seen?

**30. Apply: What do you think James means by “humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you”? Has this ever been your experience? Describe how you have found this to be true in your own life.**

## Wrap-up

What aspect of God’s character has this week’s passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is \_\_\_\_\_ shows me that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

*Close in prayer. Ask the Lord to show you how, where, and with whom you need to be a peacemaker. Confess where you have not chosen to make peace. Thank Him that He has made peace with us through His Son. Ask Him to show you where earthly wisdom has governed your thoughts, words, and actions. Ask Him for His wisdom that comes down from above. Ask Him to give you single-mindedness, focused on friendship with God rather than with the world. Confess to Him any areas of worldly behavior in your life where you are not in submission to Him. Thank Him that “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)*

# Notes

Week 8

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 9

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Last week we learned that ***genuine faith hates the wisdom and ways of the world***. We examined the extent to which we have courted friendship with the things this world values rather than the things of God. We saw that those who humble themselves by earnestly repenting of their sin show their rejection of the world and their love of Christ.

This week James shows us three pride-driven behaviors that worldliness embraces: slander, boasting, and hoarding. Read through the entire book of James. Then re-read **James 4:11-5:6**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions.

Look at **James 4:11-12**.

1. In **4:11**, what word is used to describe “speaking evil against” someone in the NIV?

\_\_\_\_\_

Look up the word *slander* in the dictionary and write a definition below that best fits the context of **4:11** (hint: the noun definition may be more helpful than the verb):

**slander:**

Based on your definition, what is the key difference between making an accusation against someone and *slandering* someone?

2. Glance back at **4:1-10**. How does James move logically from his discussion about friendship with the world to the topic of slander? How are the two discussions related?

3. Look back at **2:1-4** and note its relationship to what James discusses in **4:11-12**.

**2:4** judges with evil \_\_\_\_\_

**4:11** judges with evil \_\_\_\_\_

What motive lies behind both favoritism and slander?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 9

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4. Specifically, who is James admonishing us not to slander? (hint: what word is repeated three times in **4:11**?) \_\_\_\_\_ Why is this particular form of slander important to avoid?

5. Look up the following verses and note what you find about speaking about a brother:

**Revelation 12:9-10**

**1 John 2:1-2**

Who are we imitating when we slander a brother? \_\_\_\_\_

In what ways can we be more like Christ when speaking about a brother?

6. **Apply: Think of a time you have spoken evil against a brother or sister in the faith. How did it make you feel to slander them? What lie(s) do we tell ourselves when we slander a brother or sister in the faith?**

7. What makes us particularly unqualified to sit in the role of judge for our neighbor? (**4:12**) List several thoughts below.

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 9

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8. **Apply:** Is James saying that we are not to confront our fellow believers about sin? Why or why not? What is the difference between judging someone and correcting someone?

9. Summarize what James is saying in **4:11-12** in one sentence:

Now look at **James 4:13-17**.

10. What kind of evil speech does James address next? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Specifically, what is wrong with the kind of boasting that James forbids here?

12. **Apply:** Is it wrong to make plans for the future? If so, why? If not, what kinds of planning are wrong and what kinds are okay?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 9

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13. Why does James tell us to preface our plans by saying “If the Lord wills...”? Is the problem with planning for the future merely in the way we word our plans? Explain your answer.

**14. Apply: How can we know if God wills something in our life or not? Can we know the will of God for certain? Explain your answer. Give an example if you can.**

15. What attitude lies behind future plans that exclude the consideration of God’s will? (4:16)

What is the opposite of arrogance? \_\_\_\_\_

What would be a humble attitude to take toward future plans?

What is promised to the one who adopts this attitude? (4:10)

Does this mean the humble planner will enjoy success in all he plans? Explain your answer.

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 9

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16. How does **4:17** complete the idea James is conveying in **4:13-16**? What is “the right thing to do” that someone might fail to do?
17. Summarize what James is saying in **4:13-17** in one sentence:
- 18. Apply: What future plans have you made? List several below. Have you evaluated these plans in light of God’s right to direct your plans?**

Now look at **James 5:1-6**.

19. Look back through the book of James and circle every occurrence of the word “rich” in **green**. How many sections of the book of James address the topic of wealth? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Compare the opening words of **4:13** and **5:1** to those of **4:11** and **5:7** (look at ESV and NIV). To whom does James appear to be directing his comments in **4:13-5:6**? Explain your reasoning.
21. What apparent sins characterize the rich people James is addressing? Check all that apply and write a verse reference next to your selections:
- withholding wages
  - fraud
  - hoarding of wealth
  - condemning the innocent
  - murdering the innocent
  - self-indulgent living

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 9

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22. Read the following passages in Deuteronomy and note what each commands about money:

**Deuteronomy 10:17-21**

**Deuteronomy 15:7-11**

**Deuteronomy 23:19-20**

**Deuteronomy 24:10-15**

How does the description of the rich oppressors in **5:1-6** show a disregard for these commands?

23. In **5:1-3**, what does James point out about the relationship between worldly wealth and the passage of time?

Now read Matthew **7:19-24**. Who is speaking? What similarities do you find to the words of James?

24. Based on the words of James and Jesus, what is the right relationship to have with wealth and possessions? Why? (Look up **Psalms 24:1 NIV** to confirm your answer)

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 9

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**25. Apply:** What is your attitude toward wealth and possessions? Specifically, what are you tempted to hoard or indulge in? How are you tempted to misuse the resources entrusted to you? How does your attitude display a lack of trust in God?

## Wrap-up

What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is \_\_\_\_\_ shows me that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

*Close in prayer. Ask God to show you where your words and actions have not reflected submission to the will of God. Ask Him to show you where slander, boasting, and materialism have taken hold in your life. Thank Him that the humility of Christ has secured salvation for you. Ask Him that you might take on that humility. Praise Him that the earth and everything in it are fully his possessions, yourself included*

# Notes

Week 9

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 10

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Last week we learned that **genuine faith submits to God's will**. We examined the folly of believing that we determine the course of our own lives, and we considered what Scripture states clearly as the will of God for each of our lives. We also took time to examine the folly of slander and hoarding.

This week James concludes his letter with a renewed call to persevere and with an admonition to Godly speech in the form of prayer. Read through the entire book of James. Then re-read **James 5:7-20**. Read it in the ESV and NIV before you begin to answer the questions.

Look at **James 5:7-11**.

1. Why does **5:7** begin with the phrase "Be patient, therefore..."? How does **5:7-9** follow logically after **5:1-6**?
2. In **5:7-11**, underline in **blue** every occurrence of the word *patient* or *patience*. Look up *patient* in the dictionary and write a definition that best fits the context of **5:7-11**:

**patient:**

Based on your definition, rewrite **5:7** in your own words:

3. What other repeated ideas or words from earlier sections do you recognize in **5:7-11**? List them below. Why do you think James restates them here?
4. In **5:7-11**, mark every reference to God with a **purple** circle. What does each mention tell us is true about God? List what you find below:

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 10

5. Read the following verses. Note who is speaking, what the message is, and when the message is being spoken (or is to be spoken):

	who is speaking	message	when spoken
<b>Matthew 3:2</b>			
<b>Matthew 4:17</b>			
<b>Matthew 10:7</b>			

How do these passages relate to what James is saying in **5:8-9**?

6. In **5:10-11**, underline in **green** every occurrence of the word *steadfast(ness)*. Where else has James talked about this idea in his letter? Go back and mark other occurrences of *steadfastness*.

Look back in your homework to your definition of *steadfast* (week 2 page 5). Rewrite it below.

**steadfast:**

7. Why do we need patience and steadfastness if “the coming of the Lord is at hand” and “the Judge is standing at the door”?
8. **Apply:** Do you believe that the Lord’s coming is near? Why or why not? If so, how do you feel about it?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 10

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9. Who does James offer as an example of steadfastness? \_\_\_\_\_ What do you know about Job? List below two ways that Job's steadfastness can be an example to you in times of suffering.

**10. Apply: What fellow believer has been an example to you of steadfastness in suffering? How has their example challenged you to face lesser or similar difficulties in your own life?**

Now look at **James 5:12**.

11. James warns against swearing oaths. Jesus expresses the same idea in **Matthew 5:34-37**. Compare these two teachings. Are Jesus and James telling us we should never, under any circumstance, swear oaths? Explain your answer.

12. Look up the following verses and note what you learn about swearing oaths.

	Who swears an oath?	Is it sinful to do so?
Exodus 22:10-11		
Deuteronomy 6;13		
Deuteronomy 10:20		
Isaiah 65:16		
Isaiah 45:23		
Hebrews 7:20-22		

Based on these verses, what do you think James and Jesus want us to understand about taking oaths?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 10

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13. **Apply:** How are you guilty of not allowing your “yes” be yes or your “no” be no? Which of your relationships suffer the most because of this particular sin?

Now look at **James 5:13-16**.

14. In contrast to the previous verse and earlier discussions of the use of the tongue, James now admonishes us in *positive* uses of our speech. List below every positive form of speech James commands us to use:

15. Specifically, who does James indicate is to offer the “prayer of faith”? **(5:14-15)** \_\_\_\_\_

What two types of requests would the “prayer offered in faith” by these men include? **(5:15)**

16. Why do you think James mentions forgiveness of sin in relation to healing? Give two examples of how sin might affect our health.

Are problems of health always related to sin in our lives? Look at **John 9:1-3** to check your answer.

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 10

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17. What attitudes does James tell us underlie effective prayer?

**James 1:6-8**

**James 4:3**

18. Have you ever prayed for a sick person to be healed? Describe what happened.

**19. Apply: Why do you think the prayer of a righteous man has great power as it is working/is powerful and effective? Does his righteousness entitle him to make requests of God that others cannot? Explain your answer.**

Now look at **James 5:17-18**.

20. James offers us Elijah as an example of someone whose prayers were powerful and effective. Elijah was a great prophet of Israel, held in high regard by James's Jewish audience. He was used by God to teach a lesson to the wicked king Ahab. Read the story of Elijah in **1 Kings 17-18** and note any clues it contains about why his prayers were so effective.

21. Why does James say "Elijah was a man just like us"? (**5:17a NIV**). Are you just like Elijah? Why or why not?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 10

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22. Specifically, how did Elijah pray? (5:17) \_\_\_\_\_

Look up the following verses and note how they support his method:

**Luke 18:1**

**Colossians 4:2**

**Romans 12:2**

**Acts 1:14**

23. **Apply: Why does God value persistent prayer? Does He need to be convinced of our faith? Explain your answer.**

Now look at **James 5:19-20**.

24. In **5:19-20**, what two things will God do for the person brought back from wandering from the truth?

What is meant by the phrase “cover a multitude of sins”? Look up the following verses to expand your understanding:

**Psalms 32:1**

**Psalms 85:2**

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 10

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25. Summarize James's concluding thought in **5:19-20** in one sentence:

**26. Apply: Practically, how can we bring back a brother who wanders from the truth? What causes us to hesitate to do so? How does James address our hesitations?**

## Wrap-up

What aspect of God's character has this week's passage of James shown you more clearly?

Fill in the following statement:

Knowing that God is \_\_\_\_\_ shows me that I am \_\_\_\_\_.

What one step can you take this week to better live in light of this truth?

*Close in prayer. Ask God to grant you the strength to remain steadfast in any circumstance and confess any grumbling you have done. Thank Him that he has provided a support system through the elders of your church. Ask Him to teach you the value of steadfastness in prayer. Praise Him that all requests can be trusted to Him, and all outcomes are within His control.*

# Notes

Week 10

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# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 11

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For eleven weeks, you have had the rich blessing of learning at the feet of James, the brother of Jesus. Take some time to reflect on what you will take away from this study. Can you guess where a good place to start might be? That's right – by reading through James one last time. As you take your “victory lap”, pay special attention to what stands out most in your mind from your semester in this letter. Then answer the questions below:

1. What aspect of God's character has emerged most clearly as you have studied James?

How do you understand this character trait more fully because of studying James?

2. How has the Holy Spirit used James to convict you of sin? What thoughts, words, or actions has He shown you that need to be redeemed? What do you need to stop doing?
3. How has the Holy Spirit used James to train you in righteousness? What disciplines has He given you a desire to pursue? What do you need to start doing?
4. How has the Holy Spirit used James to encourage you? What cause to celebrate has the letter imprinted on your heart?

# James: Living a Life of Genuine Faith

Week 11

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5. What verse or passage from James stands out most in your mind after eleven weeks of study? Why?

*Close in prayer. Thank God for giving us the example of James, the brother of Jesus, whose faith proved genuine, even to the point of death. Thank God for the gift of genuine faith. Ask Him to translate your faith into religion that is "pure and undefiled", demonstrated in your thoughts, words and deeds. Ask Him to help you live out your faith in such a way that its authenticity is obvious to all you meet. Bless Him for the gift of Christ.*

# Notes

Week 11

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Appendix

# **The Epistle of James**

English Standard Version

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# The Epistle of James

Appendix - ESV Text

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# The Epistle of James

Appendix - ESV Text

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## Greeting

**1** James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:  
Greetings.

## Testing of Your Faith

**2** Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, **3** for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. **4** And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

**5** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. **6** But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

**9** Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, **10** and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. **11** For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

**12** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. **13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. **14** But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. **15** Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

# The Epistle of James

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16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

## Hearing and Doing the Word

19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

26 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

## The Sin of Partiality

**2** My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus

Christ, the Lord of glory. **2** For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, **3** and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” **4** have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? **5** Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? **7** Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

**8** If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. **9** But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. **11** For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. **12** So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. **13** For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

# The Epistle of James

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## Faith Without Works Is Dead

14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

## Taming the Tongue

**3** Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.<sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body.<sup>3</sup> If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. **4** Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. **5** So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! **6** And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. **7** For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, **8** but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. **9** With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. **10** From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. **11** Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? **12** Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

# The Epistle of James

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## Wisdom from Above

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

## Warning Against Worldliness

**4** What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. 4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? 6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you

## The Epistle of James

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double-minded.<sup>9</sup> Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

<sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. <sup>12</sup> There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

### **Boasting About Tomorrow**

<sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—<sup>14</sup> yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” <sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

## Warning to the Rich

**5** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon

you. **2** Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. **3** Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. **4** Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. **5** You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. **6** You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

## Patience in Suffering

**7** Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. **8** You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. **9** Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. **10** As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. **11** Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

**12** But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

# The Epistle of James

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## The Prayer of Faith

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

19 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, 20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.