

REAL FAITH FOR DAILY LIFE



A Study of the Book of James
by Sue LeBoutillier

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❧ *Real Faith for Daily Life* ❧
The Book of James

Dear Friend,

One prominent theme in the book of James is *wisdom*, so I think it *wise* to begin this welcome with a warning — studying the book of James may be more real, more relevant, and uncover more of your thoughts and motives than other books of the Bible you've studied lately. If you read and process this book intentionally, you'll find almost every verse will impact your daily life—your thoughts, your relationships, your words, and your actions! I think that was James' goal — to make our *Faith Real in Everyday Life*.

Somewhere in my brain, I think I was postponing a study of James until such a time in my life when my own tongue would be under control; a time when I would quickly embrace the benefit of trials in my life; basically a time when I would be *mature* and I could teach the passage without that nagging inner voice of hypocrisy. Well, that's not the point of Bible study, is it? We don't read, study and teach from perfection, we read, study and teach from vulnerability, in order to allow the Holy Spirit to shape us into the likeness of Jesus Christ. So, now is a great time for me and it's a great time for you as well!

James was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write a letter conveying certain matters to the Jews who had put their faith in Christ. His style was similar to both Jesus' **Sermon on the Mount** and the **Book of Proverbs** in that he presented short, to-the-point themes that affect us practically, as they separate dead faith from real faith in the flow of our everyday life! These themes should be read over-and-over again and allowed to simmer in our hearts and then be applied in our actions.

This Bible Study has been prepared for you to study all 108 verses, in a five-day-a-week format over seven weeks. The first week is an introduction without written study on your part, followed by six weeks of actual verse-by-verse study.

As you study each day, there will be four main elements:

- **Read** the full passage indicated for that day. That same passage will be read each of the five days for that lesson.
- **Write** the handful of verses assigned for that day in a separate journal or notebook. The act of handwriting is one of my favorite techniques to help us slow down and process as we write each word, AND we end up with a copy of the book of James written in our own hand.
- **Answer** the questions and thoughts in your Study Guide for each day's passage.
- **Participate** in a discussion group when you gather each week. There is a section at the end of each chapter entitled, *Questions for Thought and Discussion*. This section has some great questions to help us process the passage together and to hear how other women are applying the Scripture to their lives.

Wherever you are, or whatever type of a group you may have as you study together, I pray that the Lord will richly bless you as you learn to know Him better through His Word—

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To watch the video teachings for this Bible Study go to:
ccontario.com/womens-studies
or
YouTube.com/calvarychapelontario

*The best translation of the Bible to use is the one you understand the most easily—and using more than one translation can be a great aid to study! This study guide was created using the ESV (English Standard Version), which may be a helpful tool as you work through your study.



Week 1—Introduction to the Book of James

Here are a couple pages for note-taking on the Introduction to James. (You can find the audio or video on our website at ccontario.com under *Women's Studies*.)

About **James** himself:

About the **audience** and **time frame** for this letter:

About the **purpose** and **style** of this letter:

Main Themes and Key Words in James 1

What is the goal?

1:12 *“to receive the crown of life”*

Key words: _____

What is the starting place?

1:18 *“he brought us forth by the word of truth”*

1:21 *“receive ... the implanted word, which is able to save your soul”*

Key words: _____

What moves us toward the goal?

1:3 *“the testing of your faith produces steadfastness”*

Key words: _____

What do we need along the way?

1:5 *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God”*

Key words: _____

What is our key to success?

1:6 *“let him ask in faith with no doubting”*

Key words: _____

What identifies a life that is pleasing to God?

1:22 *“be doers of the word, and not hearers only”*

Key words: _____

Week 2 — Faith that Remains Steadfast

Welcome to your first day of personal study! Remember, your goal is to set aside time each day to...

- read the listed passage (**James 1:1-15** this week),
- write the daily focus verses in your journal,
- answer the questions in this study guide.

It's so important to look into the Word of God personally before we hear the input of others in our study group. Then, after personal study, the input of others can be a source of real enlightenment.

Begin your reading time with a simple prayer, asking God to open your spiritual ears and help you to hear from Him as you study His Word.

Day One

☞ READ **James 1:1-15**

☞ WRITE **James 1:1-4**

In our Introduction, we talked about *James*, the man, the brother of Jesus and the author of this letter. We also talked about the *recipients*, the believers who had fled from Jerusalem primarily because of persecution. That introduction was entitled, "*Faith that Matures*". In the same way, our body's muscles and bones *mature* as stress is applied to them (think weightlifting); so too our faith in the Living God *grows* or *matures*, as we encounter stress of *various kinds*.

Note that **v.2** doesn't say, *if you meet trials but rather* _____ *you meet trials*.

- Do you get the sense from these verses that we all face the same kinds of trials in our life? What words did James use in **v.2**?

- What is the most beneficial response to these trials (**v.2**)?

- That type of response doesn't seem natural. Why should a follower of Jesus respond this way (v.4)?
- Is there anything in these verses that leads you to believe this is an ongoing process that we might expect over and over again? Explain.

Do you already see how these truths about Real Faith will affect your daily life? What has God been allowing in your life recently to test your faith? (List as many things as you can think of.)

- Are you staying close to the Lord through those trials?
- Are you steadfast?
- Are you determined to remain steadfast?
- Have you been able to detect a spiritual benefit from those situations yet?

"Have we trials and temptations
 Is there trouble anywhere?
 We should never be discouraged,
 Take it to the Lord in Prayer"
 — What a Friend We Have *in Jesus*¹

Day Two

☞ READ James 1:1-15

☞ WRITE James 1:5-8

Remember, the goal presented in **v.1-4** is maturity—completeness! The catalysts moving us toward maturity are trials. Lest we somehow think that maneuvering through the maze of those trials is all on us — like some sort of spiritual exam — we’re reminded to seek wisdom from God.

- How will God respond when we ask for wisdom?
- With what type of attitude should we ask Him?

Underline the last three words in the above translation of that verse!

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. — James 1:5-6 (NLT)

- If we go through the motions of asking for wisdom from God, but we’re still checking out all the other possibilities as well, what should we expect as a result?
- What do you think are some reasons that someone might go through the motions of asking, but not really believing that God will respond?
- What is the phrase used in **v.8** for someone who sort of trusts in God and sort of trusts in herself?

- Draw a cartoon picture of this type of woman:

- In your current set of trials, would you describe yourself as being more single-minded or more double-minded?

- What is one thought process you would like to change to eliminate the double-mindedness of your faith?

Because the writing style of James is similar to both **Proverbs** and Jesus' **Sermon on the Mount** in Matthew, we'll find many verses that can be lifted out to stand independently from their context. The true statement makes sense all by its self. **Verse 5** is a great example. There is no situation in a believer's life when asking God for wisdom isn't a great idea! — SL

Day Three

☞ READ James 1:1-15

☞ WRITE James 1:9-11

Remember our context is the *various trials* that followers of Christ face and their usefulness in our lives. When you listed your current trials on *Day One*, they likely fell into one of the following categories: a physical difficulty, a relational problem, or a financial challenge — and haven't we all endured financial challenges over our lifetime?

Perhaps it's those financial trials that link with today's verses.

- What should your attitude be if you're currently in a humble financial situation?
- What should your attitude be if you are currently *flush* with resources?
- What is the lifespan of all humanity likened to in these verses?
- What does that have to do with the context of wealth and pursuits?
- What attitude toward God do you think may be a common temptation for those in humble circumstances?
- What attitude toward God do you think may be a common temptation for those in wealthier circumstances?
- On a scale of 1-10, where are you right now in your financial circumstances? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (circle)

The advice from **v.5** regarding financial circumstances is sound — *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God. All our resources are given for this life only. We will take nothing out of this life.*

Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal and so dishonor the name of my God. —Proverbs 30:8-9 (NIV)

Day Four

☞ READ James 1:1-15

☞ WRITE James 1:12

Verse 12 reads like a topic sentence for an essay on spiritual maturity and its ultimate reward. There are two main points in this sentence — note them by completing the missing words:

*Blessed is the man who _____ under
trial...he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to
Those who _____ .*

We're all growing older day-by-day. Growing older doesn't necessarily mean we're becoming mature. We all face trials, but the mere presence of those trials does not mean we'll receive the crown of life.

- The characteristic of the one who is *blessed* is steadfastness. What word, or words, do some other translations use in this verse? Which one is your preference and why?
- Write a dictionary definition of one or more of the above words:

Did you also note that God has promised the *crown of life* to those who love Him? You might have thought it would read *those who obey Him*, or *those who trust Him* — but James says *those who love Him*.

- What is the link between loving someone and obeying someone? (Check **John 14:15** for Jesus' take on it)
- If you really *love* someone and you know they *love* you and have your best interest in mind, how should that make it easier to *obey* and *trust* them?

- On a scale of 1-10, how much do you *love* God, based on your current willingness to *obey/trust*?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (circle your answer)

If your score is low, don't despair! This is why we study the Scriptures — to change us into His image. His Word is living and active, and as we submit to what it says, God will transform us and mature us.

Day Five

☞ READ **James 1:1-15**

☞ WRITE **James 1:13-15**

We don't *a/ways* love God by obeying Him, do we? We are often tempted to love and obey things that are opposed to God.

- Where do our temptations originate from? (**v.14**)
- Is a temptation the same as a sin? Explain:
- What is necessary for a temptation to become a sin?
- What is the expected result of sin? (**v.15**)

Within the conversation about temptation — **v.13** says we're not to blame God for our temptations. What? Who would ever blame God for their temptations or their failure to resist temptation?

Maybe one answer is found in **Genesis 3:9-13**. Read that passage and look at the reason Adam gave for his disobedience in **v.12**:

*"The woman whom you gave to be with me,
she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."*

In other words, here was his logic...

- It was God Who gave me the woman.
- It was the woman who tempted me to sin by eating the fruit
- Therefore, it was God Who tempted me to sin.
- I can't be held responsible.

We know that Adam is the representative of our human race, so really, we may end up thinking the same way. James is challenging the kind of thinking that suggests...

- God allows trials into our lives.
- Trials stir up temptations to sin, in all sorts of ways.
- Therefore, God may be the One tempting me to sin

V.13 opens with, "*Let no one say*" (or even think along those lines), and ends with, "*He (God) himself tempts _____.*"

Let's think again about the current trials you're facing in your life (those listed on *Day One*.)

- What type of temptations accompany your brand of trial?

- What are you tempted to do, to have, or to get rid of, in order to ease the pressure of those trials?

God isn't the one dangling temptation in front of you. It's actually your enemy, the devil, that is luring you to entertain that desire, become friendly with it, intimate with it, conceive, give birth and sit back and watch sin grow! God help us end our relationships with those temptations! —SL

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. If the first book of the Bible you read was James, what would you expect to be normal in a Christian's life — trials or a life of prosperity and ease?
2. Why do you think so many American Churches focus on prosperity and health, rather than the virtues and purpose of trials and testings?
3. If the purpose of trials is completeness and maturity, why do you think we shrink back from them and try to wriggle out of them so often?
4. Have you ever thought along the lines stated in v.13 that it's really God's fault that you've been tempted? (i.e., If God would have provided a more attentive husband, I wouldn't have to escape to Netflix or fiction so often, so it's really not my fault.)
5. Name one practical and purposeful roadblock you think God would have you put in place, so that you're less likely to be *lured and enticed by your desires* and fall into sin.

But He knoweth the way that I take,
when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.
— Job 23:10

Notes for Teaching on Week 2

Week 3 — Faith That is Genuine

I know we're taking a leisurely pace through the first chapter of James, but there are so many important aspects for us to think through. We'll finish chapter one this week and then our pace will quicken.

Day One

☞ READ James 1:16-27

☞ WRITE James 1:16-17

Isn't verse 17 just lovely? *Every good and perfect gift!* But the immediate context still includes temptations, evil desires, sin and death. The immediate contrast is God's good gifts.

Before we move on to the good news, let's review the bad news about the temptations. Read ahead to **James 4:1-3**. Pay attention to the repetition of one word:

- James 4:2 You _____ *and do not have...*
- James 1:14 *Each person is tempted...and enticed by his own _____*

Now, think again about the temptations you listed on p.13. Do any of those temptations have to do with unmet desires?

What about some of these common unmet desires?

- to have a husband (single)
- to have a different type of husband (married)
- to have more income, or a bigger savings account
- to see your children succeed in life
- to have a bigger house, quieter neighborhood
- to have the health others seem to enjoy
- to have stability

Most things we cultivate a *desire* for aren't evil, just like the fruit Eve *desired* in the garden wasn't evil. It just wasn't God's intention for her.

God does not set things up to tempt us (as we read in **v.13**) — quite the opposite — what does He *give* us? (**v.17**)

There *may* be a big difference between:

the things we desire and *the gifts God intends to give us.*

On a scale, where *focusing on what you desire* is a “1” and *patiently waiting for God’s good and perfect gift* is a “10”, where do you land?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (circle)

Read **Romans 8:28** and write it out here:

We may not have trouble believing the truth contained in **Romans 8:28**; the trouble may lie in agreeing with God about what is *good*.

Here is a truth: *Good gifts may be concealed within our bad trials!*

Read **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**. How does the truth of these verses speak to your situation and answer questions about your dilemmas in life?

The hymn ***Great is Thy Faithfulness***² written by Thomas Chisholm testifies to God’s good gifts in the lives of His children. Chisholm shared toward the end of his life, “*My income has not been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. Although I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care, for which I am filled with astonishing gratefulness.*”

I wonder if **James 1:17** stating, “*there is no variation or shadow due to change*”, provided inspiration for this verse of the hymn:

*“Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.”*

Day Two

☞ READ James 1:16-27

☞ WRITE James 1:18-21

James' letter isn't focused on *how* a person enters God's family — he knew his readers were saved — he addressed them as '*brothers*' 14 times. But these verses *do* remind us about God's work of salvation!

In your journal, circle the phrases...

- *the word of truth (v.18)*
- *the implanted word (v.21)*

Those two phrases are the bookends for spiritual birth and growth.

- What's the tense of the first bookend?
he brought us forth by the word of truth Past Present
- What's the tense of the second bookend?
receive with meekness the implanted word Past Present

It is *the word of truth* that enables us to believe, be born again and enter God's family and it is the same *implanted word* that enables us to move forward and grow into the likeness of Jesus in God's family.

What is the companion phrase for *word of truth* in these Scriptures?

- Romans 10:17 _____
- Ephesians 1:13 _____
- 2 Timothy 3:14-15 _____

What do those suggest to you about what God uses for drawing people to Himself?

Once we have received and believed the Scriptures about Christ, there is additional work for *the implanted Word* to accomplish in our lives. You might say that is the main focus of this letter, intentionally letting the implanted Word of Christ change us through **Real Faith** in everyday life!

“Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

Verse 19 shows us the path to success for the *implanted Word* to change us into people who actually *do* what the Word says.

KNOW THIS! *Let every person be...*

- *quick to* _____
- *slow to* _____
- *slow to* _____

Have you had a conversation with a friend and had to remind yourself, '*Just listen, don't talk*'? Listening isn't as easy as we'd like to think. A little voice inside is always suggesting *we* should add to the conversation, based on how we see things and what we've experienced.

Have you had a conversation with a friend and you could hardly finish your thought because their flow of words made the conversation all about them? You left feeling like they didn't care about what you had to say because of all the talking was on their part.

Although we can apply this verse to regular conversations, it's really instructing us *how to receive the implanted Word*. We're to listen to what it says, not talking about what we think, not arguing with it.

Think about these three relevant questions:

- How can you cultivate a readiness to *listen/hear* when it comes to the Word of God?
- How can you restrain yourself from being the *continual talker* who has difficulty hearing God's Word because you always have something to say about it?
- How can you guard your heart against *anger*, which closes the mind to God's truth as it imagines arguments against God?

Day Three

☞ READ James 1:16-27

☞ WRITE James 1:22-25

As we pointed out, **v.22** could well be the key verse for this whole letter. Again, this is written to people who already have Christ in their life, so they have obviously already been hearers of the Word. But *hearing* and *doing* are two different things!

- When we *hear* words — like a lecture, a story, a sermon, something that is told to us — what effect does it have on us?

- As it relates to the Word of Christ, how do you think a person is *deceiving* themselves by hearing the Word alone and not doing it?

- What does *the mirror* of Scripture show us about ourselves as we look into it?

- With what words is God's Word described in **v.25**? (Compare different translations if you can)

In our culture, the perception of God's Law is that it *restricts* freedom. Why does James describe it with words like *liberty*? How is God's Word *the perfect law that gives freedom* (NIV)?

What is promised at the end of **v.25** for those who both *hear* and *act*?

How does **Psalm 1:1-2** convey that same idea?

What do you think is significant in **v.25** about the inclusion of the phrase, '*and perseveres*'? What might that teach us about our journey to be doers of the Word?

The life that pleases God is not the one who reads their Bible, nor rests in proper doctrine, or regular church going; The one who pleases God is the one who looks intently at the character of God as expressed in the Word and through perseverance, puts that same character into practice! —SL

Day Four

☞ READ **James 1:16-27**

☞ WRITE **James 1:26**

The words *religious* and *religion* aren't found often in Scripture.

- What do you think of when someone uses these terms?

- What do you think James meant by *religious*?

Why, oh why, does it have to start with *bridling the tongue*? Why can't pure religion be something more like making meals for sick people, leading children's worship 50 weeks in a row, or serving as the nursery coordinator? Why the tongue? Well, we better look into the mirror so we don't deceive ourselves!

Keeping reign on one's tongue is definitely a by-product of a life that has surrendered control to the Spirit of Christ. We all have a tongue and we all need to bridle it. James, being raised in a devout Jewish home, knew the Old Testament Scriptures well. Since the book of Proverbs in particular is filled with exhortations on controlling one's words, let's look at a handful and note what you discover:

Proverbs 12:18

Proverbs 13:3

Proverbs 15:1-2

Proverbs 17:20

Proverbs 18:21

Day Five

☞ READ James 1:16-27

☞ WRITE James 1:27

We don't often describe someone by using the word **Religion** in the positive sense of the word...but we might use the word **Faith**.

- We probably wouldn't say, '*she has a REAL religion*'
- But we might say, '*she has REAL faith*'

This Bible Study is entitled, "**Real Faith — for Daily Life**" and, here at the end of chapter one, James is contrasting *religion that is worthless* and *religion that is pure*. Maybe we could call it *faith that is worthless* contrasted with *faith that is pure*.

- What was the characteristic of *Real Faith* from v.26?
- What is the example of *Real Faith* given in today's verse? (v.27)
- Do you think the ministry of *visiting* is a specific requirement or an example of what a life controlled by the Spirit might look like?
- If a person doesn't happen to know any orphans or needy widows, what other examples of love expressed toward others might be an indicator of *Real Faith*?

Expressing love to people is one important element of pure religion, but look at the last phrase of this chapter for the other important part:

"to keep oneself _____ from the world"

We call that *holiness* and it's a topic we'll revisit in chapter four when James talks about *friendship with the world*.

James' preface is now complete. Beginning with chapter 2, we'll discover twelve topics the Holy Spirit inspired James to bring to the attention of the young Church through this letter. We'll also discover that almost all of these topics echo portions of Jesus' **Sermon on the Mount!**

It's gonna be great — don't give up — keep pressing on!

Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.
— Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)

Questions for Thought & Discussion

Being *quick to listen and slow to speak*, in the context of James 1, is about hearing from God's Word so you can turn around and do it. However, those are great life skills for every situation.

- What relationship in your life needs you to be a better listener?

 - What practical steps can you take to make that happen?

 - What relationship needs you to engage in less talking?

 - What steps can you take to make that happen?
1. Is there a good and perfect gift that God has sent into your life that you now realize as a gift from God?

 2. How does the statement, '*Good gifts may be concealed within our trials*' make you feel? Is that a comfort, or does it make you sort of mad that God works through trials and troubles to mature us?

 3. In what ways have you been convicted this week that you have been merely a hearer of the Word and not much of a doer?

Week 4 — Faith that is Alive and Working

Today's passage begins the second portion of this letter. James was obviously influenced by the original Jewish Scriptures but we also see an undeniable echo of the themes Jesus taught in His **Sermon on the Mount**. So, each time we come to a companion passage to the Sermon on the Mount, you'll find a box that will allow you to compare the two and write out a sentence on how God wants you to be a doer of that particular word. **Real Faith for Everyday Life!**

Day One

☞ READ James 2:1-26

☞ WRITE James 2:1-7

- Summarize the problem/wrongdoing that James observed (v.1):
- Summarize the specific example of partiality (v.2-3):
- Read **Acts 10:34** and explain why a Christian acting in this way would be out of step with God's character:
- What are some synonyms for *partiality*?
- What types of things might motivate a person to treat someone wealthy with special attention?

Read **Matthew 5:46-48**.

- What type of partiality is Jesus condemning in this passage?
- How might this type of special attention surface in our Church circles?
- Are there any situations that the Lord has brought to mind, through these passages, that might require a change in your way of interacting with people?

#1 Real Faith — shows no partiality	
<i>Summary of James 2:1-7</i>	<i>Summary of Matthew 5:43-48</i>
<i>How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?</i>	

Day Two

☞ READ **James 2:1-26**

☞ WRITE **James 2:8-13**

There is a supreme Law that sums up all Laws in Scripture. What is it called in **v.8**? _____

Read **Matthew 22:36-40**. What did Jesus say about this Law?

In **v.8**, walking in agreement with the *royal law* is described as **doing well!** In **v.9**, walking in opposition to the *royal law* is described as _____.

- What is the link between not showing partiality and loving your neighbor as yourself (the royal law)?
- How is that played out in **Deuteronomy 1:17**?

The last two verses link *judgment* and *mercy*. In your journal, circle the occurrences of both of those words. As Christians, we're no longer *judged* for our sins (**John 5:24**), they have been forgiven; but James provides motivation for charity in our actions because we *will* be *judged under the law of liberty*.

Read these passages that give us insight into the believer's judgment:

- **Romans 14:10-13**
- **2 Corinthians 5:10**
- **1 John 4:17**

The reality of a believer's judgment gives a final reason to show *mercy* rather than *partiality*. Not only should *mercy* be the habit of a person who has received *mercy* from the Lord; but *mercy* should also be our habit so we have nothing to fear at the judgment.

To 'show favoritism' is not merely to be guilty of an insignificant fault or social impropriety; it is sin.
—The Expositor's Bible Commentary³

Day Three

☞ READ James 2:1-26

☞ WRITE James 2:14-17

The title of this Bible Study is **Real Faith**—which implies there may be other types of faith masquerading as the real thing. In this week's passage, any counterfeit faith is called dead faith!

— v.17 *faith by itself, if it does not have works, is* _____

— v.20 *faith apart from works is* _____

— v.26 *faith apart from works is* _____

Real faith will always bear real fruit — *works* or *deeds*, depending on your translation. In your journal, circle the words *faith*, *works*, and *deeds*.

- What is the claim that someone may make in v.14?

Claims require proof. I can claim that I own a horse in my garage, but until I demonstrate that it's really there, it's only a claim.

- Is there proof of the claim of *faith* in the example in v.15-16?
- What type of work/deed/action could have demonstrated proof of real faith in that verse?
- Without any demonstration of Christ-like compassion in this example, what would be the conclusion about the claim to have faith?

Faith will bear fruit

Action is the fruit of real faith

Without any fruit, the faith must be dead

James is *not* saying that caring for the physical needs of other people is **THE ONLY** way your faith is demonstrated to be real, because he goes on to offer examples of Abraham and Rahab's actions, which

had nothing to do with the needy. But, since we're on this subject, let's peek into other Scriptures that also teach the importance of real care and concern for people around us as part of God's plan for us:

Matthew 25:40

Galatians 6:10

1 John 3:17-18

- What is your conclusion about God's desire for us to be actively involved in caring for the needs we observe around us?
- What effect do those passages have on you? Write a Spirit-led action plan for one thing God is bringing to your mind where He would have you meet physical or emotional needs around you:

Day Four

☞ READ **James 2:1-26**

☞ WRITE **James 2:18-20**

In your journal, circle all of the words *faith*, *works/deeds*.

The imaginary *someone* in **v.18** wants to separate *faith* and *works*.

- Does James believe that to be possible?
- With what phrase would you classify someone who had only works or good deeds, without professing a faith in Christ?

- How would you classify someone who professed faith in Christ, but had no works or good deeds in their life?

V.19 says of the person who professes faith, '*you believe that God is one*' but that isn't enough. That statement may not make sense for non-Jewish ears, so read **Deuteronomy 6:4**, which reminds us of the daily affirmation of faith spoken by a Godly Jew.

- Do you suppose there were Jews who spoke that affirmation every day without serving God in any other way?
- Do you suppose there can be Christians today who would say they believe in God and attend Church regularly without applying their lives to serve God in any other way?

In fact, it can be so common to intellectually believe that God exists that v.19 mentions *even the _____ believe that!* (For proof, read **Matt. 8:28-29** and **Mark 5:7-8**.) They know God exists, they believe Jesus is the Messiah, but they don't serve God—they do not have **real faith!**

If works of faith are not a part of our life, then the reality of our faith is questionable. Real faith eventually expresses itself in the likeness of Christ, doing the good works prepared in advance for us. (**Eph. 2:10**)

The conclusion of James from **verse 20** is that **faith apart from works is _____.**

Day Five

☞ READ James 2:12-26

☞ WRITE James 2:21-26

Who are the two people in this chapter that James mentions by name as examples of **real faith**? _____ and _____.

Read **Genesis 22:1-18** to review a small chapter of Abraham's life.

- How did Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his own son offer proof that his faith in God was real?

- What elements does James point out about Abraham's faith in these verses?

Read **Joshua 2:1-21** for insight into Rahab's life.

- How did Rahab's actions toward the Israelite spies demonstrate her genuine faith in the God of Israel?

I'm not sure it's possible to point to two more different people in the Bible than Abraham and Rahab.

- Abraham was a friend of God — Rahab belonged to Israel's enemies
- Abraham was a Godly man — Rahab was a harlot

and yet both of them...

- came to real faith in the one true God
- put their real faith into action during a frightening time
- became part of the lineage of Christ (**Matthew 1:2-16**)
- are honored in *The Hall of Faith* in the book of Hebrews

Read their respective passages and note anything additional you discover about how they put their faith into action:

Abraham—Hebrews 11:17-19

Rahab—Hebrews 11:31

How is God calling you to put your faith into action right now in your life, to prove the claim that it's real?

Today's verse wraps up the theme of this section with an accurate, although slightly disturbing, image. Describe the analogy in **v.26**:

- Explain why James uses a dead corpse to make his point:

Let's finish with these passages that inspire us to demonstrate our real faith in everyday life by doing the work God has given us to do—body and spirit united—alive! Make notes as the Lord speaks to you:

Matthew 5:16

Ephesians 2:10

1 Timothy 6:18-19

Titus 3:8, 14

#2 Real Faith — actually does God's work	
<i>Summary of James 2:14, 26</i>	<i>Summary of Matthew 7:17-21</i>
<i>How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?</i>	

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. If you were applying for a ministry position and it was possible for someone to secretly observe you for a week, what conclusions do you think they would make about the works in your life matching your profession of faith?
2. The teaching on favoritism in the passage is *believer-to-believer*. Do you think showing special favor toward a believer over a non-believer is acceptable? Why/why not?
3. James didn't intend his letter to be used as a measuring stick to judge the genuineness of other people's faith. What is the intention of a passage like that which we studied this week?
4. How would you answer someone who said to you, *"I know that I'm not living the way I should, but I'm trusting in Christ for salvation, not what I do or don't do"*?
5. If this passage brought conviction of inattentiveness to a work or good deed that God has given you to do, a) Have you confessed it to the Lord? b) Have you received a renewed vision of what God may have for you? c) Can you share with your group?

I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart. Psalm 40:8

Notes for Teaching on Week 4

Week 5 — Faith Through Words and Wisdom

Last week, we learned that REAL FAITH will bear REAL FRUIT in everyday life. I'm not sure if there's any more obvious fruit than our everyday words. Maybe that's why this letter focuses now on the topic of our speech and attitudes—all of which spring from our hearts.

Since the Proverbs have so much to say about the tongue, words and attitudes, we'll also add a handful of Proverbs to read and process at the end of each day's lesson this week.

One last thing—a reminder to sincerely pray before you begin your lesson each day. This lesson, in particular, requires that we ask God to soften our hearts, hear what the Scripture says, then look ourselves in the mirror and humbly ask the Holy Spirit to transform us; while at the same time guarding our heart from the condemnation or discouragement of the enemy. The Apostle Paul said, "***All Scripture is profitable for...training in righteousness***". This week's training session is focused on our words!

Day One

☞ READ James 3:1-18

☞ WRITE James 3:1-2

What group is singled out in v.1 with a warning?

Why do you think this warning is placed right within the context of carefulness with words?

We use the term *influencers* (especially in social media) to describe those who teach on any subject under the sun. They influence our product purchases, impact our investment strategy, or simply train us on how to apply makeup! Read **Matthew 18:6-7**, and explain what is sobering for those who influence people spiritually:

Note the pronoun *we* in each of the verses (two times).

- What does that tell you about James and his own struggles?

- What do you think he means when he says “the one who doesn’t stumble in what he says is a *perfect man*?”

☞ **Proverbs Pondering for Day One:** Read and meditate on these verses. Note anything significant in your own struggle with words.

Proverbs 10:32

Proverbs 12:17-18

Proverbs 13:3

Day Two

☞ READ James 3:1-18

☞ WRITE James 3:3-8

What are the three analogies given for the tongue: positive or
Negative

v.3 like a _____ for a _____ _____

v.4 like a _____ for a _____ _____

v.5 like a _____ in a _____ _____

Which one of these resonates the most with you? Why?

All of these illustrations show the power of a very small object over a very large one, but it is the fire that James goes on to talk about.

You can probably relate to that sinking feeling when you view the massive destruction caused by a carelessly tossed cigarette, fireworks or an unattended campfire.

- List some of the harsh phrases used in **v.6-8** to describe the influence of a careless tongue:

Do you feel those are harsh? Read **Psalm 39:3** and **Matthew 12:34**.

- Where does the power of the tongue come from?
- The conclusion for today is that ***no human being can tame the tongue***; but since we know the tongue's source of fuel (see Scripture above), what should we focus on changing?
- How is that accomplished? List some specific actions:

☞ **Psalms & Proverbs Pondering for Day Two:** Read and meditate on these verses and note the role of a heart trained in righteousness.

Psalm 19:14

Psalm 139:23-24

Proverbs 15:28

Proverbs 16:23

Day Three

☞ READ James 3:1-18

☞ WRITE James 3:9-12

Remember the childhood jingle, “*sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me*”? Don’t you think maybe the opposite is true? Broken bones can mend to be *good as new*, but a crushed spirit, caused by careless words, can linger unhealed for decades.

As difficult as it may be, let’s not use James’ letter right now as a measuring rod to turn and beat someone *else* over the head for *their* careless words. Let’s *only* look at the face in the mirror—and the words that come out of that face—MY WORDS!

Today’s verses are all about consistency in life!

- What are the two opposite possibilities for our speech in **v.9-10**?

- Do you observe that to be true in life? Is it true for you?

List the three metaphors from nature that are deemed to be impossible:

- v.11 for a _____ to pour forth _____
v.12 for a _____ to bear _____
or a _____ to bear _____
v.12 for a _____ to yield _____

Which metaphor makes the most sense to you, and why?

God created nature to act consistently with itself. He desires people, made in His image, to be consistent as well—even with our words.

- In your life right now, who would benefit most from greater consistency in the words you say?

Maybe you haven't outright *cursed* anyone this week. We rarely *intend* to speak badly about people or harshly to people. But without diligence and restraint, it can happen. Read these passages and note the ways our speech can be inconsistent with what God desires:

Jeremiah 9:8

Psalm 12:2

Proverbs 11:12

Proverbs 15:18

Put a checkmark by the following speech inconsistencies that represent the biggest problem areas for you:

exaggeration complaining criticism
 arguing/opinionated endless talking gossip/rumors
 flattering/impressing sarcasm/snarky yelling/anger
 off-color humor boasting lying/
deception

There's no easy formula for overcoming bad habits of the tongue. But realizing we are talking in a way that is inconsistent with God's design is the first step. Repentance, Prayer and Perseverance come next!

- What does **Colossians 3:16-17** add to this topic?

- Write an action plan for this week to tackle one of the problems checked above. How will you submit your heart, and therefore your mouth, more fully to the lordship of Jesus Christ in that area?

☞ **Proverbs Pondering for Day Three:** (Read these verses, meditate on them, and note how consistency is important with our words)

Proverbs 10:19

Proverbs 15:1-2

Proverbs 25:11-12

Proverbs 26:20

#3 Real Faith — is careful with words

Summary of James 3:1-12

*Summary of Matthew 12:33-37**

How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?

**not part of the Sermon on the Mount*

Day Four

☞ READ **James 3:1-18**

☞ WRITE **James 3:13-15**

We've learned that the mouth speaks from the health of the heart (**Matthew 12:34**). We know the heart is basically sick (**Jeremiah 17:9**) and needs a cure. We know that new life in Christ is our cure (**1 John 5:4**). We know that we need to walk out the reality of the work God has done in us (**Ephesians 4:1**). The remaining six verses in chapter three highlight the potential for wisdom from above to triumph over fleshliness from within. Let's investigate...

What shows someone to be truly skilled in the art of living well?

Rewrite **v.13** from a question to a statement of observation.


"The person who shows her works _____

- What two characteristics in **v.14** demonstrate the opposite of Godly wisdom:
- What do those things tend to look like and how can they affect a woman's daily life?

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate yourself on purposefully reaching out for *wisdom from above* and applying it to your life?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (circle)

If you're not satisfied with the number you circled, if you see too much selfish ambition in your life, take these Proverbs in the next section to heart and ask God to do a real makeover in your heart!

 **Proverbs Pondering for Day Four:** (Read these, meditate on them, and note significant insights and benefits of godly wisdom)

Proverbs 2:1-6

Proverbs 3:13-18

Proverbs 8:12-17

Proverbs 16:23

Day Five

☞ READ James 3:1-18

☞ WRITE James 3:16-18

What does **v.16** tell us is the result when we let attitudes like jealousy and selfish ambition run rampant?

What are the attitudes (**v.17**) of a heart immersed in *wisdom from above*? List the eight characteristics you see in this verse and give a description or example of each:

- *pure*

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Which of those evidences of godly wisdom would you like to see more of in your life?

Is there another attitude that you think would be improved upon in your life by purposefully applying the wisdom from above?

☞ **Proverbs Pondering for Day Five:** (Read these, meditate on them, and note what you learn related to our attitudes)

Proverbs 9:4-6

Proverbs 21:2-3

Proverbs 28:26

#4 Real Faith — displays godly attitudes	
<i>Summary of James 3:13-18</i>	<i>Summary of Matthew 5:5-9</i>
<i>How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?</i>	

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Do you think that people who teach in Churches today take to heart the warning from **v.1** in this chapter?
2. Have you ever caused a proverbial *forest fire* with careless words that you wish you could take back? What damage control actions did you take? What actions would you advise to someone in that situation?
3. Do you think many Christians believe the *transgressions of the lips* (as Proverbs puts it) to be of much consequence? Is it taken seriously?
4. If you have experienced victory over one of the problem areas listed on p.40, would you share with your group? For example, if you have learned to overcome *sarcastic comebacks* or *chronic complaining*, share your victory.
5. Read **Ephesians 4:29** in your group. Discuss what *corrupt talk* means. Discuss how our words can *build up* and *give grace*.

Week 6 — Faith Through Humility

Day One

☞ READ **James 4:1-17**

☞ WRITE **James 4:1-3**

Today, you wrote the words *fight*, *war*, *murder* — chances are you may have subconsciously assigned these verses to a special Bible section for *really bad people* — *people who murder* — not normal Christian people like you and me — because *we* don't murder, *we* try not to quarrel or fight, and *we* have our passions under control!

We'll find, however, this chapter reveals the true condition of our heart. We're naturally prideful — not humble. We naturally think more highly of ourselves than we ought. We naturally want to plan *our* life, *our* way.

Let's approach these Scriptures with an open mind and really hear what the Spirit of God is teaching us about ourselves.

- According to these verses, what is the root cause of all types of conflict between people?
- Do you think conflict between spouses, friends, Church members, even nations all stem from that same cause? Why, or why not?
- Do you really think that the average Christian's response to not having what they desire is murder?

Read these passages: **Matthew 5:21-22** and **1 John 3:15** — then note whether your answer to the above question has changed.

- What did James list as the reason God’s people do not have what they desire? (v.2)
- And what did James list as the reason God’s people still don’t have what they desire, even after asking God? (v.3)
- Read **1 John 3:21-23**. Based on both of these passages, what is the most important aspect of answered prayer?

#5 Real Faith — satisfies desires by asking God	
<i>Summary of James 4:1-3</i>	<i>Summary of Matthew 7:7-11</i>
<i>How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?</i>	

Day Two

☞ READ James 4:1-17

☞ WRITE James 4:4-6

James shockingly called his readers *adulterous*. An adulterous person, in the regular sense of the word, would mean a person who prefers the affections of someone other than their spouse, or someone who wants a relationship with *both* their spouse *and* another person at the same time.

- Based on that idea, write a definition of a *spiritually adulterous person*. (Include *who* the adulterous *other party* could be)

- Explain God's perspective on this type of person (v.5):

In other Scriptures, we've learned about that *tempting trio* that wars for our attention: 1) *the world*, 2) *the flesh*, and 3) *the devil*.

James focused on *the world* in today's passage. But let's use a different passage for a similar warning about adultery with *the flesh*.

Read **Romans 8:5-10**:

- Is it a possibility to live happily with, be friends with, and please both the *Spirit* and the *flesh* at the same time?

- What can be the expected result for someone who wants to please the *flesh*? (v.7)

- What does friendship with the world look like in your life at times?

- What does setting your mind on the things of the flesh look like?

After these warnings, **v.6** offers a way of escape for these spiritually adulterous tendencies toward *the world* and *the flesh*. What is it?

Read these Psalms and note God's response toward the humble:

Psalm 18:27

Psalm 25:9

Psalm 147:6

Day Three

☞ READ James 4:1-17

☞ WRITE James 4:7-10

In the first two days this week, we dealt with two-thirds of our temptations: *the world* and *the flesh*. Today's verses give us direction for that last source of temptation — *the devil* himself.

- What two commands, given in **v.7**, relate to the temptations of the devil in our lives?
 -
 -
- What result can we expect when we obey these commands?

- What types of temptations do Christians face from the devil?

List temptations that are different from temptations that arise from *friendship with the world* or *the desires of the flesh*.

How does a person submit to God, you ask? That's a good question and **v.8** has a good answer. Write the three action phrases James tells believers to do:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Have you ever been spiritually adulterous? Estranged from God? Has He seemed distant in your life? The first action phrase that you listed from **v.8** comes with a promise — if we will humble ourselves and draw near to God, what can we expect Him to do?

- Do you think there are any exceptions to this promise?
- What do you think it means to *cleanse your hands* and *purify your heart* in the context of this passage?
- Do you think those particular actions/attitudes really have the ability to change our spiritually double-minded status? How?

Do you remember the illustration in chapter one about looking intently at our face in the mirror and not ignoring what we see but taking action? With that in mind, read **v.9** again, considering the one who looks spiritual adultery in the face and actually sees it for what it is. James described the response that recognition should elicit.

But it's not God's intention that we live in that state. Write the last action phrase from **v.10**:

• _____

Read **Matthew 23:12** and **Luke 14:11**. Combined with this passage, what is promised to the one who humbles himself before the Lord?

• _____

Day Four

☞ READ **James 4:1-17**

☞ WRITE **James 4:11-12**

Today's verses make one simple statement:

Don't speak badly about another person

...even though what you're saying might be true!

The NIV uses the word *slander*, which is repeated in New Testament letters, like **Colossians 3:8**, "*...you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language...*" (NIV)

This is pretty straightforward. We learned it from Bambi's friend Thumper, *'If you can't say something nice, don't say nothin at all'*. But we usually think the motivation for not speaking badly of other people should be rooted in kindness or love—love always protects, right?

But the main principle or argument given here for not slandering a fellow believer isn't necessarily love, it's **the Law!**

Circle all of these words in your journal: *judge, judges, law, lawgiver*

In the following verses, note some practical help for our thoughts and our speech that will set us on a path to obedience in this area:

Proverbs 11:12

Proverbs 17:27

Romans 12:3

1 Peter 2:1

#6 Real Faith — doesn't speak badly of others	
<i>Summary of James 4:11-12</i>	<i>Summary of Matthew 7:1-2, 12</i>
<i>How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?</i>	

Day Five

🔗 READ James 4:1-17

🔗 WRITE James 4:13-17

Go back over **v.11-17** in your journal and circle all the speaking-type words: *speak, say, boast, etc.*

- What type of speech is inappropriate for a Christian in **v.11-12**?

- What type of speech is inappropriate for a Christian in **v.13-17**?

Read **Matthew 12:34** again.

- What is the source of both of these types of speech?

Summarize how the one in **v.13** tells about their neatly planned life:

We're so accustomed to business plans that we might not readily detect what's missing in that statement. But this is a follower of Jesus talking about their life. What IS missing?

You know the phrase, *control-freak*? Maybe you've described yourself that way—in jest or honestly. In many ways, we ALL want control over our lives. But James doesn't call this person a *control-freak*...

- What is the word in **v.16a** used to describe boasting about neatly-controlled plans? _____. My guess is we DO NOT go around describing ourselves with THAT word.
- What is the dictionary definition of THAT word?

- What aspects of that character trait might ring true in your own desire to control?

Hannah was not able to neatly control her life. God arranged it as He desired. Read the first portion of Hannah's prayer, as she gave her boy, Samuel, to the service of the Lord in **1 Samuel 2:1-3**.

- List two things that strike you about her attitude:
 -
 -

So, is planning a bad idea? Read these passages and explain the difference between crafting your own plans and agenda for life, and submitting those plans to the Lord:

Proverbs 16:3, 9

Proverbs 19:21

Proverbs 27:1

List one area that you have gotten off track in terms of submitting your plans to the Lord, and write a plan for correcting that:

#7 Real Faith — entrusts the future to God	
<i>Summary of James 4:13-17</i>	<i>Summary of Matthew 6:31-34</i>
<i>How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?</i>	

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. *“Friendship with the world is enmity with God” (James 4:4)* When you are with your Christian friends, how easy or how difficult do you find friendship with the world? In other words, do you have friends that pull you toward the world or toward God?
2. James brought up slander, which can include: criticizing and saying things in a way that puts another in a poor light. **James 4:12** says, *“who are you to judge your neighbor?”* What is the difference between verbally confronting someone about an area of sin (which is making a judgment) and verbally highlighting someone’s downfalls (which is also making a judgment)?
3. What would you tell someone who asked you *‘How do I become more humble?’* ?
4. Is it wrong for a Christian to make plans for the future? What should be our guidelines for planning and telling others about our plans?
5. What area of your life do you desperately want to control? Has the Lord spoken to you in some practical way to rest in His guidance and desires for your life? Can you share with your group?

Week 7 — Faith that is Patient and Prayerful

Day One

☞ READ James 5:1-20

☞ WRITE James 5:1-6

This chapter begins with James addressing rich people.

- Do you think he has *all* wealthy people in mind?
- Do you think he is talking to disobedient Christians, or unbelievers?

Identify four crimes of these wealthy people. Note verse #s by each:

-
-
-
-

What word is used in v.6 to describe the ones being oppressed?

Read these verses from the Law of Moses and note God's intention for how His people should use wealth:

Exodus 22:25-27

Leviticus 19:9-10

Deuteronomy 14:27-29

Deuteronomy 24:14-15

You probably don't think you're wealthy — but chances are you have more resources than *many people* so, *you* are wealthy!

- What things might you be tempted to hoard (Keep more than you are able to use in a reasonable time)?

- In what areas might you be tempted to overindulge?

What do these passages add to our conversation on the proper use of wealth for God's people?

Proverbs 11:28

Proverbs 19:17

Luke 6:34-35

Luke 12:16-21

#8 Real Faith — is wise about wealth	
<i>Summary of James 5:1-6</i>	<i>Summary of Matthew 6:19-21</i>
<i>How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?</i>	

Day Two

☞ READ James 5:1-20

☞ WRITE James 5:7-11

The word **therefore** always makes a link with previous content. So, refresh your memory on **v.1-6**...

- What is the context of those previous verses?
- What kinds of things were happening to *the righteous*?
- How do we know that **v.7** is speaking now to believers?
- What one word would you choose as the main point of **v.7-8**?
- We have lots of Scriptures about patience. We know it's a fruit of the Spirit. But what exactly are God's people to wait patiently for?
- While the waiting is going on, what is to be avoided in **v.9**?

Do you remember long road trips before the days of tech and air conditioning? Kids and parents and station wagons? Close quarters with sweaty siblings waiting for the day to come to an end? What naturally happens during the wait? Grumbling! So, this is a timely reminder to war against that temptation during a season of waiting!

Do all things without grumbling or disputing,
that you may be blameless and innocent...
— Philippians 2:14-15 (ESV)

Scripture teaches us not to *compare or classify* ourselves with one another (**2 Corinthians 10:12**). However, successful examples in life can be helpful and James gives us such examples:

- In **v.10**, who are successful examples of supernatural patience in the face of suffering?
- In **v.11** who is the successful example named, who was blessed for his steadfastness?
- If you have another translation, what other words are used in place of steadfast?
- What situation have you been facing that requires patient endurance or perseverance?
- Is there someone in your life that has shown you, by example, how to be successful in that area? Explain?

#9 Real Faith — is patient through persecution

Summary of James 5:7-11

Summary of Matthew 5:11-12

How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?

Day Three

☞ READ James 5:1-20

☞ WRITE James 5:12-15

James isn't done with giving reminders about the words that come out of our mouths. Today's verses highlight another negative type of speech in **v.12**, followed by two positive alternatives in **v.13-15**.

Verse 12 is almost a word-for-word echo of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. READ **Matthew 5:33-37** and compare the two:

- What do you think James' usage of the word **swear** means in the context of this passage?
- What did Jesus mean by **taking an oath**?
- Do you think either of them were forbidding all **oaths** or **swearing -in** ceremonies? Why or why not?

#10 Real Faith — simply speaks the truth

Summary of James 5:12

Summary of Matthew 5:33-37

How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?

Verses 13-15 suggest that, in the face of trouble or suffering, instead of using our mouths to *grumble* (v.9), or *swear* dramatic oaths (v.12), we are to *pray* and *praise*. Those are very good habits to build!

- What action should a believer, who is sick, take?
- What reaction should an elder have to that request?

Asking for prayer can be an intimidating thing to do, but this passage teaches us that God intends for us to live in community, not isolated and independent. Think about it — when we ask others to pray for us, we give *them* a positive purpose for their words as well.

- What do you think are some reasons we resist asking for prayer or even praying all together when we are struggling?

- How do we overcome those blocks?

...we'll continue the thread on prayer tomorrow.

#11 Real Faith — believes in prayer

Summary of James 5:13-15

Summary of Matthew 7:7-8

How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?

Day Four

☞ READ James 5:1-20

☞ WRITE James 5:16-18

Circle the speech-related words in your journal: *confess, pray, prayer*.

Circle which of the following phrases that makes you slightly more uncomfortable:

Confess your sins to one another

Pray for one another

Why do you think that is?

Have you ever *confessed your sin* to someone? What was the result?

What do you think is the link between *confess your sins* and gaining the status of a *righteous person* in **v.16**?

The word *confession* means to *agree with God* or to *say the same thing as God*. Since He knows all things perfectly (including our heart), confession is like an alignment with God. It is an act of humility to bend ourselves to His direction and we've learned that when we humble ourselves, God will lift us up.

Read **Psalm 32:1-5**—

- Describe the man's condition before he confessed his sins. How did unconfessed sin seem to affect even his physical body?

- What potential connection does that have with **James 5:16**?

Read **Psalm 66:16-19**—

- What does the Psalmist seem to be saying about God hearing our prayers?

Read **John 9:30-31**—


- What did even the blind man that Jesus healed understand about God's ways?

There are so many unknowns about prayer — especially prayer requests for physical healing. We can probably all give examples of someone that God seemed to heal almost instantly, and examples of someone who didn't receive their healing until they saw His face in Heaven. There are so many things we don't know, so we rest on what we do know — Jesus taught us to ask and James taught us to confess — so that we might be as effective as even Elijah!

Has God stirred up within you the need to confess your sins? Is there something you actually need to verbally confess to another person? Pray for wisdom. Remember what we've learned about the power of our words. Then, be obedient and humble yourself before God and before others.

Day Five

 READ **James 5:1-20**

 WRITE **James 5:19-20**

We have two final two verses, and just like the Proverbs or the Sermon on the Mount, they don't represent any great summary statement or climax to the whole letter. But, in a way, they present a very important aspect of our work as Christians — pointing the way to life!

What has the person in **v.19** wandered from?

Do you think this *wanderer* is a Christian or a non-Christian? Why?

Do you think it's possible for a born-again Christian to *wander from the truth*? Do you see that possibility in Scripture? Do you have an example from everyday life?

We've gleaned so much wisdom from this book and this last sentence is icing on the cake because **Proverbs 11:30** tells us, "***he who wins souls is wise***". Winning a *lost soul*, or restoring a *wandering soul*, are both part of our calling. In the following passages from Luke, Jesus taught about the great care and celebration He desires to see in restoration:

Read Luke 15:4-7

- What had wandered?
- What effort was made to bring back the wanderer?
- What was the end result?

Read Luke 15:8-10

- What had gotten lost?
- What effort was made to find the lost?
- What was the end result?

Read **Luke 15:11-32**.

- Who had wandered?
- What effort was made to bring back the wanderer?
- What was the end result?

#12 Real Faith — points the way to life	
<i>Summary of James 5:19-20</i>	<i>Summary of Matthew 7:12-14</i>
<i>How does God want you to be a doer of this Word?</i>	

Read **Hebrews 2:1**. What do we need to be careful of ourselves?

That verse is a great ending place. I hope your Faith has become more Real through this study of James. May the Lord Richly Bless You! Sue

Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. How would you explain the differences between Godly Christians who happen to possess wealth and those described in chapter five?
2. What advice would you give to someone who realizes she has a grumbling problem and wants to reform? (*'You shouldn't grumble'* isn't an acceptable answer here)
3. Has anyone ever asked you to pray for their healing? Did you? What was the result?
4. James 5:15 says, "***the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.***" If that is a 100% guaranteed formula, no one would ever die. So, what do you think the promise is in this verse?
5. Did the final two verses bring someone to your mind who is wandering? Have you begun to earnestly pray for them and ask God what your part may be in their journey? Share your intentions in your group and pray for one another that God would enable you to ***bring a sinner from his wandering.***

References

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1— **Joseph M. Scriven.** Hymn *What a Friend we Have in Jesus* originally written as a poem to his mother in 1955.

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3— **Gaebelein, Frank E., ed.** *The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 12: Hebrews through Revelation.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981. WORDsearch CROSS e-book.

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- **2 Samuel**— The Reigning King
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- **Titus**—While We Wait
- **James**—Real Faith for Daily Life
- **1 & 2 Peter**—Hope, Holiness and Humility in a Hostile World
- **1,2,3 John**—Light, Love and Logic