



James



# James

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# Introduction

Imagine receiving a letter. You strip it from the envelope and read it aloud, but as you hear the words spoken off the page, you feel the challenge and difficulty that is laid before you. Not just you, but all who are like you.

*"Faith without works is dead..."*

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

*"...be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*

*"Even the demons believe—and shudder!"*

Welcome to the epistle of James.

James "the Just" is a colorful character inside and outside of the Bible. This James is the half-brother of Jesus and the author of the epistle, and while we don't have any information about his conversion, we do know that early on, he did not believe his brother was the Messiah (John 7:3-5; Mark 3:21). We also know that his leadership in the early church was vital to the embryonic Christian movement (Acts 12:17, 15:13, 21:18). Second century tradition held that he was such a man of prayer "that his knees became hard like those of a camel, in consequence of his constantly bending them in his worship of God, and asking forgiveness for the people."<sup>1</sup>

His epistle itself has proven to be a challenge for the church through the centuries. On one hand, its message of "works" has been pitted unnecessarily against the grace of the gospel message, and on the other hand, every generation that hears its pastoral and practical message must grapple with the question, "Is my faith a working faith?"

Over the next seven weeks, we will dig into this epistle and this question. As you hear and read the words of the letter, we are convinced that you will not be able to look at your Christian life the same way again.

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<sup>1</sup> *Hegesippus, Hypomnemata*



## USING THIS STUDY GUIDE

This guide is designed to lead your weekly group discussion around a particular text. It is important that you, as a participant, prepare before each meeting with your group. Reading the text and study questions, and praying about both beforehand will offer the best opportunities for all in the group.

***The guide is separated into the following sections:***

### **Text for the Week**

On the first page of each session you will find the text for the week's discussion and study. Read this before your group meeting and read it aloud during the group.

### **A Vision of Faith**

This section introduces you to the text and serves as a primer to be read aloud in your group. The introduction is followed by a series of questions about the Text for the Week. Take time to follow any instructions in the questions including reading scripture and having open discussion about the questions. Some answers are relatively clear. Some are more detailed.

### **A Faith Examined**

This series of questions will bring the concepts from the text into your life. These questions are more personal and press you to consider the biblical worldview and how it is working out in your life and in the lives of your fellow group members.

### **A Working Faith**

The key to living out our faith is being honest and driving that honesty into action. This section asks something of you. It calls you to make changes, to put your faith into action in the coming week, and draw accountability from your group. Without this step, your group time becomes only a mental exercise. We pray you don't let that happen.

## James 1:1-18

<sup>1</sup>James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. <sup>2</sup>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. <sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup>he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. <sup>9</sup>Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, <sup>10</sup>and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. <sup>15</sup>Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. <sup>16</sup>Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. <sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

## A Vision OF Faith

James certainly cuts to the chase: "Hello Friends, you sufferin'?" What a gift!" Pardon the exaggeration, but clearly this is not a greeting with any chance of being appreciated by our culture. We buy things to make us happy. We run for our lives away from trials or find ways to numb ourselves when we cannot avoid them. James' message is for his hearers to embrace trials, to expect them to grow and thicken their faith. James' rhetoric is shockingly straight-forward as he speaks of God and as he discusses our human tendencies. It is here in James' epistle that we encounter a fusion of the practical and the powerful, leading us down a path toward a healthy and working religion.

- Based upon this section, what would you identify as key themes to the whole book of James. Why?
- There are several contrasts in this section. Identify them and discuss why James may be using them (e.g. rich and poor).
- How would you define steadfastness?
- James 1:14-15 shows a pattern of temptation. What is the origin of the pattern? Map this pattern to a real situation from your life or someone close to you. How accurate is James' description of the process?
- Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. Do you think this is true and can you point to a situation in your life as proof?



## James 1:19-27

<sup>19</sup> Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup> for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> For he looks

at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

<sup>25</sup> 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.

<sup>26</sup> If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

<sup>27</sup> 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.

## A Vision OF Faith

In 1968, psychologist Robert Mager wrote, "If telling were teaching, we'd all be so smart we could hardly stand it."<sup>1</sup> Consider the slight change, "If hearing were learning..." For those of us that are parents, we sometimes complain about our children, "Why don't they listen? I told them what to do." We have this illusion that if we "tell" or the other person has "heard," they will "do." We are all susceptible to believing that telling and hearing are the greatest behavior changing tools known to man. But this human tendency has been around a long time. James 1:22 reminds us, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." The great faith chapter of Hebrews 11 is all about what the great heroes of faith did, not what they heard or said. How can we become faithful doers of God's word?

<sup>1</sup> Mager, Robert F. (1984) *Developing Attitude Toward Learning*, 2nd edition, Lake Publishing Company

- How can you recognize that a person is "quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger?" How does this behavior produce the "righteousness of God?"
- Meekness often has overtones of weakness in our contemporary society. But meekness can also mean "humble, teachable and patient." How does this definition amplify the meaning of "the implanted word" as described in verse 21? How might the implanted word be something we don't want to ignore?
- Verse 26 indicates that we can deceive our heart, making our religion worthless. How would you describe the connection between a person's heart and their tongue?
- Read Micah 6:8. How does verse 27 illustrate the "doing" of the words of Micah?
- Based upon James' description in verse 27 and Micah 6:8, what would an impure and defiled religion look like in detail?



## James 2:1-13

<sup>1</sup>My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. <sup>2</sup>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, <sup>3</sup>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," <sup>4</sup>have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? <sup>5</sup>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? <sup>6</sup>But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the

ones who drag you into court? <sup>7</sup>Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called? <sup>8</sup>If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. <sup>9</sup>But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup>For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

## A Vision OF Faith

James continues by giving an example of temptations that, apparently, were occurring to such a degree in the church, that it demanded immediate and heightened attention. For believers, the temptation to show partiality toward some, positions them in "the place of a judge, with evil motives." Imagine struggling to get food and the basic needs in life every day which probably does not describe many of us. So, instead, imagine the church in need of launching new ministries, more paid staff or new buildings. On Sunday, you notice "the local millionaire" walk in. Our natural bent is to prefer him to another family that is within the same congregation. Imagine the family has children with cheap clothes and uncombed hair. You know, those we might label, "needy people". We make a judgment about the value of persons based on their look, abilities, and resources, in order to meet needs or desires within our own lives. We just made a distinction that even our Lord does not make. We are to give honor to whom honor is due; to parents, pastors, police officers, and the like. But when we show favoritism and place value on someone based on their riches or real estate, skin color or social status, ethnicity or education, we do not practice the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. Loving our neighbor means giving to others, who truly are in need and not consideration of personal benefits or personal preference.

- What other sins, in this short section of James, does he use to drive home the gravity of the sin of favoritism?
- Do you view partiality the same after reading this section? Why/why not?
- Why do you think that James gives such a robust description of Jesus?
- Compare how Philippians 2:3-4 and our James passage speak about "preference and partiality." How might this change our understanding of favoritism?
- James refers to the "law of liberty" (1:25) and the "law of freedom" (2:12). In the book of Romans 5:18, Paul says, "While we were STILL sinners Christ died for us" and in Romans 8:2, he says, "for the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." What is the relationship between these verses and the "law of freedom (liberty)" in James? How then will we be judged by this law?





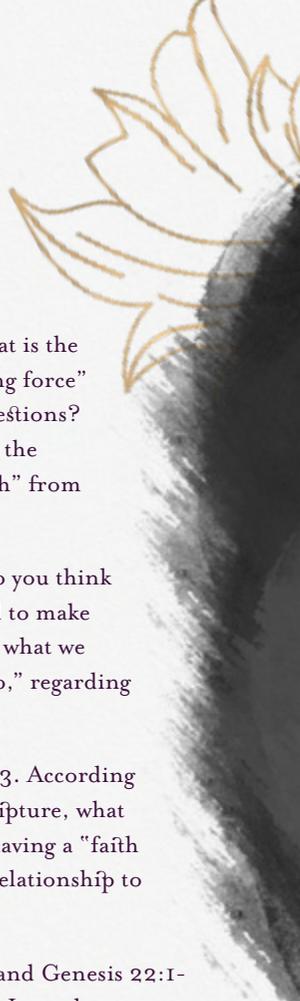
## James 2:14-26

<sup>14</sup>What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

<sup>15</sup>If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup>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? <sup>17</sup>So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! <sup>20</sup>Do you want to be shown, you foolish person,

that faith apart from works is useless?

<sup>21</sup>Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup>You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup>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? <sup>26</sup>For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.



## A Vision OF Faith

Have you ever heard someone use the term "works righteousness"? They want you to know that we cannot earn our way back to God and that we are saved by His grace alone. This is SO true! But "works righteousness" is often used in a belittling manner, it may even include an unflattering aside about Catholicism (which, if you have read ahead, is not good considering what James says about the tongue). Here James teaches us the fundamental difference between a God-honoring "faith that works" versus a "faith that is likened to a corpse." Through a series of rhetorical questions, this epistle demonstrates what the gospel is like when it is lived out in "shoe leather." Careful consideration of James' questions allows us to discover a bolder, more fervent, adult-like faith. Let's invite the Word of God to transform us to be effective "Kingdom-Bringers" in our spheres of influence, as we anticipate the return of our Glorious King Jesus.

- In James 2:14-16, what is the main point or "driving force" of James' series of questions? How is this related to the discussion of the "rich" from last week?
- In James 2:18, why do you think James is so compelled to make a distinction between what we "say" and what we "do," regarding "faith and works"?
- Read Matthew 7:15-23. According to this portion of Scripture, what is a prerequisite for having a "faith that works" and our relationship to Jesus Christ?
- Read Genesis 15:1-6 and Genesis 22:1-14. Considering what James has to say about Abraham in James 2:20-23, what did Abraham's "working faith" look like?
- Read James 2:24-26 and compare it to Paul's teaching about faith in Ephesians 2:8-10. How are they different? How are they the same?





## James 3:1-12

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>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! <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup>but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup>From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup>Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? <sup>12</sup>Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.



## A Vision OF Faith

Whether a Christian or not, we all have felt the sting and ensuing punishment or regret of having said the wrong thing at the wrong time. It seems to be a challenge we will wrestle with all our lives. Though we are aware that we must be careful about what we say, in the unguarded moments we tend to fail over and over in this area. James goes as far as to say that if we should ever meet a person who does not stumble in this way we have met a perfect man! After giving us some powerful metaphors and even calling the tongue a fire, he gives us the bad news: “No human being can tame the tongue.” Wow! What then are we to do? It seems like we are set up to fail. Our feeble plan to repress our true feelings about a matter will eventually let us down. But as we read to the end of this text, he begins to uncover the underlying problem which begins long before the words actually hit our lips or maybe before the words are even formed in the mind. It seems as with all these issues, it starts at the source—the heart.

- Read Luke 6:43-45. No doubt the metaphor of trees and fruit from Jesus were fresh in James’ mind as he wrote this letter. From where does the mouth get its material? From verse 6:45, do you get the idea that this content is spontaneous or accumulated? Why/why not?
- In James 3:11, he refers to the words that flow from our mouths like a river. Read Proverbs 10:11. What does this passage call the mouth of those who are righteous?
- Rivers and fountains flow from somewhere. If control begins at the heart then we must know the “how.” Read Proverbs 4:20-27 to see a progression. What are the things the son is warned to do and how would you redefine it in your own words?
- Read Galatians 5:16-25. In the list from verses 19-21, which items can be sparked by the fire of your tongue? In verse 25, what does Paul mean when he says to “live by the Spirit” and to “keep in step with the Spirit,” and how can this help with controlling your tongue?
- Read Ephesians 4:29. What is a good purpose for the tongue and what might that sound like?



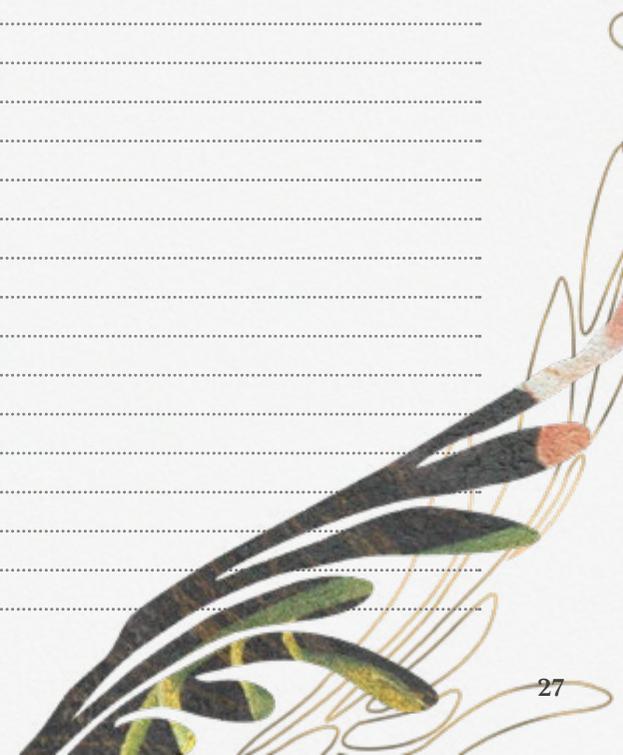
## A Faith Examined

- Discuss a time when someone close to you (like a parent, child, or friend) said something to (or about) you that made a lasting impression on you, good or bad.
- In your own experience, what are the times when you are more likely to say something you'll regret later? Are there certain people, types of people, situations or even physical conditions that you know trigger you to shoot off your mouth? What may that indicate about your heart? What steps can you take to avoid or prepare for these triggers?
- Share about a time when you said something that you regretted immediately and the consequences that resulted.
- On the flip side, think about a time you held your tongue and were thankful for that later. What was the key to your success in that moment? What made the difference?

## A Working Faith

Read Matthew 12:33-37. This is a heavy passage with a warning about giving account for the words we speak. Words do have a powerful and seemingly eternal impact on us. Think of words spoken over you that left a lasting effect. Perhaps there are relationships that have been damaged by your own words. Most often it is the people we are closest to that take or give the most. Is there someone you need to seek out to ask forgiveness? What steps can you take starting today to address the matters of your heart that flow to your lips? Write down three action items to take. Finally, don't forget to pray. If anyone had cause to "vent" it was David. In Psalm 141:3 we read his prayer, "Set a guard over my mouth Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips." Can I get an Amen?!

## Prayer & Notes



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# James 3:13-4:12

<sup>13</sup>Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

<sup>14</sup>But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. <sup>15</sup>This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup>For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

<sup>17</sup>But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup>And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

<sup>1</sup>What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>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"? <sup>6</sup>But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." <sup>7</sup>Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you 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?

## A Vision OF Faith

As James continues to admonish and teach the early Church, he returns to the importance of Godly wisdom and calls out the root cause of division and strife in the Church: worldliness and pride. For James, godly wisdom and the humility that comes with it, is the solution to the division in the Church. He holds that wisdom from above will be recognizable in the same way that faith is recognizable—through the actions and disposition of the person displaying it. When we lack this kind of wisdom, we show our worldliness through selfish ambition, quarrels, and inappropriate judgment. Therefore, James exhorts the Church, them and us, to purify our hearts and draw near to God. Drawing near to God will help to align our passions with God's will and enable us to ask for what we truly need, reducing our battle with our selfish desires.

- Throughout this section James uses strong, gut-wrenching language. What words stand out to you? What purpose do they serve? What emotions do they bring out?
- How would you normally define wisdom? How is the "wisdom from above" that James describes different?
- How does being a "friend of the world" make us an "enemy of God"? From the context, what does this kind of "friend of the world" look like?
- Revisit James 1:5-8. How does that section tie into this week's section?
- Read Matthew 6:19-24. Compare Jesus' message to James' message in 4:1-4.



# James 4:13-5:20

<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.

<sup>5</sup> Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. <sup>2</sup> Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you. <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. <sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may

not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. <sup>19</sup> My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, <sup>20</sup> 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.

## A Vision OF Faith

As he concludes this forceful letter, James presents us with a collection of closing thoughts, all of which are profoundly challenging to Christians living a life of ease in the modern world. As we read his words, directed at those who try to meticulously plan out their future, those who trust in their riches while neglecting the poor, those who must patiently endure trying times, and those who need guidance in prayer, it is hard to believe that they were written thousands of years ago and not yesterday. These closing sections speak powerful and important truth into our present struggles and failures, and ultimately serve to drive us deeper into the patient endurance that James has already told us will make us "complete." The question we are ultimately left with is whether we will be doers of the word, or hearers only.

- What attitude toward our future is James concerned about in 4:13-17 (see verse 16)? What kind of behavior would reveal this attitude?
- 4:13 and 5:1 both begin with the exact same phrase, "Come now, you..." Are the people or groups being addressed different? If not, what is the overlap? Which one do you find more personally challenging and why?
- What action is James looking for in James 5:1-6? What would this demonstrate about their internal state, and how does it compare to the natural disposition of this audience? Read Luke 6:20-26. How do Jesus' words compare with James' reasoning here?
- James uses the word "patience" four times in four verses (5:7-10). What specifically are his readers supposed to be patient about? What does patience look like in this section?
- Read the last two verses of the book. Based on everything James has covered in this book, what is the significance of James ending this way? What does it reveal about James?





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