

THE BOOK OF JAMES

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THE BOOK OF JAMES: SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

The book of James is a message of practical application. Crafted in the style of the book of Proverbs, James alternates his message between core principles and application in everyday life. Like Jesus's sermon on the mount, the lessons use common, easily understood metaphors that help to crystallize the concepts in the minds of James's audience. Consistent throughout the book is James's reference to the law, the prophets, and other Old-Testament figures.

James breaks each chapter into a series of lessons, generally without connected themes within each individual chapter - a disadvantage of breaking epistles into discrete sections. Themes build across the book as foundational principles expand to broader application.

With only a brief introduction, James begins chapter one with foundational principles key to the remainder of the book: the value of faith and endurance in a Christian's growth, and the importance of being an active hearer of the word. Chapter two is broken into two primary sections, first addressing the sin of being a respecter of persons, and second the union of faith and works.

James chapter three deals primarily with a recurring theme first touched on briefly in the first chapter: the tongue. The tail end of chapter three fits more into the context of the fourth chapter, where James addresses the issues of physical faction and those of a divided heart. As with chapter three, the final verses of chapter four bleed into the beginning of chapter five, addressing the issues of injustice and pride. This section of James particularly mirrors the feeling of many of the Proverbs. James finishes the book with a series of exhortations that pull together applications for many of the principles laid out previously throughout the book.

**THE BOOK OF JAMES:
CHAPTER 1 -
SUMMARY**

Following a brief introduction, James delves immediately into the meat of the book, beginning with the important role trials play in the maturity of a Christian. The chapter closes with a brief treatise on applying God's word, interlaced with examples of immediate application.

**JAMES 1:1-18
TRIALS AND MATURITY**

THEMES

- 1) Trials and Maturity*** - Maturity is developed through endurance of trials and temptations.
- 2) Faith and Prayer*** - Faith acts as an anchor and is essential when petitioning God.
- 3) Rich and Poor Tested*** - Both the rich and poor are tested by their stations in life, but are presented with the same opportunity in salvation.
- 4) Endurance and Reward*** - God promises a reward to those who endure in the face of trials and temptations.
- 5) Temptation and Sin*** - Uncontrolled temptation leads to death.

**JAMES 1:19-27
HEARERS AND DOERS**

THEMES

- 1) Swift to Hear and Slow to Speak*** - Hearing is key to accomplishing the righteousness of God.
- 2) Hearing and Doing*** - Hearing alone is insufficient. We must put our knowledge to use through good works.
- 3) Vain Religion and Pure Religion*** - Vain religion and pure religion are distinguished by self-control and selflessness.

THE BOOK OF JAMES:
CHAPTER 1
ASV - EDITED

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting.

² Count it all joy, my brethren, when you fall into manifold temptations; ³ knowing that the proving of your faith works patience.

⁴ And let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and does not criticize; and it shall be given him. ⁶

But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubts is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. ⁷ For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; ⁸ a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹ But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: ¹⁰ and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. ¹¹ For the sun arises with the scorching wind, and withers the grass; and the flower thereof falls, and the grace of the fashion of it perishes: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings.

¹² Blessed is the man that endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him. ¹³ Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no man: ¹⁴ but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. ¹⁵ Then

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the lust, when it has conceived, bears sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, brings forth death. ¹⁶ Be not deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. ¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

¹⁹ You know this, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. ²¹ Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. ²² But be you doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. ²³ For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: ²⁴ for he beholds himself, and goes away, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. ²⁵ But he that looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continues, being not a hearer that forgets but a doer that works, this man shall be blessed in his doing. ²⁶ If any man thinks himself to be religious, while he bridles not his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain. ²⁷ Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

**CHAPTER 1 -
TRIALS AND MATURITY
JAMES 1:1**

1) What can we know and likely infer about the audience of the letter (v. 1)?

See Acts 8:1-4; 11:19-21; Jas. 2:2, 21; 4:4; 5:10-11, 17-18.

JAMES 1:2-4

2) How is the interpretation of verse 2 impacted, knowing the intended audience, and how does this contrast with our natural reaction to trials? Cite examples of this principle in action.

3) What is the result of the proving of our faith, and how does that result come about (v. 3)?

See Job 23:10; 1 Peter 1:6, 7; Romans 5:2-5.

4) How is the complete work of patience accomplished (v. 4) - is patience enough? What is the end result?

See 2 Peter 1:5-8; 1 Peter 2:20-25.

JAMES 1:5-8

5) What part does wisdom play in becoming a complete man, and enduring trials? How important is it?

See Proverbs 19:11; 4:5-7; 2:10-15.

6) If we lack wisdom, how does James say we should work to acquire it (v. 5)?

See Matthew 7:7-11.

JAMES 1:5-8
(CONTINUED)

7) What does James mean in verse 5 when he says that “[God] gives to all...without criticizing?” Why might he have put this statement in here?

8) What is the crucial role of faith in the effectiveness of our prayers and petitions (v. 6, 7)?

See Matthew 21:21-22.

9) Why should a doubter expect to receive nothing from God (v. 7)?

See Hebrews 11:6.

10) In what way does doubt produce instability (v. 8)?

JAMES 1:9-11

11) What is a “brother of low degree” and in what way is he exalted (v. 9)? *Contrast Luke 12:21.*

See Prov. 15:16; 28:6; Psalm 37:16; James 2:5.

12) How is being “of low degree” a trial that could develop patience?

JAMES 1:9-11
(CONTINUED)

13) Why is the rich man to rejoice (v. 10) and how would this be considered a trial that could develop his patience?

See Hebrews 10:34.

14) Summarize verse 11 in the context of the passage.

See Matt. 6:19-21; 19:23-30; Luke 12:15-21.

15) What broad lesson can we draw from verses 9-11 that we can apply today?

JAMES 1:12-15

16) How does verse 12 apply to the preceding verses? Consider the value of the reward.

17) What is God's role in temptation (v. 13)?

See 2 Peter 2:9; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Peter 1:5-7; 1 John 2:16.

18) Reconcile this with God testing his people.

Examples: Deut 8:2-5; Gen. 22:1-2; Matt. 4:1; Job 1:8-12.

JAMES 1:12-15
(CONTINUED)

19) What does James say is the source of man's temptations (v. 14)?

20) In verse 15, what kind of death is James describing and what is James ultimately warning against?

See Gen. 2:17; 1 Cor. 11:27-30.

JAMES 1:16-18

21) Why would James warn his audience not to be deceived (v. 16)? About what deception(s) was James warning them? Consider the context.

22) How do verses 17 and 18 reinforce James's point made in verse 13 about God's role in temptation?

23) What does verse 17 tell us about God's nature?

Compare 1 John 1:5; Heb. 6:17-19; Mal. 3:6; Psa. 102:25-27.

24) What does James mean by "brought us forth by the word of truth," and in what way are we "a kind of firstfruits" (v. 18)?

Consider Jer. 2:3; Lev. 27:30-33; Deut. 26:1-11.

HEARERS AND DOERS
JAMES 1:19-21

25) In verse 19, James begins with “quick to hear.” How might this help us avoid being “quick to anger”?

Consider Eccl. 7:9; Prov. 14:29; 15:18.

26) James follows “quick to hear” with “slow to speak”. In what way does one complement the other?

Consider Prov. 10:19; 15:1-2, 28; 17:27-28.

27) Why is it so important to be “slow to anger?” In what way does man’s anger not accomplish God’s righteousness (v. 20)?

See Prov. 14:17; 15:18; 29:2; Rom. 12:19-21; Eph. 4:22-27.

JAMES 1:22-25

28) In what ways would someone who is a “hearer only” be deceiving themselves (v. 22-24)?

Consider Josh. 1:8; James 2:26.

29) What does James mean by “looks intently into the perfect law of freedom” (v. 25)?

See Josh. 1:8; Deut. 11:18-23.

30) Who does James contrast with the “forgetful hearer” and what is the outcome for this person’s works (v. 25)?

JAMES 1:26-27

31) In verse 26, James says that the man who does not control his tongue only thinks he is religious. How does his lack of control make his religion useless?

32) Why might James specifically call out control of the tongue as making one's religion vain? Might anything else make one's religion vain?

33) How does control of the tongue tie back to James's exhortation in verses 19 and 20?

34) What does James mean by "pure and undefiled religion" in verse 27?

35) How does caring for orphans and widows demonstrate pure an undefiled religion (v. 27)?

**THE BOOK OF JAMES:
CHAPTER 2 -
SUMMARY**

Chapter two is divided completely in half, with each half of the chapter addressing independent themes. Almost as a continuation of James's thoughts on pure religion, chapter two begins by addressing the issue of favoritism. The back half of the chapter is dedicated to the indelible tie between faith and works.

**JAMES 2:1-13
THE SIN OF FAVORITISM**

THEMES

- 1) *Superficiality***- *Superficial judgment and treatment based in trivialities like wealth is evil.*
- 2) *Rich in Faith*** - *Those who are physically poor may be spiritually rich.*
- 3) *Breaking the Law*** - *Favoritism runs counter to the second great command - Love your neighbor as yourself.*
- 4) *Judgment and Mercy*** - *Favoritism is an unmerciful act, and we must be merciful if we are to expect mercy.*

**JAMES 2:14-26
FAITH AND WORKS**

THEMES

- 1) *Faith Alone is Worthless*** - *Faith apart from works can accomplish nothing.*
- 2) *Works Demonstrate Faith*** - *Faith must be put into action, and our works (obedience of faith) show the kind of faith that we have.*
- 3) *Justification by Works*** - *Active, obedient faith (demonstrated in works) results in justification.*

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CHAPTER 2
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My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. ² For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; ³ and you have regard to him that wears the fine clothing, and say, Sit here in a good place; and you say to the poor man, Stand there, or sit under my footstool; ⁴ do you not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? ⁷ Do not they blaspheme the honorable name by which ye are called? ⁸ Howbeit if you fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well: ⁹ but if you have respect of persons, you commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he has become guilty of all. ¹¹ For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if you do not commit adultery, but kill, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹² So speak, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment is without mercy to him that has shown no mercy: mercy glories against judgment.

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¹⁴ What does it profit, my brethren, if a man say he has faith, but has not works? can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and in lack of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says unto them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled; and yet you give them not the things needful to the body; what does it profit? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead in itself. ¹⁸ Yea, a man will say, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well: the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But will you know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? ²² You see that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; ²³ and the scripture was fulfilled which says, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. ²⁵ And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.

*THE SIN OF FAVORITISM
JAMES 2:1-4*

1) Define favoritism.

2) Is the command in verse 1 limited to favoritism based on wealth? Are there other distinctions people often make that might lead us to the same sin?

3) Does James's command in verse 1 contradict Paul's command in Romans 12:10 to "be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another"? Explain.

4) Why might James have chosen the example of the wealthy and the poor to address the issue of favoritism (v. 2-7)?

5) Is favoritism a sin only when you act on it, or is it a sin of the heart (v. 4)?

Consider God's attitude - Job 34:19; Rom. 2:11.

6) In verse 4, James uses the terms "discriminated" and "judges with evil thoughts." How might God look at favoritism?

See 2 Chronicles 19:7; Prov. 28:21.

JAMES 2:5-7

7) Explain how “God chose the poor in this world to be rich in faith” (v. 5)? Is that true of all poor? What about the rich?

See Job 29:12; Matt. 19:23-24; 1 Tim. 6:17; Prov. 18:10-12.

8) Is verse 5 an example of God, himself, showing favoritism? Contrast God’s “choosing” with man’s favoritism.

Compare Eph. 1:4.

9) Contrast God’s treatment of the poor with man’s treatment of the poor (v. 5-6). How is man’s perspective warped?

Consider Deut. 15:7-8.

JAMES 2:8-13

10) In what way is favoritism a violation of the “royal law” (v. 8-9)?

11) In what way is someone who breaks a single command guilty of the entire law (v. 10-11)?

Consider Deut. 28:15, 58.

12) What is the “law of liberty” to which James refers in verse 12?

Consider Rom. 2:12-16; 8:2.

**JAMES 2:8-13
(CONTINUED)**

13) Why does James bring up the idea of mercy in the context of favoritism (v. 13)?

Consider how God views partiality - Lev. 19:15.

14) In what way does mercy triumph over judgment (v. 13)?

See Isa. 30:18, 19; Micah 7:18; Eph 2:4-5.

**FAITH AND WORKS
JAMES 2:14-17**

15) What is James implying in the rhetorical questions of verse 14? Can someone also have effective works without faith?

16) Explain how verses 15 and 16 make James's point.

17) If faith without works is dead, does this mean that faith is unimportant (v. 17)? Can one be saved without faith?

See Heb. 11:6.

JAMES 2:18-26

18) Can faith be demonstrated without works (v. 18)?

JAMES 2:18-26
(CONTINUED)

19) In what way is faith demonstrated by our works (v. 18)?

Consider Matt. 5:13-16.

20) How are demons an example of faith without works (v. 19)?
What is their response to their faith?

21) What does James mean by “justified by works” (v. 21)? Reconcile this with Ephesians 2:8, 9.

22) How is faith perfected by works (v. 22)? Consider what James means by “perfected.”

23) Was it simply because of Abraham’s belief that it was credited to him for righteousness (v. 23-24)?

24) What does Rahab’s example have in common with Abraham’s (v. 25)?

**THE BOOK OF JAMES:
CHAPTER 3 -
SUMMARY**

The majority of chapter three is dedicated to the dangers of the tongue and the importance of exercising control over the tongue. James emphasizes the importance of the consistency we must maintain between our profession as children of God and the way we use our tongues. The end of the chapter contrasts the wisdom of the world with wisdom from above.

**JAMES 3:1-12
CONTROLLING THE
TONGUE**

THEMES

- 1) A Sign of Maturity-*** *The ability to exercise control over the tongue is a mark of the mature.*
- 2) Dangers of the Tongue -*** *The tongue has a unique ability to cause disaster and steer the course of one's life.*
- 3) The Untameable Tongue -*** *Unlike the creatures of this world, no man can tame the tongue.*
- 4) A Tongue Divided -*** *A tongue divided, pronouncing both good and evil violates the nature of a child of God.*

**JAMES 3:13-18
WISDOM FROM ABOVE**

THEMES

- 1) The Fruits of Earthly Wisdom -*** *Exercising earthly wisdom results in chaos and division.*
- 2) Wisdom From Above -*** *Wisdom from above promotes purity and peace among brethren and resists division.*

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CHAPTER 3
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Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment. ² For in many things we all stumble. If any does not stumble in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. ³ Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also. ⁴ Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman wills. ⁵ So the tongue also is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! ⁶ And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell. ⁷ For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed by mankind: ⁸ but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison. ⁹ Therewith we bless the Lord and Father; and therewith we curse men, who are made after the likeness of God: ¹⁰ out of the same mouth comes forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. ¹¹ Does the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? ¹² can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither can salt water yield sweet. ¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you

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have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, do not glory and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom is not a wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. ¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

**CONTROLLING THE
TONGUE
JAMES 3:1-2**

1) Why would a teacher receive stricter judgment than others (v. 1, 2)?

Consider Titus 2:7-8.

2) Reconcile James 3:1, 2 with 1 Peter 3:15 and Ezekiel 33:1-6 and the responsibility all Christians have to share the gospel.

3) What does control of the tongue say about the one who controls it (v. 2)? What is that man also capable of doing?

JAMES 3:3-6

4) What do James's examples in verses 3 and 4 have in common?

5) What does James say that the tongue is capable of accomplishing (v. 5)?

See Prov. 10:19; 13:3; Matt. 15:18, 19.

6) Explain in your own words the meaning of verse 6.

Consider Matt. 15:11, 17-20.

*JAMES 3:3-6
(CONTINUED)*

7) Is the tongue evil, in and of itself? Consider what Jesus says in Luke 6:45.

8) Who does James say is capable of taming the tongue (v. 7-8)?

JAMES 3:7-12

9) Is there a difference between taming something and controlling something? Consider how James describes the tongue in verse 8.

10) How do challenges controlling the tongue manifest themselves (v. 9-10)?

11) What is James's point in verses 11 and 12, and what are some things we can do to exercise control over the tongue?

Consider Psalms 141:3; 19:14; Prov. 10:19; 13:3.

12) What does James say is the example the wise should demonstrate to those around them (v. 13)?

WISDOM FROM ABOVE
JAMES 3:13-16

13) Is it possible to demonstrate good conduct without wisdom's gentleness (v. 13)?

14) In what way does bitter jealousy and selfish ambition lead to glorying (v. 14)? Might pride have been an issue all along?

See Phil. 2:3; Prov. 13:10.

15) How does pride/glorying cause you to lie against the truth (v. 14)?

Consider Gen. 3:6; Jer. 8:9; 1 Cor. 1:19; 3:18, 19.

16) In what way are the actions of verse 14 considered wisdom - even earthly wisdom (v. 14-15)?

17) How do jealousy and selfish ambition create disorder (v. 16)?

18) How does the disorder of verse 16 run contrary to God's desire for his people?

Consider Eph. 4:1-6.

JAMES 3:17-18

19) James applies structure and order to the qualities of “wisdom from above” with words like “first” and “then”. What is the significance of this order (v. 17)?

20) How is the fruit of righteousness sown, and who is responsible for the sowing (v. 18)? Why must it be sown this way?

**THE BOOK OF JAMES:
CHAPTER 4 -
SUMMARY**

The beginning of chapter four flows directly from the end of chapter three, bringing into stark contrast the wars among them against the backdrop of wisdom from above. Here James focuses on the humility required to remediate their strife and draw near to God. The end of chapter four focuses on submitting our will to God's and recognizing God's role in our plans.

**JAMES 4:1-12
HUMILITY BEFORE GOD**

THEMES

1) *The Source of Strife* - *Strife arises when man's desires drive him to fulfil them at any cost and without regard to God's will.*

2) *No Middle Ground* - *God is jealous and will not share your friendship with the world.*

3) *Humility and Purification* - *Only by humbling yourself, cleansing your heart, and drawing near to God can you be exalted.*

4) *Judging Your Brother*- *By slandering our brethren, we speak against the core of God's commands.*

**JAMES 4:13-17
GOD'S WILL BE DONE**

THEMES

1) *The Unknowable Future* - *The future is hidden from man, and life, however long, is brief and uncertain.*

2) *Arrogant Boasting* - *Man demonstrates his arrogance when he treats life like he knows the outcome and thinks he has control.*

THE BOOK OF JAMES:
CHAPTER 4
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Where do wars and fights come from among you? do they not come, even of your pleasures that war in your members? ² You lust, and do not have: you kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: you fight and war; you do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask, and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it in your pleasures. ⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the scripture speaks in vain? Does the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying? ⁶ But he gives more grace. Therefore the scripture says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁷ Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you doubleminded. ⁹ Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you.

¹¹ Do not speak one against another, brethren. He that speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law: but if thou judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge. ¹² One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who are you that judges your neighbor?

¹³ Come now, you that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go

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CHAPTER 4
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into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: ¹⁴ whereas ye do not know what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For you are a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. ¹⁵ For that you ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. ¹⁶ But now you glory in your arrogance: all such glorying is evil. ¹⁷ To him therefore that knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

HUMILITY BEFORE GOD
JAMES 4:1-3

1) Compare/contrast the situation James is addressing in 4:1 with what he had just said in 3:16-18?

2) What does James say is the source of their wars and fights (v. 1)?

Compare Rom. 7:13-25.

3) What does James say is the end of the pursuit of their desires (v. 1, 2)?

4) What are the dangers of uncontrolled desires (v. 2)? Are the behaviors listed literal or hyperbolic?

Consider Matt. 5:21-22.

5) Why does James say that they are not receiving the things that they desire (v. 2, 3)? What was wrong with their hearts?

See Matt. 6:24, 1 John 5:14, 15; Luke 22:42-44.

JAMES 4:4-10

6) How does James characterize them compared to their relationship with God (v. 4)? How exclusive is our relationship?

Consider God's characterization of Israel in Ezek. 16.

JAMES 4:4-10
(CONTINUED)

7) In your own words rephrase or describe what James says in verse 5.

8) Contrast the gifts God gives with the ones he withheld from them (v. 6)? Are these gifts conditional?

9) What response does James call for in verse 7?

10) What is promised to those who resist the devil (v. 7)? How does this align with the preceding verses?

Consider Eph. 6:10-18.

11) In contrast with resisting the devil, how are we to behave toward God, and how will that aid our resistance (v. 8)?

12) Summarize what James is calling for in verses 8-10.

Consider Psalm 30; Jonah 3:5-10.

JAMES 4:11-12

13) How does “speaking against one another” tie back to the context of chapter 4 and the humility James just called for (v. 11)?

14) What kind of speaking against or judging does James seem to imply is taking place among them (v. 11)?

See 1 Peter 2:1, 12; 3:16; Eph. 4:31.

15) What law does James reference in verse 11, and in what way does this behavior speak against/judge the law?

Consider Lev. 19:15-18; Mark 12:30-31.

16) What is the real issue with the way they were judging their neighbors in verse 12?

Consider Phil. 2:3; Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:2, 3.

**GOD’S WILL BE DONE
JAMES 4:13-17**

17) In what way do verses 13-17 tie back to the issues of pride and humility James addressed in the preceding verses?

Consider especially verse 16.

18) In what way is speaking confidently about the future (aside from God’s promises) an exhibition of pride (v. 13, 14)?

Consider Job 38-41; Matt 5:36.

JAMES 4:13-17
(CONTINUED)

19) What do we learn in verse 14 about the span of our lives, especially relative to eternity.

Consider Psalm 90:9, 10; Eccl. 8:8.

20) What mind-set/behavioral shift does James call for in verse 15 and why does this matter?

21) Summarize in your own words what James says in verse 17.

22) How is verse 17 complemented by Romans 14:23 and Hebrews 10:26, 27?

**THE BOOK OF JAMES:
CHAPTER 5 -
SUMMARY**

Chapter five starts with a series of condemnations of the un-righteous rich, written in the style of the judgment pronounced through the prophets of Israel. James follows up those condemnations with words of comfort for the oppressed. The close of the book contains a series of reminders and brief lessons centered around the power of the prayer of the righteous.

**JAMES 5:1-12
PATIENCE IN TRIALS**

THEMES

- 1) The Reward of the Rich*** - *The oppressive rich have their rewards in this life and will be judged for their wickedness.*
- 2) Patience in Trials*** - *Be patient in oppression and focus on endurance in preparation for the Lord's coming.*

**JAMES 5:13-20
THE POWER OF PRAYER**

THEMES

- 1) The Prayer of the Righteous*** - *The prayers of the righteous are heard by God and their prayers in alignment with God's will can accomplish great things, whether on their own behalf or that of others.*

THE BOOK OF JAMES:
CHAPTER 5
ASV - EDITED

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. ² Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. ³ Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. You have laid up your treasure in the last days. ⁴ Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. ⁵ You have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; you have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶ You have condemned, you have killed the righteous one; he does not resist you.

⁷ Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receives the early and latter rain. ⁸ Be you also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge stands before the doors. ¹⁰ Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we call them blessed that endured: you have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.

¹² But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yes

THE BOOK OF JAMES:
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be yes, and your no, no; that you fall not under judgment.

¹³ Is any among you suffering? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing praise. ¹⁴ Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: ¹⁵ and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. ¹⁶ Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

¹⁹ My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; ²⁰ let him know, that he who converts a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

PATIENCE IN TRIALS
JAMES 5:1-6

1) Unlike other sections, verses 1 through 6 do not appear to be directed at James's audience. Why then would this section be written? Consider verse 7.

2) What does James say about the temporal nature of the earthly gain laid up by the rich (v. 1-3)?

See Matt. 6:19-21.

3) In what way is the rust of riches a testimony against the rich that will eat their flesh with fire (v. 3)?

4) Why might verse 4 have been of significance to James's audience and what lesson can we learn now?

5) What should the unrighteous rich expect after this life (v. 5, 6)?

Consider Luke 16:19-26.

JAMES 5:7-12

6) Why was James's audience instructed to be patient and how might these verses be a comfort to them (v. 7, 8)?

Consider Rev. 6:10.

**JAMES 5:7-12
(CONTINUED)**

7) What is the problem with grumbling against one another and why would it result in their judgment (v. 9)?

Consider Matt. 7:1-2; James 2:12, 13.

8) What is the important lesson of verses 10 and 11?

9) What is the problem with the swearing of oaths (v. 12)? What are we called to do instead?

Consider Matt 5:33-37.

**THE POWER OF PRAYER
JAMES 5:13-18**

10) How does God expect our reactions to be proportional to our circumstances (v. 13, 14), and what do these responses have in common?

11) How does God respond to the petitions of the righteous (v. 15-18)?

12) What is the importance of confessing sins one to another (v. 16) and what can prayers accomplish for that person?

Consider Acts 8:18-24; James 1:5.

JAMES 5:13-18
(CONTINUED)

13) Why should we find verse 17 particularly encouraging when it comes to faith in what our prayers can accomplish?

JAMES 5:19-20

14) What is accomplished by the righteous one who turns a sinning brother from his ways (v. 20)?

Consider Paul's warning in Gal. 6:1.

“For as the body apart from
the spirit is dead, even so faith
apart from works is dead.”

JAMES 2:26