

Joyful Life Bible Studies

REVIEW OF JAMES 1-3

Lesson 14

The epistle of James addresses practical issues that are as current as this morning's newspaper. Its challenges present timeless truths regarding the application of the Christian *faith*. Knowing God's Word is not enough. We must apply this knowledge to our everyday lives. Real *faith* can be seen through our behavior. The emphasis of this letter is on the *works* that real *faith* produces. The first three chapters of James deal with some of the behaviors that are produced by genuine *faith*. As you begin this review express to the Lord your desire to glean all that He has for you pertaining to your *faith* and the deeds that it generates. Thank Him for His promptings to do good *works* and His enabling power to perform them. Write your prayer here.

*For it is God which worketh in you
both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*

-Philippians 2:13

FIRST DAY: Read James 1:1-12

1. The first chapter of James deals with two types of *temptations*: *temptations* that come from without and *temptations* that come from within. This first portion of the chapter pertains to *temptations* that come from outside sources. The word *temptation* as it is used here does not mean seduction to sin. It is used of trials or testings with a beneficial purpose and effect; trials divinely permitted or sent. From James 1:2 how are we to *count*, consider or view trials?

a. How does understanding the definition of this kind of trial help you to *count it all joy*?

2. According to James 1:3,4 what is the purpose of trials?

a. Recall how a trial in your life had this effect.

(1.) What did you learn about God from that trial?

3. Our attitude during a trial can often turn that trial into a triumph. Because God has a beneficial purpose in our trials, we want to glean all that we can so that God's intentions will be fulfilled and the trial will not be wasted in our lives. Record the attitudes in trials depicted in the following verses:

a. Habakkuk 3:17,18

b. II Corinthians 12:9

c. Hebrews 12:3

d. I Peter 4:12,13

(1.) Since your outlook in a trial determines the outcome, what steps do you take to adjust your attitude so that God can use the trial for the utmost benefit in your life?

4. When a trial comes we need *wisdom*. We need to know what to say and what to do. We should not lean on our own understanding. What did you learn about *wisdom* in James 1:5-8?

a. What is our part?

b. What is God's response?

c. Why do you think it is important that we *ask in faith*?

5. What is the reward for *enduring temptation*? verse 12

a. A key to victory in trials is perspective. How does having an eternal perspective help you to *endure temptation*?

*To ask in faith, nothing wavering,
is to align our will with His purposes.*

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SECOND DAY: Read James 1:13-27

1. The second type of *temptation* dealt with in James is the *temptation* that comes from within. This kind of *temptation* can be described as a *solicitation to evil*. What does James 1:13-15 (16-18) tell us about this kind of *temptation*?
 - a. How do we know that God is not the source of this kind of *temptation*?
 - b. From verses 14,15 what is the progression of *temptation*?
 - (1.) What can we do to break this progression?
 - (2.) How would applying II Corinthians 10:5 put a stop to the downward spiral of a *temptation*?
2. In your own words describe the *temptation* that comes from within.
 - a. What preventative measures should you take to avoid being entangled by this kind of *temptation*?
3. James 1:22 has been called the heart of James. Applying what you have learned as you studied the first three chapters of this book, why do you think this verse is the key verse?
 - a. The word *doer* in the Greek is *poiotes* which can be translated *poet*. A *poet* is one who expresses the word. We are to express *The Word* through actions. How does being a *doer of the Word* help you to resist *temptation*?
 - b. We cannot *be doers of the Word* in our own strength. According to the following scriptures what enables us to walk rightly:
 - (1.) Psalm 119:11
 - (2.) Acts 1:8a

THIRD DAY: Read James 2:1-13

1. This portion of James deals with how we are to treat people in the different strata of society. James was addressing Christians who were favoring the *rich* and despising the *poor*, a problem that is still relevant in the church today. What example does James use to present the problem of being a respecter of persons?
2. What does verse 5 say about the *poor*?
 - a. Why do you think that many of the *poor* are *rich in faith*?
3. *Giving preferred treatment to rich people is a clear case of selling one's soul for a piece of bread.* Proverbs 28:21TLB How can showing partiality be a temptation to commit additional sin?
4. What is wrong with being a *respecter of persons*?
 - a. What message does showing partiality give to the *rich*?
 - b. What message does being a *respecter of persons* give to the poor?
 - c. What message does God want us to give to all men regardless of their social status? Matthew 22:16; John 3:16
5. *If ye fulfill the royal law...ye do well.* James 2:8 What is the royal law?
 - a. How would fulfilling the royal law prevent us from committing the sin of having respect to persons?
6. How has the study of James 2:1-13 affected the way you treat others?

*Judging a man by his wealth
shows that you are guided by wrong motives.*

-James 2:4 TLB

FOURTH DAY: Read James 2:14-26

1. Some commentators cite this section of Scripture as contradictory to Paul's teachings. However, rather than being contradictory, they are complementary. James' teachings are consistent with Paul's teaching that we are saved by faith alone. Paul emphasized the purpose of faith - to bring salvation. James emphasized the results of *faith* - a changed life. What have you learned from James 2:14-26 about the fact that genuine faith will be shown by *works*?
2. James poses the questions: *What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such a faith save him?* verse 14 NIV Why do you think deeds must accompany genuine faith?
 - a. On the flip side, some people have what appear to be good deeds, but do not have genuine *faith*. What does Jesus say in Matthew 7:(21,22)23 to those that have done these kinds of *works*?
 - b. It is not the one who simply claims to have *faith*, but the one who actually has *faith* that is saved. What does Ephesians 2:8-10 say about *faith* and *works*?
3. What two examples does James give of people whose genuine *faith* produced good *works*? James 2:21-25
 - a. How did they show their *faith* by their *works*?
4. *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* James 2:26 How would you explain this verse to someone who said he had *faith*, but had no *works*?

Personal: What changes have you experienced since you became a Christian that are evidence to you that you have a *saving faith*?

*Faith alone saves but the faith
that saves is not alone.*

-J. Calvin

FIFTH DAY: Read James 3:1-12

1. James describes two characteristics of the *perfect* (mature) Christian in the first two chapters. A mature Christian is patient in *trials* (James 1) and his faith is displayed through good *works* (James 2). In this section, we discover the third characteristic of the mature believer: he has power over his *tongue*. Record the analogies that James uses to describe the *tongue*, and how they help you to understand its power.
2. The *tongue* has power both to wound and to heal. List some verses that reveal the destructive or the constructive power of the *tongue*. (You might want to review the past lessons on the *tongue*.)
 - a. Understanding the capability of the *tongue* should cause us to choose our words more carefully. Share an example of a time recently when you chose to bridle your *tongue* from speaking evil and loosed it to edify or encourage someone.
3. *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:14* For the words of our mouth to be acceptable, the meditation of our heart must be acceptable. How does Luke 6:45 verify this?
 - a. What are examples of speech that are *not acceptable* to the Lord?
 - (1.) What kind of *evil treasures* might we store in our heart that could manifest themselves in speech that is *not acceptable* to the Lord?
 - b. What are examples of speech that please the Lord?
 - (1.) What kind of *good treasures* might we store in our heart that would manifest themselves in speech that is pleasing to the Lord?
4. *Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. James 3:10* Complete this verse by filling in the blanks:
My brethren, these things _____
- a. What illustrations does James use to describe this contradiction of speech?
 - (1.) How do these cause you to concentrate on the source of what you say?

SIXTH DAY: Read James 3:13-18

1. In the first chapter of James two different types of *temptation* are defined for us - *temptation from above* (trials without) and *temptation not from above* (trials within). In this portion of chapter 3, James deals with the two sources of *wisdom* - *wisdom that descendeth not from above* and *wisdom that is from above*. How does James define these two types of *wisdom*?
2. *Wisdom that is from above* is exhibited in eight attributes of character. James 3:17 Further your understanding of these qualities of *wisdom* by recording synonyms for each. If you have time find a verse that deals with each quality:
 - a. pure
 - b. peaceable
 - c. gentle
 - d. easy to be entreated
 - e. full of mercy
 - f. full of good fruits
 - g. without partiality
 - h. without hypocrisy
 - i. Choose one of these qualities of godly wisdom that you most desire to be worked into your life. Share why you chose it.
3. What is the end result of *wisdom from above*? verse 18
 - a. What are the goals of Romans 14:19?
 - (1.) How would our behavior reveal if we are pursuing these goals?
 - (2.) Does our behavior determine our goal or does our goal determine our behavior?
4. What have you realized about walking in wisdom that speaks to you about your behavior in relationships with others?

SUMMARY: James 1-3

1. How would you summarize James' intentions for writing the first three chapters of this book?
2. Briefly record what you discovered about each of the following:
 - a. trials
 - b. respect of persons
 - c. faith/works
 - d. the tongue
 - e. wisdom
3. Choose one of the topics that James addresses and share how it has impacted you.

*I want to be a doer, Lord
In trials and all that comes my way
To treat all people equally
And to guard everything I say
May I walk in godly wisdom
That reflects Your heart of love
And may I always, always know -
Power to do comes from above.*

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