

JAMES

A STUDY IN

faith that pleases God



Calvary Chapel Treasure Valley Women's Bible Fellowship

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How to Use This Study Guide

Each week, as you sit down to study, begin with prayer. Before reading the lesson and answering the questions, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His truth to you. You may find it helpful to have a few study aids such as a dictionary, a concordance, and more than one translation of the Bible. You may also find the following online resources helpful: BibleGateway.com BlueLetterBible.org

Note: The New American Standard Bible (NASB) was used for this Study Guide with consideration of the New King James Version (NKJV) and the (AMP) Amplified Bible.

The Bible is an endless mine of priceless treasure. The "Growing Stronger" section is designed to help you dig more treasures from God's Word that will strengthen your relationship and walk with Him. May what you find there dazzle you!

At the end of each week's study questions, there is a "Lift Your Heart" section. This will be an important and personal part of your study. You are encouraged to write in your journal what transpires as you listen and respond to the whispers from God's heart to yours. When you look back through your journal at the end of the study, you will be blessed and amazed at your insight and growth.

Study notes for James Introduction

James 1:1-11... *Testing Our Faith*

James openly acknowledged that tough times come to good people and he wanted his readers to see the deeper purpose. He saw testing as a marvelous benefit in bringing believers to greater maturity and stronger faith. When we have questions about our trials and testing, God will give us wisdom when we ask Him in faith.

Read James chapter 1

Re-read verses 1-4

1. What does being a "bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" mean to you?

2. According to the following verses, what do trials produce?

Romans 5:3-5

James 1:2-4

1 Peter 1:6-7

3. Why do you think trials are effective in refining us?

"It seems we need an occasional storm or fiery trial if our faith is to mature."

~ Joni Eareckson Tada

Read verses 5-8

4. In a trial, why is it important to ask God for wisdom?

How will God respond?

5. What does doubt reveal?

Read verses 9-11

6. In what ways might a poor believer be rich?

In what ways might a rich believer be poor?

7. How can being wealthy be a trial?

8. What lessons have you learned from a time of testing?

Growing Stronger...

1 Corinthians 1:24b says, Christ is “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” Asking for wisdom is ultimately asking to be like Christ. Consider practical ways to be more Christ-like in this area using the following verses.

Matthew 4:4

John 4:34

John 8:29

Philippians 2:5-8

Lift Your Heart...

“...for the one who doubts is like a billowing surge of the sea that is blown about and tossed by the wind.” (James 1:6, AMP) A mind that wavers is not completely convinced that God’s way is best. It vacillates between feelings, the world’s ideas, and God’s commands. Is there an area of doubt that you struggle with? Ask God to increase your faith and remember that you can trust Him. Then be loyal by committing yourself wholeheartedly to God. Write your thoughts in your journal.

Study notes for James 1:1-11

James 1:12-18... *Trials and Temptations*

The trials and temptations in our life can sometimes provide fertile ground for attitudes such as complaining, resentment,, and even revolt against God. But God wants us to persevere when we are under trial with an inner joy that rests in Him rather than in our outward circumstances. Our rewards are blessedness and a crown of life.

Read James Chapter 1

Re-read verse 12

1. What do you think it means to "persevere under trial"?

How have you done this?

What will be your reward?

Challenge: Do a little research about the "crown of life".

Read verses 13-16

2. When do temptations result in sin?

3. Who can you blame for your sin?

Why?

4. What is the consequence of sin? (see Romans 6:23)

5. What is the remedy for sin? (see 2 Corinthians 7:10 & 1 John 1:9)

6. Where can you turn when you face temptations? (see Hebrews 4:14-16)

7. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What promises do you find there?

How can these promises encourage you when you face temptations?

Read verses 17-18

8. What do you see in your life as good and perfect gifts from God?

9. Describe what it means to be "brought forth by the word of truth." (see 1 Peter 1:23)

Growing Stronger...

We cannot prevent all temptations in our life. Yet we can actively work at becoming better prepared to resist them. Read Psalm 1:1-3.

What are some warnings to heed? (verse 1)

List some preventive measures you can take to become better prepared. (verse 2)

Describe the outcome of this preparation and the blessings you would receive. (verse 3)

"It's always easier to avoid temptation than to resist it."

~ Randy Alcorn

Lift Your Heart...

James encourages us to deepen our faith in God. He will give us strength to resist temptations. We can trust Him because He is faithful and He is good. In your journal, write a prayer thanking God for the good and perfect gifts He has given you.

Study notes for James 1:12-18

James 1:19-27... *Hearing and Doing*

In this section, James challenges believers to be doers of the word and not merely hearers. A “forgetful hearer” is easily deceived, but an “effectual doer” of the word is blessed in all she does.

Read James chapter 1

Re-read verses 19-21

1. How can you personally practice the following?

Quick to hear

Slow to speak

Slow to anger

Why is it important to heed these instructions?

*"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." ~ Psalm 19:14*

2. What must you put aside in order to receive the word?
3. How should you receive the implanted word?

What does it mean to have the word “implanted”?

What does God’s Word have the ability to do?

Read verses 22-25

4. In your own words describe:

a “doer of the word”

a “hearer of the word”

5. Read Matthew 7:24 and Luke 11:28. What do you learn about the person who hears and obeys the word of God?

6. How have you been blessed as a doer of the word? Be specific.

Read verses 26-27

7. Describe the person whose “religion is worthless”.

8. What is considered “pure and undefiled religion” before God?

9. In what ways can you extend help to the needy?

10. How can you keep yourself “unstained by the world”?

Why is this important?

Growing Stronger...

James 1:26 says: “If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man’s religion is worthless.” Our religion is empty and meaningless if we cannot control our tongue. Read Ephesians 4:29-32 and list ways you can keep your speech in check.

Lift Your Heart...

James compared God’s Word to a mirror that reveals the thoughts and intentions of the heart. It exposes our pride and self-centeredness. Are you gazing into the Word or merely glancing at it? A hearer hears the Word but fails to learn and apply its meaning. If this has been a struggle, pray and ask God to implant His Word in your heart. Ask Him to transform you into an active doer of His Word. Praise Him for the good work He is accomplishing in your life. Record your thoughts in your journal.

Study notes for James 1:19-27

James 2:1-13... *Living Without Partiality*

Faith in the Lord Jesus is incompatible with partiality and discrimination. God is neither partial nor prejudiced in His dealings with the human race. The color of a person's skin, the size of her bank account, or her social status leaves God completely unimpressed. Jesus treated everyone with the same love, the same interest, the same care and concern.

Read James chapter 2

Re-read verses 1-7

1. Why is it wrong to show partiality? (see Deuteronomy 10:17)
2. What causes us to treat people who are rich/poor, popular/unpopular, young/old, and so on differently?
3. What does discrimination reveal about your thoughts and motives?
4. What helps you see people as Jesus sees them?

"Love without distinction, without calculation; love without procrastination. Just love."

~ David Jeremiah

5. Describe what the following verses say about those who seem to have less.

Job 34:19

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Read verses 8-13

6. Explain the “royal law” as stated in John 15:12.

7. How do we break all of God’s law when we break the “royal law”?

8. Why is it important to show one another mercy? (see Matthew 6:14-15 & Ephesians 4:31-32)

Growing Stronger...

Describe Christ's heart toward the poor, the working class, and the social rejects using the verses below. Feel free to cross-reference these verses or use a concordance to find more examples.

Luke 5:12-13

Luke 5:27-31

Luke 14:12-14

How can you follow Christ's example and teaching? Be specific.

Lift Your Heart...

Did a particular verse from this week's lesson make you think? Is there a verse that convicted or encouraged you? Write it in your journal and memorize it. Allow God's Word to permanently brand itself in your head and in your heart.

Study notes for James 2:1-13

James 2:14-26... *A Faith That Works*

The fact that salvation comes by faith alone led some in the early church to deny all responsibility to do good works. James proclaimed that faith without works produces nothing that counts for eternity. Our good works are proof of a life surrendered to the will of God and obedient to the leading and guiding of His Spirit.

Read James Chapter 2

Re-read verses 14-20

1. How does James describe a faith which has no works?
2. Why might the absence of works in someone's life make their claim of faith suspect?

"Faith that does not act, is a faith that is just an act."

~ Lois Evans

3. How do your good works demonstrate your faith in Jesus Christ? (see John 13:35)

What are some of these good works?

4. Briefly describe some of the truths you find in the following verses.

Matthew 25:34-40

John 15:5

1 John 3:18

Read verses 21-26

5. What do you glean about works from the following verses?

Ephesians 2:8-10

Philippians 2:13

Philippians 4:13

6. How was faith at work in the life of Abraham? (James 2:21-23; Hebrews 11:17-19)

In the life of Rahab? (James 2:25; Hebrews 11:31)

Growing Stronger...

The faith we profess in Jesus Christ is not passive. It grows, it works, and it changes us to be more like Jesus. Our good works are the fruit of faith. Our lives are to be committed to loving others and showing mercy. Read Galatians 5:19-23. Contrast the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

Works of the Flesh	Fruit of the Spirit

How is the fruit of the Spirit evident in your life?

Lift Your Heart...

Our faith in Jesus is lived out through good works. Each morning ask God, "What have You prepared for me to do for You today?" Then follow through. Record the results in your journal.

Study notes for James 2:14-26

James 3:1-12... *Taming the Tongue*

James passionately speaks about the destructive nature of the tongue. He describes it as being "set on fire by hell". Although we are unable to tame our tongue, God has given believers His Word and the fruit of His Spirit, self-control, to enable us to speak life-giving words.

Read James Chapter 3

Re-read verses 1-5

1. What warning does James give to those who desire to become teachers of the Word?
2. Describe what it means to you "to bridle the whole body".
3. What is James illustrating with the bit in a horse's mouth and the rudder of a ship?
4. According to the following verses, how should your tongue be used?

Psalm 19:14

Psalm 96:1-3

Ephesians 4:29

Colossians 4:6

Read verses 6-8

5. How is the tongue described?

6. Read Matthew 15:10-11. According to Jesus, what defiles the entire body?

Read verses 9-12

7. Name two things we do with our tongues.

8. Read Luke 6:45. Explain the connection between your tongue and your heart.

"The tongue is a slave of the heart, so let's be sure the heart is a good master."

~ Stanley Toussaint

9. What point is James making when he refers to a fountain, a fig tree, and salt water?

Growing Stronger...

Proverbs 18:21 tells us: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." We have a choice to wield our words as weapons or present them as treasure. Read Proverbs 15:1-4. Contrast the upright tongue and the wicked tongue.

The Upright Tongue	The Wicked Tongue

Look up other Scriptures about the tongue and record what you find.

Lift Your Heart...

Ephesians 4:29 (New Living Translation) says: "Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them." Do you struggle in the area of coarse language? Gossip? Criticizing others? Lying? Complaining? Confess it to the LORD. Purpose in your heart to use your tongue to encourage others, offer forgiveness, give comfort, and praise God. Write a prayer in your journal asking Him for wisdom to choose words that build up and do not tear down.

Study notes for James 3:1-12

James 3:13-18... *Two Kinds of Wisdom*

In these verses James compares the world's wisdom to godly wisdom. The world's wisdom promises power, prestige, and wealth to those who selfishly look out for "number one". Godly wisdom, on the other hand, gives spiritual insights for practical skills in living. Those with godly wisdom make choices based on God's Word rather than the world's standards.

Read James chapter 3

Re-read verses 13-18

1. What proves that we have wisdom and understanding?

*"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*

~ Proverbs 9:10

2. List the characteristics of "earthly" wisdom.
3. What does it mean to you to "lie against the truth"?
4. In what ways does earthly wisdom lead to "disorder and every evil thing"?

5. James uses several adjectives to describe the wisdom that comes from God. Give an example of how you can live out each of the following:

Pure

Peaceable

Gentle

Reasonable

Full of mercy and good fruits

Unwavering

Without hypocrisy

6. Read James 3:2-4. Do you think what you say controls what you do? Explain your answer.
7. What does it mean to you that "the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace"? (James 3:18; see also Proverbs 11:18 and Isaiah 32:17)

Growing Stronger...

"Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls." (James 1:21) Humility is the character trait underlying true Christian behavior. You must cultivate humility if you desire to take James' teaching deeply into your life. According to the following verses, what are some advantages to being humble?

Psalm 25:9

Proverbs 11:2

Proverbs 29:23

James 1:21

1 Peter 5:5

Lift Your Heart...

Gratitude is powerful to help us conquer envy and serving others helps us avoid selfish ambition. In your journal, list at least 10 things that others do for you that you are grateful for. Are there things on your list that you can do for others? Prayerfully consider doing some of those things for others.

Study notes for James 3:13-18

James 4... *Drawing Near to God*

Salvation comes from God alone. He earnestly desires and deserves our undivided allegiance. To run after anything or anyone else is spiritual adultery. We live in this world of sin, but we are to seek after God's righteousness and not become enslaved by the world's passions and pleasures.

Read James Chapter 4

Re-read verses 1-3

1. What was the source of the quarrels and conflicts among the believers James was writing to?

What are the results of your pleasures waging war in your members?

2. Why might your prayers go unanswered?
3. According to the following verses, what are some reasons your prayers would be answered?

Psalms 34:15

1 John 3:21-22

1 John 5:14-15

*"The prayer that is born of meditation upon the Word of God
is the prayer that soars upward most easily to God's listening ear."*

~ R. A. Torrey

Read verses 4-6

4. How would you describe "friendship with the world"?

How does God view this friendship?

Read verses 7-10

5. List the actions of repentance in these verses.

6. What three promises do you find?

Read verses 11-12

7. What is "the law" James refers to? (see Matthew 22:37-40)

Who is exempt from obeying this law?

Who is exempt from being loved by you?

Read verses 13-17

8. Why is it important to seek God's will as you make plans?

9. What do you learn about boasting? (James 4:16; see also Jeremiah 9:23-24)

10. When would not doing something be a sin? (James 4:17)

Growing Stronger...

Worldly living does not always appear as hatred toward God. Sometimes it is merely selfishly leaving Him out of our plans and seeking what pleases us rather than seeking what pleases Him. We have no sure knowledge of the future and often fail to fully comprehend how temporary life is. What do the following verses teach about putting your life in God's hands?

Proverbs 27:1

Luke 12:16-21

Jeremiah 29:11-13

Lift Your Heart...

When we pray with a pure heart and right motives, God always answers our prayers. The answer could be yes, no, or wait. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) Can you think of a time when you looked back and thanked God for answering "No"? Write your thoughts in your journal.

Study notes for James 4

James 5:1-12... *Warnings and Exhortations*

James strongly warned the corrupt rich of God's coming judgment. Instead of storing up heavenly treasure, they stored up earthly treasure that would be of no use to them in the last days. They were more concerned about living a life of luxury and pleasure instead of doing right in the sight of God. Despite this, James encouraged the believers to patiently endure and strengthen their hearts until the coming of the Lord.

Read James chapter 5

Re-read verses 1-6

1. What charges does James bring against the rich?
2. Read Matthew 6:19-21. Explain the difference between treasures on earth and treasures in heaven.

Give a few examples of....

....treasures on earth

....treasures in heaven

Describe in your own words how treasure and the heart are connected.

Read verses 7-9

3. List three instructions James gives to believers.

4. When you are going through a trial, how do you wait patiently for the Lord? (see Psalm 37:7-8)

5. What do you think complaining “against one other” is a sign of?

How can you safeguard yourself from complaining in general?

*"Complaining about God's work or God's people
is a direct reflection on the value of God and His plan."*
~ Joseph Stowell

Read verses 7-11

6. Who does James use as examples of patience?

7. Describe the outcome of the Lord’s dealings with Job. (Job 42:10)

In light of this, what do you learn about the character of God? (James 5:11)

Read verse 12

8. Why was Jesus insistent when He said, "But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'"?
(see Matthew 5:34-37)

Growing Stronger...

Material possessions and money are not in themselves bad, but the desire to obtain these things above seeking God can lead to evil and heartache. Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. What instructions do you find about storing up "the treasure of a good foundation for the future"?

In what ways are you storing up heavenly treasure?

Where are you challenged the most regarding material possessions and money?

Lift Your Heart...

Suffering is part of living in a fallen world, but it is not without purpose. God will use suffering to deepen our dependency on Him, to comfort us, and to grow our faith. How do you endure trials patiently? How does God strengthen your heart to press on? Record your thoughts in your journal and write a prayer thanking Him for His compassion and mercy.

Study notes for James 5:1-12

James 5:13-20... *The Power of Prayer*

James concludes his letter with a call to prayer. He exhorts believers to pray in troubled times and times of joy, for those who are sick, and for those who have fallen from the faith. Why? Because the prayers of those who believe in Jesus are powerful and effective!

Read James chapter 5

Re-read verses 13-18

1. How should you respond in the following circumstances?

Suffering

Cheerfulness

Sickness

Why are these wise actions to take?

2. Have you ever asked for prayer and been anointed with oil? What was the experience like?

If not, why not?

3. What kind of healing does confession bring?

4. Why do you think it is important to confess your sins to someone else?

5. Why is it important to remember that, "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours"?

6. Explain the assurances you find in the following verses.

Psalms 50:15

Psalms 51:1-2

Philippians 4:6-7

*"To be a Christian without prayer
is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."
~ Martin Luther*

Read verses 19-20

7. What causes some to stray from the truth of God's Word? (see James 4:1-3)
8. Describe the course of action Jesus gives us in Matthew 18:15-17.
9. According to the following verses, what should our attitude be when showing another their faults?

Romans 3:23

1 Corinthians 10:12

Galatians 6:1

Ephesians 4:15

Growing Stronger...

Congratulations! You have completed a study through the book of James. Write what James said about the nature of God in each of the following verses. Describe at least one implication each statement has for your life.

	God's Nature	Implication
1:5		
1:13		
1:17		
4:6		
5:11		

Lift Your Heart...

Take time to carefully consider all that you have learned about prayer in this lesson. Is there a concept that stands out to you in a special way? Do you feel the Lord is asking you to change something about the way you pray? Express it as a prayer in your journal.

Study notes for James 5:13-20