

# LIVE LIKE JESUS



*14 Weeks Of Devotions & Discussion  
On "The Letter Of James"*



# LIVE LIKE JESUS



*James saw how Jesus lived. Day in and day out he watched his older brother. At first, he was skeptical about the claims Jesus' made about Himself, but eventually James came to believe that Jesus is God.*

*James' perspective on Jesus is totally unique. James knows what it means to live like Jesus. He now calls on all Jesus followers to live in the same way. Make Jesus' life, your life. **Live like Jesus.***



Dear Readers,

Thank you so much for jumping into this study on James! Over the next 14 weeks you are going to be challenged! James is incredibly direct and to the point. He's going to get up in your business and encourage you to live like Jesus. Not an easy task. But with the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able.

I wanted to highlight several resources that have been helpful for me in my study of James. First, I want to give honor where it is due. Some of the material in this discussion guide and devotional has been adapted from these resources. Secondly, I wanted to recommend them to you as I believe they will bless you in your continued studies.

- The NIV Application Commentary
- ESV Study Bible
- James: Faith That Works (Preaching the Word)
- Christ Centered Exposition: James
- Be Mature: Growing Up In Christ
- James: Jesus Bold Little Brother

I also want to thank the members of the Destiny Research Team: Josiah Hodgett, Stephanie Escobedo and Benjamin Gongora. It is through their faithful study and research that this discussion guide and devotional was produced. On the next page there is a brief bio on each of them.

I couldn't be more excited about this series and how God is going to use it to help us bear good fruit in His Kingdom for His glory! Thanks for coming on this journey.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Bell', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Pastor Matt Bell



## About The Authors



**MATT BELL** is the pastor of Destiny Church in San Antonio, TX. He studied at International Bible College then earned an AA degree in communications. He completed his Biblical studies with a BA from Texas University of Theology.

He enjoys teaching the Bible and spending time with his wife Heather and their four children.



**JOSIAH HODGETT** is a bi-vocational minister serving in Shell Lake, WI. He serves as a volunteer pastor at Shell Lake Full Gospel Church and manages the home office of the International Ministerial Association. Vocationally, Josiah is a Data & Technology Specialist for the Shell Lake Public School System.

Josiah is married to Adelle (Fredrickson) Hodgett, and they have two girls - Aria (4) and Adalynn (2). They are expecting a third child in July.



**STEPHANIE ESCOBEDO** is a former member of Destiny Church in San Antonio, TX. She graduated from Kings Bible Institute (KBI) in 2017. She has a BA in Psychology and will complete her Master of Business Administration in March of 2018.

She currently resides in Monterey, CA where she works full time and is an active member of Calvary Chapel. She spends her free time outside enjoying the mountains and the ocean.



Additional collaboration and supplemental content provided by **BENJAMIN GONGORA**. Benjamin has a BA in Criminal Justice from Campbell University and graduated Kings Bible Institute (KBI) in 2015.



# LIVE LIKE JESUS



## **James Sermon Schedule (February – May 2018)**

1. 2/4/18 - James 1:1  
Live Like Jesus
2. 2/11/18 - James 1:2-11  
Live Joyfully
3. 2/18/18 - James 1:12-18  
Live Faithfully
4. 2/25/18 - James 1:19-27  
Live Quietly
5. 3/4/18 - James 2:1-13  
Live Impartially
6. 3/11/18 - James 2:14-26  
Live Actively
7. 3/18/18 - James 3:1-12  
Live Graciously
8. 3/25/18 - James 3:13-18  
Live Wisely

## **4/1/18 - EASTER SUNDAY**

9. 4/8/18 - James 4:1-10  
Live Humbly
10. 4/15/18 - James 4:11-12  
Live Sensibly
11. 4/22/18 - James 4:13-17  
Live Intentionally
12. 4/29/18 - James 5:1-6  
Live Generously
13. 5/6/18 - James 5:7-12  
Live Patiently
14. 5/13/18 - James 5:13-20  
Live Prayerfully

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# DEVOTIONS



# LIVE LIKE JESUS



## Week 1 Devotions James 1:1 (Live Like Jesus)

### Day 1

My wife and I recently went on a much-deserved weekend getaway. We decided to go the classy route and stayed at a luxury hotel in a big city. Being small town folks, it was an adjustment! But the comforts of a luxury hotel make it quite easy to settle in.

The next day, as we were heading out and about, we met a gentleman who was already in the elevator. He was a cordial fellow, well-dressed, polite. He asked us where we were from and what brought us to the city. We asked the same questions. He said he was from Charlotte, he was with the Hornets, and they had a game that night! With that, he walked out of the elevator and we lost him in the crowd.

Our hotel was attached to the city's NBA arena, and we had just exchange greetings with the General Manager of the Charlotte Hornets! That evening, we also rubbed shoulders in the lobby with several of the Hornet's players.

Naturally, we just HAD to tell all of our friends and family that we stayed at the same hotel as an NBA team, and that we even got to talk to the GM! For simple folks like myself, this was a big deal! When you meet somebody famous, you tell *everybody* about it!

Now stay with me - what if you had rubbed shoulders with Jesus? Take it a step further - what if you were Jesus' half-brother? James was the younger half-brother of Jesus, and he wrote a strong and impactful letter to the earliest Christian church. But he doesn't start off his letter by saying, "Listen up, I'm Jesus' half-brother, so you better listen!" No, he starts off his letter by saying "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ..."

A servant. To be devoted to others to the point of disregarding your own will and interests. Whether we're talking James, or Jesus himself, the *power* and *authenticity* of their message was made effective by their meekness and humility. As we go through the letter that James wrote, we'll be given many opportunities to "look in the mirror" as the Lord points out things in our lives that do not line up with His will and His word. It's all part of the process of maturing as believers. But FIRST - we have to start with humility. There is no alternative.

(Josiah)



## Day 2

Growing up as a child, I always looked up to my older sister. She received much praise from my parents so I decided to get good grades like her and act more like her in general. However, I also picked up some of her bad habits too and following in her footsteps, I made some big mistakes.

When I was a newer Christian I found it easy to look up to more mature Christians, to follow their example. I recall having a mentor that one day told me to start running to God with my problems first, before running to her. She reminded me that she was not God.

James, however, had *Jesus* as an older brother. It's important to note that James refers to himself as a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than making mention that he is the brother of Jesus. As Christians we are not to look to our older siblings, no matter how great, or to our mentors, no matter how wise, but we are to look to Jesus alone as our Savior and perfect example.

A sister in Christ used to tell me to always keep my eyes on Jesus. No matter how great or godly a person in my life might be, that person has fallen short of the glory of God. Therefore, it is imperative that we consistently and constantly keep our gaze on the perfect and holy son of God, Jesus Christ.

Is there someone that you have been looking up to instead of Jesus? Are you willing to go to Jesus instead?  
(Stephanie)



### **Day 3**

The word slave has many negative connotations in today's world. However, being a slave does not always mean being owned by another person. James being a bondservant or slave to Christ is not meant to be a negative thing, but rather who we should be slaves to.

In our modern day society we find ourselves being slaves to other things rather than Christ. We can be slaves to our jobs, family, and other social requirements. Are these things bad? I would say God put them in our lives for a reason, but when they take priority over Christ it can be a bad thing.

I propose that we do an inward reflection on what we spend most of our time with. That is where our current priority is. It is also what we are slave to. (Benjamin)



## **Week 2 Devotions**

### **James 1:2-11 (Live Joyfully)**

#### **Day 1 (James 1:2-4)**

*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

*James 1:2-4*

Sometimes when we face difficulties, it's our own fault. Our choices have consequences. Other times we face difficulties at no fault of our own. Either way, there's a secret to unlocking the power of difficulties in transforming your life.

James tells us to "consider it pure joy...whenever you face trials of many kinds." What's up with that? He goes on to tell us why: "because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Trials, difficulties, hardships - they all test our faith. Sometimes my faith needs to be tested to reveal what I truly believe. Other times it's not my faith, but my faithfulness that needs to be tested. Will I hold to what is true even when I don't feel like it? Will I hold to what is true even as I walk through the consequences of my sin? Will I hold to what is true even when I get blindsided by family crises or medical emergencies?

The testing of our faith produces perseverance, and we need to see through this process of perseverance so that our faith is mature and complete! Trials will come. That isn't the question. The question is, how will you respond? How you respond will either bring you further, or it will set you back, on the journey to maturity.

(Josiah)



## Day 2 (James 1:5-8)

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. 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. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

*James 1:5-8*

Life is full of so many important decisions that we have to make. Who should I marry? Where should I work? How should I educate my children: public, private, homeschool? What church should I belong to? How should I spend my free time? The list could go on and on.

We will always be faced with difficult decisions in life, and the best choice isn't always obvious. Are you facing any decisions currently, big or small? I know that often times I just wish the Lord would audibly tell me what to do. That would make things much simpler!

But God doesn't work that way. Rather He wants us to ask for wisdom in which He will give generously. The key for us is to not doubt the faithfulness of God. The good news is that God would not tell us to ask for something that He is unwilling to give. If we will ask for wisdom, God will give it. It's a promise from Him.

Today, ask the Lord for wisdom in whatever decision, no matter how big or small. Remember what Proverbs 16:9 says, "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." Be confident that the Lord will provide you with the necessary wisdom at the right moment which will ultimately allow you to bring glory to God.

(Stephanie)



### **Day 3 (James 1:9-11)**

*Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. 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.*

*James 1:9-11*

When you imagine what a great Christian looks like, is he rich or poor? If you could choose to be rich or poor, what would you choose? Almost every honest person would admit the preference to be rich. However, James teaches us that the poor will be exalted and those who pursue riches, above all else, will be humbled. Eventually all worldly wealth will fade away like the grass.

Yet, because of God's grace, we are extended an inheritance bought with Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. This is a wealth that will never fade away! James also makes mention of a rich man fading away in his pursuit of wealth. It is not wrong or bad to be wealthy, but rather it is wrong to be chasing after worldly wealth. Instead, we should be chasing after spiritual wealth.

Pause and ask yourself the question "What have I been chasing after?" Is it something that will fade away like the grass? Or is it something eternal, that will not fade? Today, trust that God will meet all of your needs if you choose to pursue Him first.

(Stephanie)



## **Week 3 Devotions**

### **James 1:12-18 (Live Faithfully)**

#### **Day 1 (James 1:12)**

*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.*

*James 1:12*

Do you want to be blessed? I know I do. I believe we all want to live a life blessed by God. Who wouldn't want that?

Here, James gives us one of the keys to living the blessed life. The key to blessing is faithfulness. Those who remain steadfast in the midst of the trials and the tests of this life, will receive the ultimate blessing, what James calls *the crown of life*.

The great news is that this is something under our control! You can determine in your heart today that you are going to live faithfully unto the Lord. Today, make this bold declaration "No matter what may come my way, I am going to live a life that is faithful unto God." ... then, live it out! If you do, expect and anticipate God's blessings to flow in your life.

(Matt)



## Day 2 (James 1:13-15)

*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. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*

*James 1:13-15*

Temptation ... what a nasty word. As much as we would like to pretend that it doesn't exist, all of us will face temptation every single day. Have you ever thought about where temptation comes from? James gives us the answer to that very question.

First, James tells us where temptation **does not** come from: God. This shouldn't surprise us. After all, God is perfectly good and righteous. You need to know that when you face temptation, it is not coming from God. God never entices us to sin.

But surprisingly, James does not say the source of temptation is what many of us would expect him to say. James does not say that temptation comes from the Devil. He actually says the source for temptation is our own evil desires. Many times we want to lay the blame for temptation, and therefore sin, on an external source. "It's the Devil's fault. He tempted me." James says you can't do that. The problem is not external. It's internal. It's our hearts. It's our own desires that lead us into sin, and ultimately death.

So what can we do to fight temptation? Well, we need a new heart with new desires. Psalm 37:4 says "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." This verse teaches us that if we will put our focus on Jesus and make Him the object of our desire and affection, God will actually give us new desires. As we gaze upon the beauty and majesty of Christ, our hearts are transformed and God puts into us new desires.

Today, determine to delight yourself in Jesus and see how God will put into your heart new desires.

(Matt)



### **Day 3 (James 1:16-18)**

*Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 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. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

*James 1:16-18*

One of my least favorite things in the whole world is being lied to. Nothing stings quite like being purposely misled or deceived.

But here is the sad truth: we've all been deceived. We've all believed a lie. Actually, we've all believed the same lie. The lie we've all believed is this, "Something, or someone, other than God, can give me good things." That's it. That's the lie we've all believed.

In fact, every time we've sinned, it's because we've believed this lie.

James says, **DON'T BELIEVE THIS LIE!** He says the only source for good things is God himself. There is no good apart from Him. There is no satisfaction, happiness, joy, peace, comfort, healing, wholeness or anything else that is good apart from God.

Can you think back to a time when you believed this lie? Is there an area of your life right now where you're struggling to believe this truth, that God's way is the best way? Today, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you areas of your heart that have been deceived. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to believe the truth that God is the only source of anything good.

(Matt)



## **Week 4 Devotions**

### **James 1:19-27 (Live Quietly)**

#### **Day 1 (James 1:19-21)**

*19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. 21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.*

*James 1:19-21*

One year, my wife and I had this great idea to put in some garden boxes in our backyard. We were going to grow our own little vegetable crop. The plan was to eat fresh produce all summer long. We started well, but we didn't stay on top of our weeding duties. We ended up losing some of the plants, and our harvest became limited. We let our garden boxes sit for a year or two. By the time we got back out to them, they were so overgrown with weeds, that there wasn't room for a single seed!

In this passage in James is telling us to take good care of the garden of our souls. After confronting us about the impotency of man's anger, he tells us that it's time to clean out the garden boxes. The word he uses to describe the garbage in our souls - in the King James Version it's 'superfluity of naughtiness' - describes an abundantly overgrown mess.

Like my garden boxes, we first have to clean house and uproot those weeds, before we're able to receive God's Word in our souls. We have to release our grip on the filth if we are to find rest in the arms of the Lord. (Josiah)



## **Day 2 (James 1:22-25)**

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 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. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 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.*

*James 1:22-25*

Have you ever forgotten something really important? I'm not talking about forgetting to pick up milk from the grocery store on the way home from work. I'm talking about something like a spouse's birthday, a critical business appointment or a promise you made to your child.

Now, imagine that you forget your spouse's birthday every single year. No matter what you do, you can never seem to remember this important date. Year after year, it comes and goes, and year after year, you promise to never forget ... but you do. How horrible that would be!

James tells us that when we fail to put into practice the Word of God, we're just like the man who can't remember the most important of things. It's not good enough to hear the word preached. The word must be lived. Day in and day out. Taking action on God's word should be as routine as looking in the mirror. Don't allow yourself to be deceived. Put God's word into action in your life today. (Matt)



### **Day 3 (James 1:26-27)**

*If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. 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.*

*James 1:26-27*

I love the TV show *Antiques Roadshow*. On the show, people take what their antiques and have them appraised by a professional. Sometimes folks find out that what they thought was junk, was actually quite valuable. Other times the opposite proves true: a valued family heirloom turns out to be a counterfeit and worthless.

Here in this passage, James instructs us on three criteria we can use to appraise our faith and walk with the Lord. The first is whether or not we have control of our tongue. If the words you speak do not reflect the God you serve, you've got some work to do. James says you're religion is worthless!

The second criteria is how we treat those whom our society deems unimportant. James names orphans and widows. In our culture the list might look something like the homeless, drug addicted, immigrants or refugees. How do you treat those who can give you nothing in return?

The third criteria is whether or not we remain unstained from the world. Or as Jesus put it in his most famous sermon, "You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth." (Matthew 5:13-16)

The bottom line is this, if your relationship with God is not affecting the way you live your life, it's not worth very much. If your faith was being appraised on the *Antiques Roadshow*, how would you fare? These strong words from a strong leader should cause us to take an appraisal of our walk with Jesus. (Matt)



## **Week 5 Devotions**

### **James 2:1-13 (Live Impartially)**

#### **Day 1 (James 2:1-4)**

*My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. 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, 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," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

*James 2:1-4*

I was recently riding on a public train in a big city. The train car started out with plenty of seats to choose from. Eventually, as we got closer to city center, more people kept getting on, and no one was getting off!

I kept watching as people piled in. We picked up some pilots near the airport, some men in suits near a business district, some food service workers near a mall. All sorts of people from every walk of life kept piling in this light rail. Every once in awhile, one of the new passengers would give me an extra long, awkward look. Not quite a glare, but close. I interpreted this as envy, as my seat was quite comfortable!

Then when I realized my backpack was taking up a WHOLE seat! With this expensive real estate came great responsibility. Who would I give this extra seat to? The businessman with the polished shoes? The disheveled elderly woman who just barely made it in before the door closed? The young mother with three kids in tow?

Then the moral dilemma grew: I was getting off in two stops. Should I stick it out and endure the awkward two minutes, and thus avoid having to offer my seat to anyone? What would Jesus do? I got up, offered my seat to the elderly lady, and my backpack offered it's seat to the young mother with her little ones. I then struck up an awkward conversation with the businessman, and made a quick break at my stop.

We're faced with these kinds of decisions every day. It's easy for us to prefer those who we are most familiar with, while avoiding those who make us uncomfortable. James tells us "...do not show favoritism..." - a remedy for this - seek out those who make you uncomfortable, and love them like Jesus did! (Josiah)



## Day 2 (James 2:5-7)

*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? But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?*

*James 2:5-7*

As soon as the cabin pressure releases and the plane door opens, it hits you like a mack truck. The smell of burning garbage.

Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Add in a troubled history with demonic practices, little natural resources, and a corrupt government - and you've got a country that is stuck in some pretty deep ruts. Yet, in the midst of this poverty there can be found pockets of great joy and peace amongst believers.

I visited Haiti the summer after I graduated from High School, and it was a pivotal experience in a season of quickened maturity. While it was certainly a case of culture shock during my visit, it was even more shocking to come back home and be surrounded by the opulence that we take for granted in America.

Driving back home from the airport, I couldn't help but notice all of the storage units we passed along the way. Dozens, if not hundreds of storage complexes, all for stuff that people don't have room for in their own homes. My 18-year-old brain had a hard time grasping the stark contrast of Haiti, where so many have so little, to America, where so many have more stuff than they know what to do with.

In the midst of poverty and oppression, God's light can shine through. It's easy for us to view riches with high esteem. James helps us to see that just because someone has wealth, does not mean that they have God. In fact, God has often chosen those with little to do the most in His Kingdom.

James cautions us to not dishonor the poor. Think of a time in your life when you had little, or you encountered someone who was poor. What was the attitude in your heart towards that person? Today, and everyday, remind yourself to see people as God sees them, and to treat others with honor - and not just those with wealth or in places of power. (Josiah)



### **Day 3 (James 2:8-13)**

*If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. 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. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

*James 2:8-13*

Do you ever find yourself having little arguments, or “moments of rationalization” - where you try to justify a choice, action, or thought? It’s like a scene straight out of a cartoon - the good angel on one shoulder, the bad demon on the other, in a heated debate over your imminent future.

The most potent example of this is in how we evaluate our actions towards others. We think, “Oh, I better treat this person kindly,” or, “this person wronged me last week, I’m not doing any favors for them!”

James was writing to believers with a Jewish heritage. They recognized that one of the greatest commandments was to love others. But they were choosy about who was shown kindness and mercy. The example James uses - take someone who does not commit adultery - so they think they’re fine - but then they go and murder someone. Does their non-adultery offset the fact that they just murdered someone? Of course not! So if you’re going around justifying yourself for treating one person kindly, but then withholding mercy from another, does your one act of kindness offset the fact that you withheld mercy from another? Of course not!

Let your prayer today be that God would show you the moments in your life when you hold back mercy. May James’ words remind you - Mercy triumphs over judgment!  
(Josiah)



## **Week 6 Devotions**

### **James 2:14-26 (Live Actively)**

#### **Day 1 (James 2:14-17)**

*What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 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? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

*James 2:14-17*

Growing up, do you remember that one kid who always had a lot to say, but not much to show for it? I remember a kid at recess who would always talk about how good he was at basketball. Honestly, he wasn't that great. Besides, the poor guy was the shortest kid in the class. What he believed about himself and the level at which he played were two different things!

Sometimes we need a reality check. James, always one to draw our attention to our miss thinking, challenges us with this question: "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?"

What a question! Does that question make you feel uncomfortable, or is that just me? We can take any faith-based topic in society today, and apply the "James Faith Challenge" to it. If we believe that life is sacred - all life - how should that impact our approach to life and death situations? Abortion - suicide - euthanasia - obesity - drugs and alcohol abuse? If we believe that God loves the poor and oppressed - how should that impact our level of generosity and outreach?

These aren't light subjects, but faith - if it's really alive and vibrant - is no light subject either! James likes to splash cold water in our face and challenge in ways we didn't know we needed to be challenge. Today, pick one area of your life to be faithful in connecting the dots between what you believe and what you do.

(Josiah)



## **Day 2 (James 2:18-19)**

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. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

James 2:18-19

James reminds me of my high school coaches. We always had to do so much conditioning - WHY with the conditioning? We were football players, why are we running so much? We were basketball players, why are we running up and down the court for an endless eternity?! Then there was track - we just ran all the time!

We could believe we were the best. We could believe we were bound for the championship game - but if our belief wasn't paired with works - we were destined for a dead end season. You believe in God? Great. So do the demons. What are you doing about it? At least the demons shudder!

God knows what we need to do in order to develop our faith to maturity. He's like a coach - putting us through our paces so that we can build the stamina that we're going to need to do what He has for us to do. Lean in and hear what your faith is calling you to do! (Josiah)



### **Day 3 (James 2:20-26)**

*Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 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. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 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? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*

*James 2:20-26*

One night at youth group, my best friend broke his arm. That was a memorable night! If you’ve ever witnessed or experienced a bad break, it’s something that you don’t forget!

My friend had to wear a cast for MONTHS. When he was finally able to take the cast off, his repaired arm was almost comically disproportionate in size to his other, non-injured arm. After months of not using his arm, the muscles had atrophied. It took another several months just to regain the form and function of his arm.

Our faith is like that. If we lock up our faith and overlook ‘exercising’ our faith, it will atrophy. It will wither away and become impotent.

James uses an interesting Greek word for works - ‘ergos’. It’s where we get words like “ergonomic” - things that help us accomplish things with natural movement. Faith needs to be ergonomic - it needs to be accomplishing things in our life with natural movement.

Imagine your faith being a supernatural muscle. Keep that faith moving! As Isaac Newton would say, “An object in motion, tends to stay in motion.” What is one way TODAY that you can get your faith MOVING? (Josiah)



## **Week 7 Devotions**

### **James 3:1-12 (Live Graciously)**

#### **Day 1 (James 3:1-12)**

The tongue has a funny way of being the most hypocritical part of my body. I use it to bless those I love and curse the people who cut me off on the highway. If I didn't say it I sure was thinking it. James spends 12 verses to give different metaphors for the tongue and the power it holds. One thing in particular sticks out the most to me in matters of the tongue.

Luke 6:45 holds great meaning for me in my life mainly because of my mother. As a kid growing up I would sometimes say things of a sinful nature (I was 10, cut me some slack). My mom would be quick to quote the end of this passage to me as a warning and nugget of wisdom. Me in my ignorance would push those limits. As I got older I found myself reciting that verse to myself if I said something out of turn that may have hurt someone or been out of place. Where was my heart when I said those things? Was it in my pride to have the last statement that would get the best laugh or was it indeed "just a joke?"

(Benjamin)

I was writing an email the other day. I had spent a good 30-minutes crafting the email, expressing things in just the right way. Then I deleted the whole draft and got a little nervous when I thought I might have accidentally hit "send." Ever been there?

The words we say hold tremendous power. James uses 6 different analogies to talk about our "tongue" - representing the impact of the things we say. We can direct, destroy or delight - all with our tongues. But what about our emails? What about the things we text? What about our comments on social media?

One of James' examples is a freshwater spring. Can a fresh spring produce salt water? Are we a refreshing spring to those around us in our spoken word, but a bitter and salty spring in what we write? Brothers and sisters, this should not be so (James 3:10b). Whether written or spoken, let our words bring life! (Josiah)



## Day 2 (James 3:2-7)

*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. If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. 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. 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! 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. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,  
James 3:2-7*

Are you someone who chooses their words carefully? How much attention do you give to the words that you speak? Oftentimes I find myself speaking before I think. I try to get away with it by giving this harmful practice a nice phrase like “thinking out loud” or “verbal processing.” The truth is, I’m not practicing what my mother taught me “Think before you speak!” If mom’s advice wasn’t enough, our Lord even tells us in Matthew 12:36 that we will give an account for every careless word that we speak. A sobering thought!

Why does Jesus tell us to pay such close attention to our words? He gives us the answer in this passage. Our words guide our lives. Look at the examples James gives us:

Horses are guided by bits.

Ships are guided by rudders.

If he was writing today he might have said a car is guided by a steering wheel.

Then he concludes his thought in verse 5 when he says **so also the tongue.**

James is telling us that the direction of my life, and the words that I speak, are not separate from each other. As a bit guides a horse, so my words guide my life. As a rudder guides a ship, so my words guide my life. As a wheel steers a car, so my words steer my life.

Today, pay special attention to the words that you are speaking. Are they steering your life in the right direction? (Matt)



### Day 3 (James 3:8-12)

*No human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.*

*James 3:8-12*

Growing up with four younger brothers, there were a lot of things that we shared. We shared bedrooms, clothes, food, tv time, etc. There wasn't a whole lot of "personal space" or "me time." One of the things I never liked to share, especially when we were younger, was my drink. The reason is because little kids have this horrible habit of backwashing into their drinks.

As the years passed, and I formed a family of my own, I forgot all about backwash. I didn't have to worry about it anymore. Watching out for a drink with backwash faded from my day to day life ...

That is until recently when I took a drink after one of my own kids and my water was lumpy. Instead of being refreshed by this crisp cold water, I was disgusted as I was met with portions of my sons lunch as well.

As nasty as that story is, James says that sometimes our words are just as repulsive. He says that what should be coming from our mouth is blessing, but instead we curse, gossip or slander our fellow man. James says that's like searching for a drink of fresh water and instead finding bitter water (backwash). Yuck.

What about your words? Are they sweet or bitter? Are you blessing or cursing? Praising or complaining? Offering prayers on behalf of others, or spreading gossip like a wildfire? Today let us take the words of James to heart: **These things ought not be so.**

Father thank you that you are a God of blessing. Forgive me for the times I've failed with my tongue. Help me to speak blessing today. Amen. (Matt)



**Week 8 Devotions**  
**James 3:13-18 (Live Wisely)**

**Day 1 (James 3:13)**

*Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.*

*James 3:13*

A school librarian decided to do a little social experiment with her students. The library was a busy place, with many students coming and going every day. The librarian started asking students if they knew the definition of the word: “meekness.” Not ONE student could answer correctly.

James tells us that if we really want to know who is wise and has understanding among us, we’ll be able to tell by their “good life in the meekness of wisdom.” To be meek is to be quiet and gentle. As Jesus stated in the beatitudes during the sermon on the mount, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matthew 5:5)

This kind of meek wisdom is not common in our culture today. A wisdom that steps back, is gentle, and quiet. It’s a heart matter. Are our hearts right? How are we responding to others and to the situations around us, and what does that say about our own hearts? (Josiah)



## **Day 2 (James 3:14-16)**

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

*James 3:14-16*

What do you think about when you hear the word demonic? For most of us, images of ghosts, ghouls and zombies probably come to mind. Or maybe you think of a witch practicing black magic on Halloween.

While those things would certainly fit into the demonic category, the truth is, most demonic activity is much more subtle. In fact, it's often found in our own hearts!

James labels bitter jealousy and selfish ambition as demonic activity. How can this be? This is because Satan himself is the original source of these things. It is Satan who was first filled with bitter jealousy and selfish ambition ... against God. Satan, the created being, wanted to dethrone God, the creator.

Contrast this with the life of Jesus. Leaving His exalted position of glory, He humbled himself to the will of the Father. Instead of seeking after what was best for Him, He came to serve us.

When we allow jealousy and selfish ambition to creep into our hearts, we are not following Jesus ... but Satan. Make the determination today to do some spring cleaning in your heart. If I'm going to live like Jesus, I've got to get rid of anything that looks like jealousy or selfish ambition.

Father, thank you for the model of self-sacrifice Jesus showed us. Help me to put to death any jealousy or selfish ambition I have in my heart. Let me serve others the way Christ has served me. (Matt)



### **Day 3 (James 3:17-18)**

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

*James 3:17-18*

Have you ever had a friend or known someone that is too smart for their own good, but makes horrible decisions? In other words, that person has tons of knowledge, but due to the lack of wisdom, horrible things keep happening in that person's life.

Based on what James is saying in this scripture, it's not enough to just have knowledge. We must also have God's wisdom. This wisdom from above is not something we necessarily gain by taking a class or reading a "how-to" book. Scripture says that Jesus Christ Himself is our wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24).

Regardless of how many bad decisions you've made in the past, if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, then He lives inside of you! Know and trust that whatever decisions, big or small, you're faced with today, that Jesus is imparting His wisdom to you in those moments. Don't forget what you learned in chapter 1 that if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God with no doubting and it will be given to him.

Father, thank you for providing me wisdom from above through Jesus Christ who lives inside of me. Help me to depend upon You and to ask for Your wisdom when I'm facing decisions throughout the day. Help me to not only increase in knowledge but to increase in wisdom as well. (Stephanie)



## **Week 9 Devotions** **James 4:1-10 (Live Humbly)**

### **Day 1 (James 4:1-6)**

*What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 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. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. 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. 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"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

*James 4:1-6*

My sister and I used to fight, a lot. She liked things her way, and she typically got her way. However, when I tried to get my way every once in awhile, we quarreled big time. Being older, she would even come after me yelling, "Here comes World War Three!"

Have you ever noticed that people often fight or quarrel when they demand their own way? We have the ability to create wars between other people on a personal level, amongst employers, churches, ourselves, and most importantly wars with God. Wars with God occur when the world becomes our friend as James says.

Ultimately, the root cause of every war is rebellion against God. It's our lack of humility and friendship with God that creates major issues. Who are you quarreling with today? Are you in a war against your spouse, children, employer, or maybe God?

Choose today to admit and confess to the Lord whatever you may be warring with and ask Him for the grace required in that particular situation to help you be more humble and thereby bring glory to God. (Stephanie)



## **Day 2 (James 4:7-8)**

*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

*James 4:7-8*

If you've ever worked with people in any way - whether at the workplace, with customers, or even with your own family - you know that sometimes you just need to really break it down for people. They just need to hear things in simple, straightforward terms.

I work with technology in K-12 education. Sometimes, you just need to break things down into bite-size chunks to make sure people get what you're saying! "Is it plugged in?" "Did you turn it on?" "Have you tried restarting?"

James does that for us here. He makes it very simple and very clear.

Submit. Resist. Draw near. Cleanse and Purify. These are all action verbs - things we need to DO right away!

Sometimes it's easy for us to get in the rut of thinking that living like Jesus is a complex thing. It's really not. In fact, if we follow James' simple steps here, we'll be well on our way! Pick just one verb from this passage and walk it out in your life today. (Josiah)



### **Day 3 (James 4:9-10)**

*Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

*James 4:9-10*

Have you ever been so overwhelmed by the grace of God that it made you cry? You can be moved with emotion when you see just how sinful you are, and how good and gracious God has been to you.

At first glance, it seems that James is telling us to be big cry-babies, but that's not the case at all. Rather, he is telling us to take our "joy" and "laughter" we experience when we are fully engaged in the world and wrapped up in our sin and turn that joy and laughter into humility before God. Our sin should make us feel wretched and cause us to mourn and weep.

BUT it's when we humble ourselves before God that He lifts us up. He lifts our spirits, our perspective, and sometimes our positions in this world. Most importantly, however, He exalts us by bringing us nearer to Him and one day will exalt us in His kingdom. Today, focus on humbling yourself before the Lord and see how He exalts you, remembering that His ways of exaltation differ from ours. (Stephanie)



## **Week 10 Devotions**

### **James 4:11-12 (Live Sensibly)**

#### **Day 1 (James 4:11)**

*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.*

*James 4:11*

*“Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”*

Do you remember this childhood saying? The idea behind it is nice and uplifting. The problem is, it's totally false. Words do hurt. In fact, I bet you can think of something right now that someone said that hurt you.

We've all experienced this. We've all been wounded by words. We've all used our words to wound others. Words have power. Your words have power.

This is why James tells us plainly, do not speak evil against one another, brothers. As Christians, we are family. We are to use our words to build others up, not tear others down (1 Thessalonians 5:11, Ephesians 4:29).

It's easy to get into a judgmental attitude about others. It's easy to see the bad in people. It's easy to criticize and condemn. But God has not called us to do the easy things. Rather, we're called to do the hard things. Jesus Himself did not come to condemn the world (John 3:17), why should we? Today, determine to look for the good in people, and encourage that. Build them up. It's how Jesus lived and it's how we're called to live as well. (Matt)



## Day 2 (James 4:11-12)

*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. There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?*

*James 4:11-12*

One of the first things the Lord rid from my life was alcohol, which He did for me before I asked Him to be Lord over my life. The fact that the Lord saved me from my destruction with alcohol is what began my salvation journey with Christ. Alcohol is a sin for me personally because of the position it held in my life for so long and the destruction it brought to my life.

Shortly after God saved me from physical death, I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior. He then proceeded to rid from my life sexual immorality, smoking cigarettes, swearing, and so on. Today, the Lord deals with other sins of my heart--such as pride, envy, bitterness--and also obvious behavioral sins, such as not asking for help because of my pride, snapping at my boss because I'm annoyed, and similar other things.

The point is that the Lord deals with each person and believer differently. What He is working on in my life is different from what He is working on in your life. God will one day judge us all. It is more important and necessary to encourage one another in the Lord rather than judge that person. We are all in a process of sanctification. (Stephanie)



### **Day 3 (James 4:12)**

*There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?*

*James 4:12*

I have a confession to make. I am scared of talking to people. Just in general, conversing with people is often an anxious experience for me. This makes for an interesting rollercoaster of emotions when you consider that I'm a volunteer pastor at my home church. I have to force myself to walk slowly through crowded places, in the event that I need to converse with someone along the way.

One of the stumbling blocks I've had to overcome as a leader-in-training is knowing how to give constructive criticism. Seeing something that needs to be corrected, and confronting people about it.

It used to be quite common for me to default to sending an email in a situation that really should have been handled in person. In writing an email, I would try so hard to be specific and to the point, building a perfect basis for my 'constructive' criticism. However, the victims of these emails almost always read it as condescending, arrogant, and just plain rude.

We have to choose our words wisely. But not only that, we have to know when we're in the place where we can give constructive criticism, and when we're just being arrogant judges who have no place. James warns us - Who are you to judge your neighbor? And what James is warning against is condescending arrogance - not so much coming down hard on others so much as it's elevating ourselves. Remember what James said in 4:10 - leave the elevating to God!

As you go about your day, bite your tongue! Be on the lookout for times when you're elevating yourself above others and judging them. Leave that to God, who sees all and knows all. (Josiah)



## **Week 11 Devotions**

### **James 4:13-17 (Live Intentionally)**

#### **Day 1 (James 4:13-14)**

*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”—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.*

*James 4:13-14*

In my teens and twenties I felt invincible. Because of that, I did some really stupid things, especially driving my car. I would speed and drive recklessly. Can you relate?

But as I got married, had children, and matured into my thirties, my eyes were opened. I began to see that I am not invincible. In fact, I’m quite fragile. Life is precious. It seems that the older you get, the faster time flies.

This is what James is talking about in this verse. He compares our life to a mist or a vapor. He says that we should view our lives as temporary and fleeting. James is not the only writer of Scripture that feels this way. This is a theme that runs through the entire Bible. Check out Psalm 39:5, 90:12, 102:3, & 2 Corinthians 4:18.

What James is teaching us is that if we’re going to live like Jesus, we have to realize that we only have a short amount of time to our lives. We, like Jesus, should be so focused on what matters most. If you knew you only had 1 week to live, what would that week look like? What would you do? Who would you call? How would you spend that time? I bet that week might look a little different than your life does now.

May we all realize that our lives are passing away quickly. Lord help us to spend our time wisely on what matters most. (Matt)



## **Day 2 (James 4:15-16)**

*Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.*

*James 4:15-16*

I once knew an older gentleman that would always say to me in response to "see you next time," "Lord willing!" Now that I stop to really think about it, this was a humble attitude and an acknowledgement that God is in control. I don't think this was something he necessarily began saying as he neared death either, but rather, it was something that he simply accepted in his life. He would make his plans, but the Lord would ultimately establish his steps (as in Proverbs 16:9). He would not boast about what he would or wouldn't do.

Consider for a moment the things you say to others about what you are or are not going to do. Are you ever overly confident with great expectations? Or do you make mention that those are simply your plans?

It could be a dangerous place to be more confident in your own plans as compared to the confidence you have in what God has planned for you. Choose today to acknowledge that God is in control, you make your plans, but "if the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." (Stephanie)



### **Day 3 (James 4:17)**

*So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.  
James 4:17*

“I didn’t do anything wrong” I told my dad. He replied, “Son, it’s not that you did something wrong. It’s that you didn’t do what was right.”

I can’t recall how many times I had conversations with my dad that were just like that. What my father was trying to do was impress the truth of this verse onto my heart.

This verse is talking about your personal walk and relationship with God. This verse is talking about your personal convictions. Most things in this life are not inherently sinful. But humanity as sinful creatures, uses most things in a sinful way.

Take social media for example. There is nothing wrong or evil with social media. It can be used both for good and evil. Yet, for any number of reasons, the Holy Spirit may convict you of your social media usage. He may ask you to cut back, or quit all together.

What this verse is teaching us, is that if God convicts you of something and you disobey, for you, it is sin. It may not be sin for someone else, but it is a sin for you. So many times we get caught up comparing ourselves and our lives to others. Don’t fall into the trap of excusing your sin by comparing yourself to others. It’s not about you and others. It’s about you and God.

So, where has the Holy Spirit convicted you? Has He asked you to do something, yet you’re not doing it? Has He asked you to not do something, yet you continue to do it? Let today be the day you do the right thing that you know to do. (Matt)



## **Week 12 Devotions**

### **James 5:1-6 (Live Generously)**

#### **Day 1 (James 5:1-6)**

*Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 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. 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. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.*

*James 5:1-6*

Who is James addressing in this passage? Are his comments directed at anyone who is rich? Is he saying that if you have wealth, you are an evil person?

Many people today believe just that. They believe that if you are wealthy, it's because you've done something shady or evil to acquire your wealth. However, this is a false idea that is not Biblical at all. Many godly people in the Bible were wealthy (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Lydia, to name a few).

So again, the question is, who is James talking to? This is why context is so important! If we were to just take the first verse, and leave out verses 2-6, we could make James say something that he is not saying.

James is not talking to all rich people everywhere. He's talking to those who use their wealth to abuse and oppress the weak and poor. He's giving them a scathing rebuke and a stern warning. God is watching and he's keeping score. These strong words are meant to soften hard hearts. James is hoping that these wicked businessmen will repent.

One of the things that this passage shows us is that God cares about every part of our lives. We who have been blessed with positions of power and influence need to steward that blessing well. God cares. We who have financial resources should use them in a godly way, to be a blessing to others. To bless, not oppress. (Matt)



## Day 2 (James 5:1-6)

*Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. 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. 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. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.*

*James 5:1-6*

Have you ever worked for a large company or someone that appeared to be super rich? If so, do you believe the company or individual paid you a fair or more than fair wage? Some people might live by the saying, “The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer,” but that is not the way the story ends with God. On the day of judgement, God will justify all who have been oppressed, and the rich oppressors will receive what’s due to them.

Now this isn’t to say that we, as Christians, don’t do appropriate research on wages within our industry and experience level, put together a report for our bosses, and ask for a raise when necessary. And we are not to ignore the injustices of those that can’t necessarily speak and stand up for themselves. Rather, this verse reminds us that no matter the circumstance or outcome of us trying to fight for what’s fair, God is fully aware of all that oppress others and all being oppressed. He cares; it matters to Him.

Today, know that you can surrender any situation to God and believe and trust that He will make all things right. Ask Him to lead you and help you to do what is within your power and ability. Then rest in God and His plan. (Stephanie)



### **Day 3 (James 5:5-6)**

*You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the righteous person.*

*He does not resist you.*

*James 5:5-6*

Today we continue to look at James warning to those who use wealth and riches to oppress the poor and weak.

Have you ever felt like someone used their position of authority or power cause you harm? Recently, I felt like I got a bad deal on a vehicle I purchased from a small used car dealer. The salesman had purposefully deceived me. A week later, I returned and spoke to the owner of the dealership about my experience and the salesman's deception. I was hoping he would try to rectify the situation. However, his attitude was basically "tough luck." At that point, there was really nothing else I could do.

Now, in the grand scheme of things, this was a small injustice. Yet in the moment, it was awful feeling powerless against someone who knowingly had done me harm. As I left the car dealership that day, the Lord reminded me that it was not my place to seek vengeance. Instead, I should put the situation in God's hands. So I did. As I left, I shook the dust off my feet and said "God, I'm giving this to You. You do what you see fit."

Think of how that situation could have turned out differently. I could have called the Better Business Bureau, filed a lawsuit, punched the guy in the face ... a whole number of things I could have done to try to get justice for myself. All of which would have actually cost me dearly. Instead I gave it to God.

There is a great peace knowing that the God we serve is a righteous judge. I can trust Him with every injustice. Have you suffered something that you just need to had over to God instead? Let me encourage you, God can do a much better job of bringing justice to someone than you can. (Matt)



## **Week 13 Devotions**

### **James 5:7-12 (Live Patiently)**

#### **Day 1 (James 5:7-8)**

*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. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*

*James 5:7-8*

Whether we're at work dealing with customers or coworkers, at home dealing with crying children, or stuck in traffic, we all have situations where our patience runs very thin or completely out! Well, James is speaking about patience for sure, but he is specifically speaking about patience to those who are suffering. How much more difficult it is to be patient in our sufferings.

Consider if farmers were not patient enough to wait until the crops are ready to be harvested. James calls the fruit precious and that's just what we are waiting for on this earth also! As we endure suffering, we develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Additionally, we will also receive a precious reward as a result of patiently waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Are you suffering today? Remember that God is at work whether you see it or not. Today, meditate on the reason we patiently endure suffering in this life, because what we are waiting for is more than worth the wait, just as the farmer knows it's worth the wait before harvesting a field of crops. (Stephanie)



## Day 2 (James 5:9-11)

*Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 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.*

*James 5:9-11*

I inherited many good traits from my father. For those I am thankful. I also received some things that aren't so great. One of those character traits is impatience. I hate to wait ... for anything. Ask Heather. More times than I would like to admit, I've almost lost my salvation in the drive through line. "It's a hamburger. What could possibly be taking so long?!"

In our fast paced, on demand, broadband world, patience is not regarded as a virtue. Yet if we're going to live like Jesus, we're going to have to develop and grow in patience. Think of how patient God has been with you. James says the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

It's one thing to be impatient with the microwave, but quite another to lose patience with one of our Christian brothers or sisters. When that happens, how quickly we begin to grumble about them. Have you ever said something like this?

"Why can't they \_\_\_\_\_."

"I wish they were more \_\_\_\_\_."

"I've been trying to be patient, but they really need to \_\_\_\_\_."

We need to realize that all of us is still in process. God is working on us. We should follow in his example of being patient with one another. Have you been impatient with someone recently? Why not make a phone call, apologize, and ask for forgiveness? Determine today to live patiently, like Jesus. (Matt)



### **Day 3 (James 5:12)**

*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.*

*James 5:12*

If your friends were asked to rate you on a scale of 1-10 on how reliable you are, what do you think your score would be? Are you someone who can be counted on, or do you need 3 reminders to show up to something you’ve committed to? I’ve actually had someone tell me that if I didn’t give them a reminder call, they weren’t going to show up. And this was actually for a commitment that was later that day! I said, “**This** is your reminder call!”

As followers of Jesus, we are to be people who keep our word. If I make a commitment, I should follow through. (Without needing reminder calls!) If I say yes, it should be a yes. If I say no, it should be a no. We shouldn’t have to swear or promise or say “I really mean it this time.” A simple yes or no should do.

To live like Jesus, we have to be people who are trustworthy. We have to keep our word. God always keeps His word. Always! It’s such a bad witness to an unbelieving world when Christians don’t keep their word. As we become more and more like Jesus, we should also do everything we can to be dependable and trustworthy. This includes being on time and punctual as well. God is also never late! If you’ve been sloppy in this area, allow the Holy Spirit to convict you, and make a commitment to being a man or woman of your word. (Matt)



## **Week 14 Devotions**

### **James 5:13-20 (Live Prayerfully)**

#### **Day 1 (James 5:13-15)**

*Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. 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. 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.*

*James 5:13-15*

Lactose intolerance. This is a particularly uncomfortable physical condition. Sure, it's not the worst lot one may have in life - but it is an accentuated issue when an intolerant finds themselves born and raised in Wisconsin - THE DAIRY STATE. Our grocery stores have entire aisles of just CHEESE!

I have experienced the ENTIRE battery of stomach-related health procedures. No answers. I eventually just gave up on feeling better, and muddled through life with good days and bad days. But then I went a stretch without eating any dairy, and I felt fantastic! The mystery was solved.

A couple years later, an itinerant evangelist came to our church and held healing services. I grew up around this sort of thing, so it was just another night at church. Towards the end of the prayer time, I felt like the Lord was prodding me to go up for prayer for healing. I was hesitant at first, and made sure I got the last place in line. After all, who gets healed of lactose intolerance? I told the evangelist I was dealing with lactose intolerance, and he said something like, "Well, this is a new one! But let's pray together."

At that moment, he laid his hands on me, and we prayed. Instantly, I felt this strange sensation in my gut - like it was being washed up and reset. I walked away from that moment in a state of wonder. I believed it was possible to be healed, but I had never experienced it. That night, I went home and had a bowl of REAL ice cream (not that soy stuff...bleh!). I felt terrific, and have been enjoying dairy ever since. What a BIG God, and what a simple way for Him to reveal himself to me in a real and tangible way.

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray! Who can you pray for today? Next time you come across someone who is suffering, why hesitate? Pray! (Josiah)



## Day 2 (James 5:16-18)

*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. 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. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.*

*James 5:16-18*

Sometimes we forget that praying is something we can do! It's like when we take some cash and put it in our pocket, and then totally forget about it until a washing or two later. Then we pull it out and we're like, "Eureka! I'm going to use this!" In my case, this pocket cash usually turns into a cup of coffee and a donut.

How sad that we treat prayer like forgotten-pocket-cash. And then, when we do find it, we go spend it right away on ourselves.

"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective!" James gives us simple instructions to implement powerful and effective prayers. Confess your sins and pray for one another, that we may be healed!

Confession is like cleaning the slate. Praying for one another confirms our dependence on God alone. Do this, and we'll be healed. Healed of what? Some scholars link this back to the verses about physical healing. Others look at the soul-work of confession and prayer and link this to emotional and spiritual healing.

Either way, it's healing! And it's what sets us up for powerful and effective prayers. This week, rather than treating prayer like twice-washed pocket cash - keep it at the forefront of your minds and activate it often. Get together with someone you trust, start with confession and honesty, and then pray together. Then watch what powerful and effective prayer can do in your life! (Josiah)



### **Day 3 (James 5:19-20)**

*My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, 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.*

*James 5:19-20*

We've reached the end of James. There's been hard challenges, strong rebukes, and straightforward directives. But James isn't all business. James also knows that "mercy triumphs over judgment." Like anyone who is learning to live like Jesus, he's just a sinner who has been brought back from his wandering.

James' salutatory verse reminds me of my own family. I have an older brother who wandered quite a way from Christ! My brother loved to party. This made high school a rambunctious time for him! A few years of poor choices and bad influences led him to possessing marijuana on school grounds during his senior year of high school.

Suddenly, this Christian family, with parents leading a small group and a dad on the Deacon Board, had a son in jail and tried as an adult. But...mercy triumphs over judgment!

I knew I wanted to see my older brother come back from his wandering. I didn't always know what to do or what to say. What do you tell your older brother? But we did work together in the family business, and I did consistently honor and respect him. Sometimes people just need to see the authenticity of your faith, and that it's not just something you talk about - it's how you live!

Eventually, after nearly a decade of treating my brother with mercy, respect, and love - he started getting plugged in at our church. Eventually the bad habits and bad influences were exchanged for Christian mentors and servanthood. He's served as a Deacon, and now helps out extensively with our youth group, modeling a christ-like life to his own four kids. His businesses are growing, and God is blessing him.

To sum up James, just live like Jesus! (Josiah)

LIVE LIKE  
**JESUS**



# **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**





## **Week 1 Discussion Questions**

### **James 1:1 (Live Like Jesus)**

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.  
James 1:1*

1. What do you know about James, the author of this book?
  - He was the half brother of Jesus.
  - He was a man of justice. His nickname was “James The Just.”
  - He was a man of prayer. He continually prayed on his knees for the forgiveness of people. He spent so much time on his knees praying that his knees became hard and calloused like those of a camel.
  - James was eventually martyred for his faith in his big brother Jesus. As James was being stoned to death, he knelt down and said, “I entreat thee, Lord God our Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
2. What is the significance of how James introduced himself?
  - James could have pulled rank here at the beginning of his letter. He could have said, “Listen guys, I’m Jesus’ brother. You better listen to what I have to say.” He could have introduced himself as an apostle. Instead, James takes the humble approach, following in Jesus’ footsteps. James calls himself a slave or bondservant of Jesus, instead of calling himself the brother of Jesus.
3. What does it mean to be a servant or slave to Christ?
  - A slave has no rights. James is saying that he has completely surrendered his life to Jesus.
  - Bondservants were slaves who had been released from their obligation but who willingly remained in a condition of servitude out of respect for their masters.
4. How would your life change if you began to view yourself as a servant of Christ?
5. Why did James write?
  - Because the church was not living according to what they professed they believed. Their walk didn’t match their talk. They were spiritually immature. James writes to inspire them to follow the example of Jesus, living like He did.



## **Week 2 Discussion Questions**

### **James 1:2-11 (Live Joyfully)**

1. What are some examples of different trials we go through?
  - James is talking about any kind of trial or test that we all experience as human beings. This includes sickness, accidents, disappointments, loss of job, loss of relationship, death of a loved one, etc. It also includes persecution we may face because we are Christians.
2. What do you normally do when you face a trial? Do you count it all joy? Or do you do something else (grumble, complain, have a bad attitude, etc.)?
3. Have you ever thanked God for allowing you to go through a trial?
4. What is the #1 key for you to be able to count it all joy?
  - This might be different for everyone. But for me (Pastor Matt), it's my faith in God, His power, goodness, and sovereignty that enables me to do this.
5. James says that God has a greater purpose for our trials. God is perfecting and completing us, making us mature, through the trials of life. How does knowing that God has a greater plan help us to face our trials?
6. Of all the things we could ask God for in the midst of a trial, what does James say that we should ask for?
  - Wisdom
7. Why do you think it's wisdom that we need to ask for?
  - "We need wisdom so we will not waste the opportunities God is giving us to mature" (Wiersbe).
8. Why does God tell us to ask for wisdom? This passage says He is generous in giving out wisdom. Why doesn't He just give wisdom to us without us having to ask?
  - God wants a relationship with us. Healthy relationships require consistent communication and an investment of time. By allowing us to go through trials and tests, God draws us closer to Himself as we seek His guidance and wisdom.
9. How can we rely on the community God has placed us in to help us through trials?
  - Everyone goes through trials, chances are some of those around us have already faced that specific problem and overcome it.
  - When you have overcome your trial, you can share that wisdom with others who may be facing the same thing.



## **Week 3 Discussion Questions**

### **James 1:12-18 (Live Faithfully)**

1. This passage starts off with the word blessed. What does James say we must do if we want to be blessed?
2. What do you think it means to remain steadfast during a trial?
  - It means keeping faith in God, no matter what the situation and circumstance. We must stay faithful.
  - Faith in God is evidenced by our actions, attitudes and behaviors.
3. Have you ever heard someone say that God had tempted them? Maybe you've even thought that God had tempted you. Why does James say we shouldn't say God is tempting us.
  - Because God does not tempt us.
4. If God doesn't tempt us, where does temptation come from?
  - James says that temptation actually comes from within. It's our own evil desires that lead us astray.
5. Most people think of temptation as something "out there." James on the other hand tells us that temptation is not external, but rather internal. How does knowing this help us in our battle against sin and temptation?
6. Notice the four stage progression of temptation and sin: desire, deception (v. 16), disobedience (sinning), and finally death. God has graciously given us the truth in His word, that we may avoid sin and death. What role do you think deception has in sinning?
7. James tells us that everything good in this life is a gift directly from God. What are some ways we can acknowledge God's goodness in our everyday lives?
8. What does James mean in verse 18 where he says that God brought us forth of His own will?
  - James points to salvation as the greatest good gift that has come from God. It's not by our own merit that we are saved. It is only by God's grace.



## **Week 4 Discussion Questions**

### **James 1:19-27 (Live Quietly)**

1. James reminds us that “man’s anger does not accomplish God’s righteousness.” (1:20) - Are there certain areas of your life where you struggle with anger? What can you do to respond differently in those situations?
2. James gives us some practical things we can do to prevent anger before it rises. He tells us to be “quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger.” How can patiently and quietly listening prevent anger in our lives?
3. James says to receive with meekness the implanted word. What are some ways we can prepare our hearts to receive God’s word when we come to church?
  - Prayerfully ask for God’s help to take action.
  - Confessing sin, asking for forgiveness.
  - Meditate on God’s grace and ask Him to soften your heart.
  - Attitude of meekness (not argumentative but with honor towards His word).
4. Why does James refer to God’s word as a mirror? What does this reveal to us about the role God’s word should play in our lives?
5. James again brings up the idea of deception. Last week we saw how deception plays a big part in sin. In what ways is a person who does not act on God’s word deceived?
6. What does James say is the result of hearing God’s word and taking action? (v. 25)
7. In verse 26, James again returns to the theme of our words. Why do you think there is so much emphasis put on the words we speak as Christians?
  - Jesus taught that we reveal what is in our hearts by our words (Mt. 12:34). If my words are sinful, it’s because my heart is sinful. If my religious faith is not impacting and changing my heart, it’s not worth much.
8. What does James say is the true test of one’s religious faith?
  - Not their words, but their actions. James says that genuine faith should lead to action. Taking care of and being generous towards those who are helpless (widows & orphans). And living a life set free from the power of sin.



## **Week 5 Discussion Questions** **James 2:1-13 (Live Impartially)**

1. The issue in this section is showing partiality or having prejudice. As we look at the life of Jesus, we see that He was the most impartial person who ever lived, laying down His life for the whole world. This was a problem in the churches of James' day. Do you think this is still a relevant issue in the church of today?
2. What are some things we can do to identify partiality and prejudice in our own lives?
3. What are some things happening in our world today that threaten to create divisions within the church?
4. James instructs Christians not to show partiality. In other words, don't favor people with money or high social status or really anyone in general. Consider yourself for a moment. Do you find that you belong to a specific clique within the church? Is it possible that your clique may not be welcoming or inviting to newcomers?
5. Is there anyone you can think of within the church that you would rather not associate with? What can you do to grow in impartiality?
6. What does James say it looks like when we are impartial? (v. 8)
  - We know we've overcome these issues when we love our neighbor as ourselves.



## Week 6 Discussion Questions James 2:14-26 (Live Actively)

1. Do you ever feel like your faith is getting a bit stale? What keeps our faith alive and vibrant?
2. How is what we believe connected to what we say and do (works)?
3. Is it possible to have faith without works?
4. If you stop and evaluate your faith based on your works, would you consider yourself a faith-FULL person?
5. James references Abraham and Rahab as two examples of people whose faith was active with works. Can you think of someone in your life whose faith is put on display by what they do (their works).
6. Can a workless faith lead to right standing with God?
  - No it cannot. A workless faith is a faith that is not alive. It's not really faith at all. It is the difference in profession and possession. It's not about the faith we profess, but the faith we possess. James' argument is that if we genuinely possess saving faith, we will be active in God's kingdom.
7. Does James disagree with the Apostle Paul? (See Romans 3:27-28)
  - Some people have tried to pit James and Paul against each other and create conflict. The truth is they completely agree. Paul is talking about works of the Law of Moses. James is talking about the works that should follow a life changed by faith in Jesus. Paul says the same thing as James in Ephesians 2:10 - *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."*
  - We are not saved by works of the Law of Moses. We are saved through a faith that produces a changed life and changed work. This Paul & James completely agree on.
  - We only need to look to Jesus, whose faith produced godly works. To live like Jesus, we must live actively.



## **Week 7 Discussion Questions** **James 3:1-12 (Live Graciously)**

1. Again James returns to the topic of the words that we speak. Would you say you pay careful attention to your words? Or do you more often speak without careful consideration?
2. Can you think of words that someone has said to you that have impacted your life in either a good or bad way? Why did those words have such impact?
3. How can it be that our small tongue can affect our entire bodies? In other words, how can our tongue be connected with sins committed by the whole body?
  - The rudder controls the ship
  - The bit controls the horse
4. In what areas do you struggle the most with your tongue?
  - At work, school, home, with people that annoy you, with friends, etc.?
5. Do you ask Jesus to have control of your tongue on a regular basis?
6. Why do you think God gave us a body part that we cannot control or “tame” as verse 8 states?
7. Is there someone you have hurt with your words that you need to ask their forgiveness? The same tongue that brought hurt can also be used by God to bring healing.



## Week 8 Discussion Questions

### James 3:13-18 (Live Wisely)

1. How does James differentiate between earthly and heavenly wisdom?
  - Earthly or false wisdom is envious, self-seeking, boastful, deceitful.
  - Heavenly or true wisdom is pure, peaceful, gentle, compliant, merciful, bears good fruits, decisive, sincere.
2. How can we tell if someone is wise and understanding?
  - James says that we can tell who is wise by their good conduct and good works. We should closely evaluate people's lives before we take their advice.
3. What are the results of heavenly wisdom versus earthly wisdom?
  - Earthly wisdom produces trouble in the form of envy, strife, confusion, evil works, etc.
  - God's wisdom produces blessing
    - Obeying God's wisdom sows righteousness and peace, and then reaps God's blessing.
    - Obeying man's worldly wisdom sows sin and war, and then reaps confusion and every evil work.
4. How can we evaluate what kind of wisdom we are relying on for the big, important decisions of life?
  - A big key is who you're listening to (Psalm 1). Are you listening to older, godly, wise counsel? Are you praying through issues? Or are you following the examples of the world or listening to the advice of those who are lost?
5. Has there ever been a time in your life where you thought you were making a wise decision and it ended up going completely the other direction?
  - Was it God's wisdom you were using or your own knowledge?
    - What is the difference?
6. James says that where there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there will be disorder and chaos. Can you share a time where you were motivated by jealousy and selfishness? How did that go?
7. How can we grow in God's wisdom?
  - Remember James 1:5!
  - Also, surrounding ourselves with those who have proven themselves to be wise.



## **Week 9 Discussion Questions**

### **James 4:1-10 (Live Humbly)**

1. As James is speaking to believers, he is asking why there are wars and fights among them. What are some reasons Christians fight with each other today?
2. Is it plausible that some “spiritually” rationalize their quarrels with other Christians?
  - What is the real reason behind the “spiritual” rationalization?
    - Pride and worldliness
3. Is it possible for a Christian to pray in the wrong way? James says it is (v. 3). How can we avoid praying in the wrong way?
4. James uses very strong language for people who only pray to get what they want from God. He calls them adulterous people (v.4)! Why do you think God views this type of prayer that way?
  - It’s because when we pray that way, our passions are really not for God. They’re for something else. God views these misplaced passions as cheating on Him. He should be the greatest object of our desire.
5. What does James say is the key to receiving God’s grace?
6. Why is humility the prerequisite to receiving God’s grace?
7. What do you think James means when he says we should not pursue friendship with the world? How is that different from intentionally engaging with unbelievers?



## **Week 10 Discussion Questions**

### **James 4:11-12 (Live Sensibly)**

1. When you consider that the book of James was written to Christians, some of the things that James writes are quite astounding. Take verse 11 for example. “Don’t speak evil against one another, brothers.” This should go without saying! Unfortunately, it needs to be said, often. What are some ways we speak evil against one another?
  - Gossip, quarreling, husbands and wives talking each other down behind their backs, grumbling against leadership, complaining, casting judgement on one another.
2. Can you think of some situations where people might be tempted to rationalize speaking evil against a brother?
3. How can we be less judgmental and more loving?
4. What does James mean when he says that when we speak evil against a brother, we speak evil against God’s law? How are those two things related?
  - James is saying that God is the ultimate judge. When we make our own judgements of people, apart from God’s law, we are putting ourselves in God’s place.
5. Can you think of a time when you misjudged someone only to find out you were way off? What did you learn from that experience?
6. What are some things we can do to help us not speak evil against a brother or wrongly judge each other?



## **Week 11 Discussion Questions** **James 4:13-17 (Live Intentionally)**

*A man's heart plans his way: but the LORD directs his steps.*  
*Proverbs 16:9*

1. Who is the one who has the control of our lives?
2. What should we keep in mind as we go about making our plans?
  - The most important thing we need to keep in mind is that we are not the master of our own lives. We serve a king and belong to him. We should always keep our service to Jesus in the forefront of all of our plans.
3. Planning for our future is a wise thing to do (Prov. 6:6-8). But here James says that if done in the wrong way, it can be sinful. How can we know if we're sinning in our planning? What do you think the difference is?
4. What is James saying when he compares our lives to a mist?
5. How does thinking about your life as a mist make you feel? Is that something you think about often?
  - As unpleasant as the thought may be, we should often reflect on the brevity of our lives. In fact, this is a theme that is repeated throughout the Bible (see Ps. 39:5, 90:12, 102:3, 2 Cor. 4:18). Understanding that our lives are short helps us to make the most of them for God and His kingdom.
6. How can you apply verse 17 to your life this week? "Whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin."



## **Week 12 Discussion Questions**

### **James 5:1-6 (Live Generously)**

1. Who is James talking to in this passage?
2. Do you see yourself as rich or poor? Why or why not?
  - The majority of the people in the world earn less than \$30 / day. In many countries it is much much less. Consider Haiti, where the annual household income is about \$400. That's annual income. By almost any standard, working Americans are incredibly rich.
3. James is not directing his comments at all rich people. His comments are to those who use their wealth in an ungodly way. What are some of the money practices that James identifies as ungodly?
  - Fraudulently held back wages from their employees (v. 4)
  - Wasted their money in self-indulgence (v. 5)
  - Perverted justice (v. 6a)
4. What does James say is going to happen to them and their wealth?
  - Their riches will vanish (v. 2-3)
  - They've lost a great opportunity to good do in "the last days" (v. 3)
  - They will receive Judgement from the Lord (v. 4)
5. To be clear, it is not a sin to be rich or wealthy. Abraham for example was extraordinarily wealthy. Yet he used his wealth in a godly way. That is the key. What are some ways that you can grow in godliness in the area of your finances?
6. We tend to think that if we had more money, we would be happier. This is absolutely not true. As we look at the rich in this passage, their wealth was not a blessing, but became a curse. If you had more money, what would you spend it on? Would it be a blessing or would it lead you into sin?



## **Week 13 Discussion Questions**

### **James 5:7-12 (Live Patiently)**

1. Everything in this passage is about the return of Christ. What do you believe about Jesus' return?
2. James says that we should live our lives in light of Christ returning. How does what you believe about the 2nd coming impact the way you live your life?
3. Six times James uses the word patience or steadfastness. Do you think of yourself as a patient person? What about steadfast? Where do you find yourself becoming impatient?
4. James says that we must be patient and establish our hearts. How do we establish our hearts and what does this mean to you?
  - We do this through reading/studying God's word and prayer.
  - It means to place my hope and trust in God alone knowing that God is sovereign and will return for His bride.
5. Where are you tempted to not be steadfast? What are some things we can do to grow in these two areas: patience and steadfastness?
6. Read James 5:12. Another word we could use for steadfast would be the word reliable. If your friends were asked to rate you on a scale of 1-10 on how reliable you are, what do you think your score would be?
7. What does this verse teach us about our word? How can we show people Jesus by keeping our word?
  - If we're going to live like Jesus, we've got to keep our word. God always keeps His word!



## **Week 14 Discussion Questions** **James 5:13-20 (Live Prayerfully)**

1. Take a moment to think about your personal prayer life. Now think about your prayer times in a group setting or with other another person.
  - How has praying with others affected your spiritual life?
  - How might the absence of praying with others affect your spiritual life?
  - Are you comfortable praying in different groups or settings? Why or why not?
  - What can we do to grow in confidence as we pray?
2. Why should those who are sick call upon the elders of the church?
3. Consider what James says about confessing our sins? Why is this an important practice for us as Christians?
  - *Proverbs 28:13 - Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.*
4. If not for active involvement the body of Christ (the local church), how would a Christian live out these scriptures?
5. Is there someone you know that has wandered from Christ and the church that you could be praying for and possibly reaching out to? How often are you praying for them?