



Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart."

## Course Text: James

The book of James has been called "the Proverbs of the New Testament." This is because James talks a little about many things instead of a lot about a few things.

Which James is the author of this epistle is a matter of some controversy, because there are four or five men named James mentioned in the New Testament: two apostles (1&2); a father of an apostle (3); a half-brother of Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary (4); and James the leader of the early Jerusalem church (5).

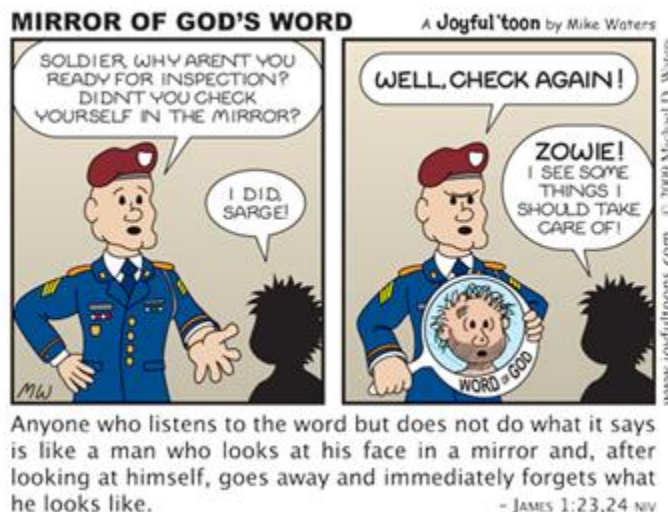
Acts 1:13 When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James (1) and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James (2) the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. (3)

Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James (4) and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.

Acts 21:18 And the following day Paul went in with us to James, (5) and all the elders were present.

Some people think the James in Acts 21(5) is the same as one of the others, and some think he was a different James. Most Christian scholars think the James that wrote this letter was the leader of the early Jerusalem church, who was also the half-brother of Jesus. (4&5) It is also generally thought that James did not become a believer until after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Whichever James it was, this epistle was widely accepted by the early Christian church as the word of God. There is also disagreement whether it was written before or after Paul wrote his letters. Either way most agree it was written before the gospels were written. Many Christians will find this reading challenging as James presents us with 60 obligations in only 108 verses. It is hard-hitting as he asks us in verse 1:23 to look at ourselves in the mirror and then straighten ourselves up. He focuses on the truths of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount and motivates us to act upon what He taught.



### **Suggested methodology:**

1. Let the students have a copy of the lesson well before the class meets. (Perhaps the previous meeting)
2. The students read the Bible book and answer the questions in this lesson before the group meets.
3. At the class meeting allow time for greetings and fellowship. (Save most of this for the end)
4. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
5. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
6. Discuss the questions on page 7. Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers, when provided, are just one opinion; you may have a better answer. It might be good to establish the norm that only those who have actually read the book should discuss it aloud.
7. Discuss whatever other questions people have on their mind about the James.
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, this class is expected to take about two hours.

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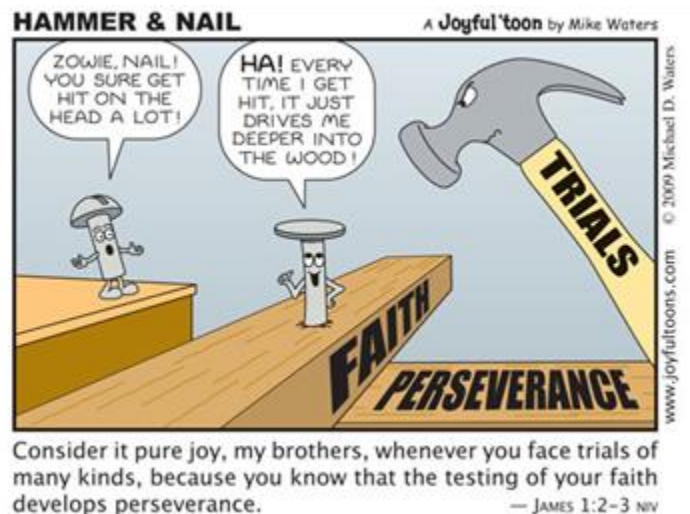
## James Chapters 1 to 2

**James Chapter 1** tells us to have patience in trials whether from our circumstances or internal struggles. Read the chapter and answer the following questions:

- [1A] What does the testing of our faith produce? \_\_\_\_\_
- [1B] If we do not have enough wisdom how can we get more? \_\_\_\_\_
- [1C] How many ways is a double-minded person unstable? \_\_\_\_\_
- [1D] When will a rich man fade away? \_\_\_\_\_
- [1E] What entices us to sin? \_\_\_\_\_
- [1F] Where does everything good come from? \_\_\_\_\_

**James Chapter 2** tells us to show no favoritism and to show our faith in our actions. Read the chapter and answer the following questions:

- [2A] When we make judgments based on appearances what kind of motives do we have? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2B] What kind of law does James call, "Love your neighbor as yourself?" \_\_\_\_\_
- [2C] How much of the law must you violate to become guilty? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2D] What happens to those who show no mercy? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2E] What triumphs over judgement? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2F] Who shudders or tremble in fear because they believe in God? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2G] What is useless or dead without works? \_\_\_\_\_



-----ANSWERS-----

**James Chapters 1 to 2**

- [1A] What does the testing of our faith produce? Endurance Jm 1:3
- [1B] If we do not have enough wisdom how can we get more? Ask God for it. Jm 1:5
- [1C] How many ways is a double-minded person unstable? All of them. Jm 1:8
- [1D] When will a rich man fade away? In the middle of his pursuits Jm 1:11
- [1E] What entices us to sin? Our own lust Jm 1:14
- [1F] Where does everything good come from? From the Father of lights Jm 1:17
  
- [2A] When we make judgments based on appearances what kind of motives do we have? Evil Jm 2:2-4
- [2B] What kind of law does James call, "Love your neighbor as yourself?" Royal Law Jm 2:8
- [2C] How much of the law must you violate to become guilty? One point Jm 2:10
- [2D] What happens to those who show no mercy? The get no mercy Jm 2:13
- [2E] What triumphs over judgement? Mercy Jm 2:13
- [2F] Who shudders or tremble in fear because they believe in God? Demons Jm 2:19
- [2G] What is useless or dead without works? Faith Jm 2:17, Jm 2:20, Jm 2:26



## James Chapters 3 to 5

**James Chapter 3** tells us to teach wisely and keep our tongues closely under control. Read the chapter and answer the following questions:

- [3A] What can turn a great ship? \_\_\_\_\_
- [3B] What is the tongue? \_\_\_\_\_
- [3C] Who can tame his own tongue? \_\_\_\_\_
- [3D] What does not grow on fig trees? \_\_\_\_\_
- [3E] What do you find where there is jealousy and selfish ambition? \_\_\_\_\_
- [3F] The seed planted in peace by those who make peace yields what kind of fruit? \_\_\_\_\_

**James Chapter 4** reminds us of the poor results of wrong motives, talks about our relationship with our enemies, and exhorts us to listen carefully. Read the chapter and answer the following questions:

- [4A] Why do we not have what we want or need? \_\_\_\_\_
- [4B] What is hostility toward God? \_\_\_\_\_
- [4C] What will the devil do if we resist him? \_\_\_\_\_
- [4D] What do we know about tomorrow? \_\_\_\_\_

**James Chapter 5** talks about prayer and patience in times of trouble. Read the chapter and answer the following questions:

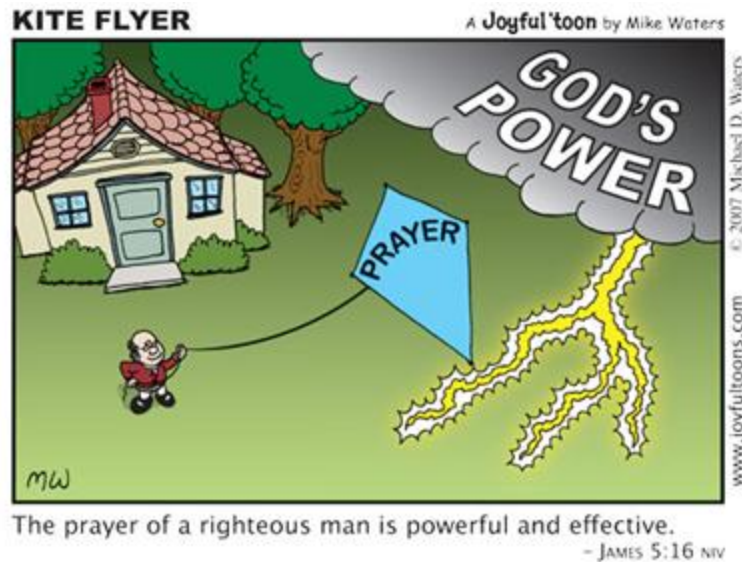
- [5A] Why should the rich weep and howl? \_\_\_\_\_
- [5B] How long should we be patient? \_\_\_\_\_
- [5C] What should we swear by? \_\_\_\_\_
- [5D] What should we do if we are cheerful? \_\_\_\_\_
- [5E] When Elijah prayed how long was their no rain? \_\_\_\_\_



----- ANSWERS -----

**James Chapters 3 to 5**

- [3A] What can turn a great ship? The small rudder Jm 3:4  
[3B] What is the tonque? A fire Jm 3:6  
[3C] Who can tame his own tonque? No one Jm 3:8  
[3D] What does not grow on fig trees? Olives Jm 3:12  
[3E] What do you find where there is jealousy and selfish ambition? Disorder and every evil thing. Jm 3:16  
[3F] The seed planted in peace by those who make peace yields what kind of fruit? Righteousness Jm 3:18
- [4A] Why do we not have what we want or need? Because we do not ask Jm 4:2  
or because we ask with wrong motives Jm 4:3  
[4B] What is hostility toward God? Friendship with the world Jm 4:4  
[4C] What will the devil do if we resist him? Run or Flee Jm 4:7  
[4D] What do we know about tomorrow? Nothing Jm 4:14
- [5A] Why should the rich weep and howl? Because of their coming miseries. Jm 5:1  
[5B] How long should we be patient? Until the Lord comes Jm 5:7-8  
[5C] What should we swear by? Nothing Jm 5:12  
[5D] What should we do if we are cheerful? Sing praises Jm 5:13  
[5E] When Elijah prayed how long was their no rain? 3 ½ Years Jm 5:17-18



(1) Read James 1:2-3. What is the writer talking about when he says we should be happy to have difficulties and trials?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(2) Read James 1:19. Can you give some examples from your own life that show that this is true?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(3) Read James 2:17-18. If it was against the law to be a Christian, what evidence would they have against you besides your words?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(4) Read James 3:5. Can you give some examples from your own life that show that this is true?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(5) Read James 5:16. What is this verse talking about?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(6) If someone asked you what James was about what would you say?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(7) How can the lessons of James be applied to our own life?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(8) Which verse or passage would you select to memorize from James? Why?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions about James, now is the time to discuss them with your classmates.



----- ANSWERS -----

(1) **JAMES 1:2-3 HAPPY DIFFICULTY** The answer is in the context. James 1:4 "And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." "Lacking in nothing" seems like a good enough reason for joy to me.

(2) **JAMES 1:19 REAL LIFE EXAMPLES** I could spend hours writing examples of the poor consequences I have had in my life from not listening carefully, speaking before I have thought it out, and becoming angry without sufficient reason. Getting angry with my boss and quitting a job before I had another one comes immediately to mind. I did that one twice.

(3) **JAMES 2:17-18 EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY** I don't like to toot my own horn, but it is difficult to answer this question without sounding all puffed up about yourself. Writing these lessons and working with the students of them seems like pretty good evidence of my Christianity I could offer to others. For myself, over the last three decades I have watched my own heart gradually become more and more genuinely concerned about others. I know there was nothing in me that could have caused that. It has to be Jesus Christ.

(4) **JAMES 3:5 REAL LIFE EXAMPLES** If I had a nickel for everything I have said that I would like to take back, I would be a wealthy man. Words are like bullets. Once you have fired them, there is no way to change what they have done.

(5) **JAMES 5:16 MEANING** Certainly being part of a group of Christians that will hold you accountable is an important part of the meaning of this verse. The last sentence in the verse opens another aspect of the topic. "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much." What does that part mean? The answer is in the context. In verses 17 and 18 James explains himself by referring to an Old Testament passage about Elijah. (First Kings chapters 17 and 18). If you read that story you find that Elijah prayed for what he understood God to want. If you pray for what God wants you are sure to get your prayers answered.

(6) **TOPIC AND/OR CONTENTS OF JAMES** It is difficult to put a book like this, which touches so many different topics, into a couple of summary statements. Perhaps "praying, loving, and doing right is much better than shooting off your mouth."

(7) **PRACTICAL AND/OR SPIRITUAL APPLICATION OF JAMES** Two important applications would be "listen twice as much as you talk" and "let your faith in Jesus Christ show."

(8) **FAVORITE VERSE** There are so many good verses to choose from. James 1:12 is good. "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." Of course, they are all good.