

James
Leader Guide
(NASB AND ESV)

A FAITH THAT'S REAL

James Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)
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USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out

When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis

- Overview of James

To begin this discussion, you might ask your group what part of James impressed them the most. Is there a subject in James they are especially looking forward to studying?

Who wrote James? What type of literature is it? Who was it written to?

James is the author of this letter.
He was a bond-servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: James was Jewish. Some in your group might have heard before that James was one of Jesus' brothers, son of Joseph and Mary. He was also the head of the Jerusalem church according to Acts. There is no need to bring that up unless someone mentions it in discussion.

James wrote this letter to Jewish (the twelve tribes) believers in the Lord Jesus who had been dispersed from their homeland of Israel.

NOTE: These Jewish believers were probably dispersed during the persecution against the Jerusalem church in Acts 8. Or they could have been those scattered during the Babylonian sieges of Judah many years before. Those Jews then heard the gospel where they were and believed in Jesus.

Some think that James was the first letter of the New Testament to be written about A.D. 45-49.

Tell your group to look at their At a Glance charts to use as a visual aid for this discussion.

JAMES 1

Ask what they noted on the At a Glance chart as a possible theme for this chapter.

Persevere / be steadfast in trials, faith tested; receive, hear, do the Word

What is this chapter about?

James wrote the dispersed believers, his beloved brethren, about trials. He called them to endure or persevere / be steadfast and to ask God for wisdom in the midst of their trials.

Some of them were probably in humble circumstances (ESV—lowly brother) because of being dispersed. Some or all might have been persecuted for their faith.

James tells about the connection of faith and trials.

Then he told them to receive, hear, and do what the Word of truth, the perfect law of liberty, says to do. He explained to them what true religion looks like.

Jews knew the Law of God as they were raised being taught from it.

James told those believers to be doers of the Word, not merely hearers. The statement in verse 22 seems to summarize what the whole letter is about.

You can ask if anyone used verse 22 as a theme of the book on the At a Glance chart. Then ask if they think this might speak to them and how.

JAMES 2

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

No favoritism / partiality in faith; fulfill royal law; faith without / apart from works is dead

What is this chapter about?

In the first part of this chapter, James addressed favoritism / partiality toward the rich over the poor.

He told his readers to fulfill the royal Law by loving their neighbor, whoever he is.

Verse 12 says to “act” as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. “Act” can be synonymous with “do” from chapter 1.

Along with being a doer and acting according to the Word, he then tells them about “works,” things they do.

Faith without / apart from works is dead.

There is evidence of true faith. James 1 said that the one who is only a hearer deludes / deceives himself. Here he says a different statement with a very similar meaning.

He gives Abraham and Rahab as examples of this—two Old Testament personalities with whom Jews are familiar.

JAMES 3

What is this chapter about?

The tongue and wisdom

James 1:26 and 1:19 began his teaching about the tongue and speech.

But this chapter devotes a whole section to it.

Help your group realize how practical to daily life this letter is.

What are verses 13-18 about? How does this relate to the rest of James 3 and also to James 1?

Deeds / works from wisdom, good behavior / conduct out of wisdom from above

Wisdom in taming one's tongue, in using speech

Is there any application in this chapter for believers today? What?

What is a possible theme?

Tame the tongue; wisdom from above

JAMES 4

How does this chapter begin?

Quarrels and conflicts / fights

What is a main point of this chapter according to verses 6, 10, and 16?

Pride and humility are contrasted.

Humble yourselves before God, and He will exalt you.

Some of them were in humble circumstances (lowly brother), 1:9

Some of them were being spoken against, 4:11.

Boasting and arrogance are illustrated.

To speak against a brother is to judge not only his brother but also the law.
There is only one Judge.

Do the right thing.

Ask what your group noted on the At a Glance chart.

Maybe something like:

Humility, pride; don't judge law, do it

JAMES 5

What is a possible theme for this chapter?

Rich; be patient until Lord's (Judge) coming; prayer

How does this chapter begin?

“Come now, you rich”

“Come now, you who say . . . engage in business (ESV—trade) and make a profit,” 4:13.
Are these the same as the rich in James 5:1-6?

Several times in this letter James says something about the rich.

God tells how to view the rich.
He tells the rich how to act and what to do.
He conveys how others are to relate to them.

What are other topics in this chapter?

Be patient until the Lord’s coming

James called those Jewish believers to endure / be steadfast until the Lord’s coming. He used the prophets as their examples to do this.

Endure / be steadfast in trials is a message from James 1 and 5.

Prayer in verses 13-18

Judging or judgment has been used in 2:4, 12-13; 3:1; 4:11-12 and here in verses 9 and 12. (ESV—“condemnation” in verse 12.)

James mentions the elders of the church in this section.
He told believers to call for the elders to pray for them in the trial of sickness.

“Faith” is used again in connection with this prayer.

And Elijah is the example given— another illustration from the Old Testament.

How did James conclude his letter?

His conclusion of everything he said has to do with turning / bringing back a sinner from sin to save his soul and cover his sins. This seems to be the purpose of this letter.

Throughout the letter, he addressed his brethren who believed in the Lord Jesus, the dispersed Jewish believers.

But among those, could there be some who didn’t have a real faith?

You might close this discussion by reviewing the At a Glance chart for the flow of thought in this letter. Then help your group reason how it speaks to them.

**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis

- James 1:2-12
- Trials

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what they remember about James.

Be doers of the Word, not just hearers

James wrote to the twelve dispersed tribes of Israel who were believers in Jesus. They knew God's law. So, he told them to do it, not just listen to it. The same is true for believers now. Those who know God's Word need to obey it.

JAMES 1

Verses 2-4

What are these verses about? Why did James begin his letter with this subject?

These verses are about trials.

The Jewish believers were dispersed.

NOTE: This dispersion might have happened at the time of Acts 8.

There is a short list about trials at the end of this lesson's guide which you might use as a visual aid for this discussion.

What did James tell them about trials? Discuss word definitions and application.

Count / consider it all joy when in various trials

trials—*peirasmos*—"to try to learn the nature or character of someone or something by submitting such to thorough and extensive testing. . .to examine"¹;
"a putting to proof"²

Know that testing produces endurance / steadfastness.

¹Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:331.

²James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G3986.

testing—*dokimion*—“that by which something is tried or proved”³; “to try to learn the genuineness of something by examination and testing”⁴

endurance / steadfastness—*hupomonē*—literally, an abiding under (*hupo*, “under,” *menō*, “to abide”)⁵; “perseverance, patience”⁶

Trials test our faith to show it is genuine. It shows that we really believe or don’t.

Our response when tested proves whether or not our faith is genuine, real.

Let endurance / steadfastness have its perfect result (ESV—full effect).

perfect / full—*teleios*—“fully developed”⁷; “denotes that which has reached its maturity”⁸

So you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing

complete—*holokleros*—“of something complete in all its parts...of a person *in every part of, in all aspects of*”⁹

How do Ephesians 4:13 and Philippians 3:12 relate to this?

Ephesians 4 speaks of equipping the saints so that the body of Christ is built up to a mature (*teleios*) man—to the fullness of Christ.

In Philippians, Paul said he had not become perfect (*teleioo*, from *teleios*), but he pressed on—he continued to endure / be steadfast.

Both of these passages show a process of maturity for believers as James does.

Give time for your group to discuss what this means for them.

³James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995). G1383.

⁴Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:331.

⁵W.E. Vine’s, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (electronic edition), published in 1940 and without copyright.

⁶James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK5705.

⁷Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 377.

⁸Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887). 1:724.

⁹Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 280.

Ask what they learned about trials, testing from the cross-references.

All three passages say something similar to James 1 about rejoicing in trials because of the result.

Romans 5:3-5

Believers exult / rejoice in tribulations / sufferings. Tribulations bring about perseverance / endurance, and perseverance / endurance brings proven character.

Relate this to James 1:4—perfect, complete, lacking in nothing.

1 Peter 1:6-9; 4:12-13

Again, believers are to rejoice because of their faith being tested and found genuine. Salvation is the outcome.

Don't be surprised at the fiery ordeal / trial. Keep on rejoicing.

Verses 5-8

How do these verses relate to verses 2-4?

Verses 2-4 are what to do in trials and what the results are.

Verse 5 begins with a lack of wisdom.

When believers are in a trial and need wisdom, they can ask God.

He gives it generously and without reproach.

Ask your group what they learned from the cross-references about God and wisdom.

Romans 11:33-36

God's wisdom is deeper than our understanding.

Daniel 2:20-23 and Job 12:13, 16

Wisdom belongs to God, and He's the one who gives it.

According to James 1:6, what is the condition to ask God for wisdom?

Ask in faith

Hebrews 11:1, 6

Faith is assurance and conviction about something not seen.

Faith pleases God, and without it He is not pleased.

Believers are those with faith—faith that God is and He rewards those who seek Him.

Matthew 7:7-11

Keep asking and seeking from God. As our Father, He gives what we ask of Him.

Mark 11:22-24

Jesus instructed to ask in faith without doubting.

Lead your discussion back to James 1:6-8. What is contrasted with faith?

Ask in faith, without doubting. This is present tense—ongoing doubting.

doubting, doubts—*diakrino*—“hesitate”¹⁰; “be uncertain”¹¹

That one is like the surf / wave being tossed by the wind.
He’s a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Continuous doubt indicates no faith.
The doubter, faithless, will receive nothing from the Lord.

Verses 9-12

What are these verses about and what is the connection with 1-8?

There are more contrasts.

Both verses 2 and 12 are about trials, so it seems all that James wrote in verses 2-12 relates to trials.

One contrast is between the brother of humble circumstance (ESV says “lowly brother”) and the rich man. Contrast this rich man with the man of faith from verses 1-10.

The brother of humble circumstances (ESV—lowly brother)
is to glory / boast in his high position / exaltation

A brother in humble circumstances (ESV—the lowly brother) is in a trial because of his circumstances. His high position / exaltation is in the Lord. He’s to glory / boast in that. Believers need to focus on their position in God’s sight, not on their circumstances here on this earth.

The rich man
is to glory / boast in his humiliation

A rich man is to glory / boast in his humiliation before the Lord, realizing that he will pass away.

The rich man who continues in his pursuits, not God’s, will fade away in the midst of those pursuits. He’ll receive nothing from God because of his double-mindedness.

¹⁰Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 42.

¹¹James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK1359.

What do the cross-references add to this?

Acts 2 and 4

These clearly say that there were both rich and poor saved in Jerusalem when the church began. The rich sold their possessions and shared the proceeds with their needy brothers.

God is not against the rich.

But the rich can be tempted to trust in their riches instead of God.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

God chose the lowly things and people of the world so that no one can boast before Him. Believers are to boast in Him only, not their positions or circumstances.

Lead your discussion back to James. What is another contrast in verses 11 and 12?

The one who perseveres / remains steadfast is blessed; he has endurance / steadfastness which leads to being perfect and complete, lacking nothing. This one is approved (ESV—stood the test) by God and will receive the crown of life.

That's a contrast with the rich man fading away.

NOTE: Since your group observed all of James 1, you can ask what they saw if you have time left in this discussion.

Verses 13-15

How do these verses relate to 2-12?

When in a trial, one might be tempted to sin.
If so, that does not come from God.

He cannot be tempted with evil and tempts no one to do evil.

Sin comes from one's own lust / desire and results in death.

That's a contrast with being approved by God (ESV—standing the test) and receiving the crown of life.

Verses 16-27

What is this about?

Don't be deceived.

About God

About merely hearing His Word without doing it

About your own heart

You might ask what your group learned about God in verses 17-18.

He gives every good thing, and every perfect gift is from Him.
Contrast this with being tempted. He gives good things, not temptations.

He's the Father of lights and does not change.

He brought forth His children by the Word of truth.
Therefore, don't be deceived—know the truth.

He is righteous.

What is a believer's responsibility according to verses 16-21?

Don't be deceived.
Be quick to hear, slow to speak and to anger.
Receive the Word implanted.
Be a doer of it, not just a hearer.

Help your group to consider that all of this can be associated with being in a trial and persevering through it.

Ask what they learned about the Word.

Truth, which brings forth—meaning people are saved by it, spiritual birth
Able to save souls
Perfect law of liberty

Let them discuss the contrast between being a hearer and a doer of the Word. Then ask them to evaluate where they might be.

A forgetful hearer, deluded / deceived.
One who thinks himself religious, but it's worthless

An effectual doer (ESV—a doer who acts)—this man is blessed. Relate this to verse 12.
His religion is pure and undefiled.
He does what God says.
In a trial, he can focus on helping others in distress.
He's not stained by the world like the rich man pursuing it.

Help your group to get excited about studying the rest of James as effectual doers of what they learn.

To end this discussion, you might ask how knowing these truths can make a difference in their lives on a daily basis.

Trials

Consider / count it all joy

Endurance / steadfastness

Ask God for wisdom

Ask in faith without doubting

**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 3**

Lesson emphasis

- James 1:12-27

REVIEW

You might begin this discussion by asking what your group remembers from James 1:1-11. Give them a brief time to share anything from these verses that has ministered to them.

James wrote to the twelve dispersed tribes of Israel who were in trials.

Consider / count it all joy.

You will encounter various trials (ESV—meet trials of various kinds).

Know that the trials are the testing of your faith.

The testing produces endurance / steadfastness.

The result of endurance / steadfastness is perfect, complete, lacking nothing.

Ask God for wisdom in trials. Ask in faith with no doubts.

At appropriate points throughout this discussion, ask application questions. Help your group understand how studying God’s Word should make an impact on their daily lives. They should be in the process of becoming perfect, complete, lacking nothing.

JAMES 1:12-27

Verses 12-18

How do these verses continue the flow of thought?

Discuss word definitions and cross-references.

The man who perseveres (ESV—remains steadfast) under trial is blessed by God.

perseveres / remains steadfast—“to stay under”¹², “endure”¹³
blessed— “well off”¹⁴

In this context, well off spiritually

He’s blessed because of his endurance / steadfastness, verses 2-4, and maturity.

He comes out better, refined, than when he first encountered the trial.

¹²James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G5278.

¹³James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK5702.

¹⁴James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G3107.

Matthew 5:10-12

Those who are persecuted—verbally or in other ways—for righteousness, for Jesus' sake are blessed. Now they are persecuted, but they have a reward waiting for them in heaven and they're part of God's kingdom.

Luke 6:20-25

The poor, the hungry, those who weep and the hated are blessed and will receive reward in heaven. They are believers.

They're contrasted with unbelievers who have their reward now—the rich, the well-fed and those who laugh now.

Not only is that one blessed, but he's approved (ESV—stood the test).

dokimos—approved / stood the test—“genuine”¹⁵; “approved after testing”¹⁶

He passed the test, probably by asking God for wisdom to know how to live in the midst of the trial.

He'll receive the crown of life, eternal life.

The crown of life is for all who love God, all who persevere / remain steadfast, all who are approved by God, all true believers, all who are blessed.

stephanos—“the wreath or garland which was given as a prize to victors in public games”¹⁷

How does 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 relate to this?

The example is a runner in a race. It takes perseverance, endurance, single-mindedness. Paul said that discipline and self-control help one persevere. If there is no perseverance, then he's disqualified. That is the opposite of “approved / stood the test” in James 1:12.

“disqualified,” *adokimos*—“unapproved. . .worthless”¹⁸

Paul's desire for himself was to live a disciplined life for God's approval.

Believers receive an imperishable wreath or crown after being approved for endurance in the race and the trials of life.

¹⁵James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK1511.

¹⁶Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 554.

¹⁷James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995). G4735.

¹⁸James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G96.

Ask what else your group learned about crowns.

James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10

Crown of life given to those who

love God

are approved through perseverance

are faithful when tested, even to death

2 Timothy 4:6-8

Crown of righteousness awarded

In the future, on that day when the Lord appears

To all who have loved his appearing

By the righteous Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ

1 Peter 5:1-4

Crown of glory given to shepherds, pastors and elders when the Chief Shepherd appears

1 Thessalonians 1:1, 5-8; 2:19-20

Crown of exultation / boasting

At the Lord Jesus' coming

A crown of joy

It's other people who are affected by one's ministry

The crowns of glory and exultation / boasting seem similar—given to those who present the gospel and shepherd others who are saved.

The crowns of life and righteousness will be awarded to all who love the Lord, all true believers. Crowns will be given when the Lord comes.

Revelation 3:11

John wrote a warning to the persecuted church at Philadelphia. He told them to hold to His Word and persevere—so that no one take their crown.

Revelation 4:10-11

This shows what those in heaven do with their crowns—cast them before the throne.

Give your group time to discuss any relevant application.

How do these verses 13-18 relate to believers persevering in trials? What is this about?

The word “tempted” is the verb form of the word for “trials.”

Trials can bring temptations to sin.

Where does sin come from? As a visual aid, you might draw the following progression.

When one is carried away / lured and enticed by his own lust / desire, then he heads toward sin.

carried away / lured—“to draw away, to lead away”¹⁹

enticed—“to *entrap*”²⁰; “to entice or catch by the use of a bait”²¹

lust / desire—“(eager) longing, (earnest) desire. . .craving”²²
This word study was not in the ESV.

Then when lust / desire conceives, it gives birth to sin.
When sin is accomplished / fully grown, it brings forth death.

“sin,” *hamartia*, “wrong-doing”²³ “a departure from doing what is right”²⁴

“accomplished / fully grown,” *apoteleo*, “to come to completion, to come to maturity”²⁵

How does 1 Corinthians 10:13 relate? Discuss application of this.

There is no temptation that believers have to give in to. God provides the way of escape.
Endurance / steadfastness in trials

Sin leads to death. Contrast with perseverance leading to the crown of life, James 1:12.

What is the warning in James 1:16-17?

Don't be deceived.
Only good and perfect comes from God, not temptation to do evil.
He doesn't change regarding this or anything else.

Ask what good gift verse 18 mentions.

God brought forth those Jewish believers by the word of truth.
God exercised His will to give them birth.
Contrast “brought forth” with verse 15.

¹⁹Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:374.

²⁰James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G1185.

²¹Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 554.

²²Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 164.

²³James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK281.

²⁴Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 45.

²⁵Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 554.

Temptation, lust, sin brings forth death.
God brings forth believers by the Word.

Contrast the word of truth with verse 16; don't be deceived.
The truth combats deception.

How does 1 Peter 1:22-2:3 relate to what James wrote?

Peter also wrote to those dispersed, and reminded them that they were born again by the living and abiding word of God. His word endures forever.

Because of being born again, they were to put aside certain things and long for the pure word of God. It brings growth in salvation. Spiritual growth is based on God's Word.

Verses 19-25

What is repeated in these verses?

It's about the Word of God—being a doer of it and not merely a hearer.

What do these verses teach about God's Word? What is its importance to believers (those who have faith, those who are in process of proving their faith)?

Receive that word of truth in humility / meekness.
It's implanted as a seed; receive it. The fruit is salvation.
It's able to save one's soul—brought forth, spiritual birth.

Prove to be a doer of the Word, not just a hearer.
Not to be deceived or deluded

It's like a mirror showing one's image, what he is like.
Look intently at it—the perfect law of liberty.

Abide by it to be an effectual doer.

How do verses 19-21 relate to the context of God's Word or law?

James wrote to Jewish believers, the twelve tribes dispersed.
They knew God's Word, His law.

He told them to be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. Although these three commands apply to life in general, it seems that they're related to God's Word in this context.

Obedience to these commands reduces arguments to reasoning. In this context it might refer to arguments about what God has said.

Receive the word; be a doer of it; don't argue about it.

Man's anger doesn't produce righteousness.

In humility receive the Word implanted. (ESV—receive with meekness)

What else did James say to do in verses 22-25?

Prove yourselves doers of the Word.

Compare this with those who are approved in verse 12.

Even in "testing," prove to be a doer—ask God for wisdom from His Word.

Look intently at the perfect law of liberty and abide by it—live by it.

This one is blessed; compare this with verse 12.

What do verses 26-27 have to do with all James wrote before this?

These are some specific ways to be a doer of the Word.

Perhaps these were peculiar to what those Jewish believers were going through at the time James wrote, but they're still relevant to all believers now.

This is a definition of true religion—true faith. Not one of delusion.

Bridle or control the tongue.

Relate this to verse 19.

*bridle, chalinagogo, "guide with a bit and bridle. . . figuratively hold in check, restrain, control"*²⁶

Visit orphans and widows in their distress.

visit—"visit, care for, be concerned about"²⁷

Keep oneself unstained by the world.

Be a doer of the Word, not a follower of the world.

How do the cross-references from 1 John relate to this?

1 John 2:15-17; 3:1-3, 17-18

John wrote things similar to what James did. The things of the world lead to temptations to sin. If a person loves the things of the world, that one does not love God.

²⁶ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 406.

²⁷Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 70.

Lust / desires of the flesh
Lust / desires of the eyes
Boastful pride of life

The world is not eternal, but the one who does the Father's will, keeps His word, lives forever.

Believers are to share the world's goods when they see brothers in need. This is loving in deed, not just saying something about it.

Give your group time to discuss how they can put these last verses into practice in their lives.

God's Word

brings forth believers
implanted to save souls
perfect law of liberty

receive the word
prove doers / be doers
look intently into
abide by it / persevere

**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis

- James 2:1-13

REVIEW

You might begin this discussion by asking about the flow of thought in James 1.

James 1:2-12

Endure in trials, ask God for wisdom, persevere / be steadfast. Trials test one's faith. Perseverance / steadfastness leads to approval and the crown of life.

James 1:13-17

Temptations are not from God. When one gives in to temptation, it leads to death. God only gives good gifts. Don't be deceived.

James 1:18-27

Prove yourselves doers of the word of truth and not only hearers who delude / deceive themselves. Pure religion is doing what God says, even in trials.

There is a short list at the end of this lesson's guide which you might use as a visual aid for this discussion.

JAMES 2

Verses 1-13

What is the first part of this chapter about? What is the flow of thought from James 1?

Favoritism or partiality toward the rich over the poor is the main concern of 2:1-13. It connects with 1:26-27 and what one with true / pure religion does and does not do.

In verses 8-12, the law is referred to several times, so it seems this chapter is a continuation of telling how to be a doer of the Word and not merely a hearer who deludes / deceives himself.

James inserted several examples of doing the Word.

Controlling one's tongue
Visiting the orphans and widows in their distress
Keeping oneself unstained by the world

Can James 2:1-7 be one way of keeping oneself unstained by the world?

If a person comes into the assembly (church gathering) dressed expensively and wearing gold, then what kind of treatment should that one receive?

According to these verses, it should be the same kind of reception everyone gets.

James told those Jewish believers who were dispersed that making distinctions between rich and poor is evil.

You might ask your group to consider if they have shown any favoritism / partiality.

How are the poor described in James 2:2-6?

Dirty / shabby clothes
Comes into the assembly
Told to stand or sit by footstool / feet
Chosen by God to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom
Love God
Dishonored

So these particular poor are the saved ones who love the Lord. They're brothers of all else who love Him. They're the brothers of humble / lowly circumstances, 1:9. They'll receive the crown of life, also promised to those who love Him, 1:12.

What does it say about the one who practices favoritism / partiality?

Pays special attention to the one dressed in fine clothes
Makes distinctions
Becomes a judge with evil motives
Dishonors the poor whom God chose

Showing partiality is sin.

How are the rich described in James 1 and 2?

The rich will fade away in the midst of their pursuits.

Comes into the assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes
Oppress you and drag you into court
Blaspheme the fair / honorable name by which you are called

These sound like they're merely hearers of the Word and not doers.
They deceive themselves.

Ask your group what they learned from their study about the rich and wealth in this lesson.

Ecclesiastes 5:19

Riches are a gift from God. He gives to whomever He wills.

Luke 12:15-21

Jesus said life doesn't consist of possessions. The parable tells of a rich man who perished in the midst of his pursuits. Be rich toward God.

Luke 16:13-14

Jesus said it's impossible to serve both God and wealth / money.

Matthew 19:24

It's hard for the rich to enter God's kingdom. Only if they are rich in Him and not serving wealth.

Proverbs 11:4; 28; 23:4-5

Riches will help no one in the day of wrath. The one who trusts in riches will fall. Don't weary yourself to gain wealth because it's easily gone.

Ecclesiastes 5:10

The one who loves money is not satisfied with it.

Mark 4:18-19

The worries of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke out the word in a person's life.

1 Timothy 6:9-10, 17-19

Those who want to get rich fall into temptations, and the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil. People claiming to be believers have wandered away from the faith by longing for and pursuing money or riches.

Those in the church who are rich should be generous and ready to share their wealth with others.

Ask your group what their attitude is toward riches, wealth, and/or the rich.
Give time for them to discuss application of what they've learned.

What is the contrast in verses 8 and 9?

Showing partiality or not

Fulfilling the royal law—love your neighbor as yourself—is not showing partiality. It's doing well. It's being a doer of the Word.

Showing partiality is sin, transgressing the law to love your neighbor as yourself.

If one loves his neighbor, rich or poor, as himself, then he is “doing” well—he’s a doer of the Word. He’s not showing favoritism or partiality. He’s keeping God’s law.

Where did this quote in James 2:8 come from? Who else quoted it? Why is it important?

Leviticus 19:18

“ . . . you shall love your neighbor as yourself . . . ” is a quote from God’s law.

Mark 12:28-31

Jesus quoted this statement from the law when asked about the greatest commandment.

Love God is first; those who love riches don’t love God first.
Love your neighbor is the second greatest commandment.

If one keeps these commands, he fulfills the law.
Loving God foremost leads to obeying Him.
Loving one’s neighbor as oneself keeps one from sinning against him.

How does keeping this royal law fulfill the law?

Romans 13:8-10

If one loves his neighbor, then he does no wrong to his neighbor.

If the neighbor happens to be poor, there would be no partiality against him in favor of the rich.

What was a Jew’s relationship to the Law before Christ?

God said they were to know His law as the standard of righteousness and were to obey it. The believers James wrote knew God’s law even before they were saved.

What is a Christian’s relationship to the law?

Matthew 5:17-20

Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that He did not come to abolish God’s Law or even what God’s Prophets had said. He didn’t come to do away with anything God had said in His Word—He came to fulfill it all.

The scribes and Pharisees had fallen into more of a man-made law; men had added to God’s law in Jesus’ time. He said one needs more than that kind of righteousness to enter the kingdom of heaven.

One needs the righteousness which comes through faith in Him.
That righteousness loves God and people and fulfills God’s law.

It’s a dangerous thing to annul / relax one of God’s commands—like not loving a poor neighbor.

Romans 6:1-2, 12-13

At salvation believers die to sin.

From that point on, they have the spiritual power not to let sin reign in their lives.

Present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead (ESV—brought forth from death to life), and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Romans 8:3-4

The Law could not condemn sin in the flesh—Jesus did that as He lived a sinless life in the flesh. Therefore, those who have His Spirit living within them, all Christians, fulfill the requirement of the Law as they live by the leading of His Spirit.

The law is fulfilled in those who walk by the Spirit, not the flesh.

Jude 4

Jude, the brother of James and Jesus wrote this letter of warning to Christians.

Those who turn grace into licentiousness (ESV—pervert the grace into sensuality) are ungodly. They creep in among believers and teach that grace means there is no longer a standard of righteousness.

Lead your discussion back to James 2. What is repeated in verses 8-11? What are these verses about? How does it flow with what is before in James?

Keeping the law

This connects with the end of James 1—look intently at (ESV—look into) the perfect law of liberty and abide / persevere by it, blessed in what he does.

One must keep the whole law and not just one part to be an effectual doer of it (ESV—a doer who acts).

Even if one does not commit adultery or murder, that one is still a transgressor of the law if he shows partiality in not loving his neighbor as himself.

Acts 10:34 and Romans 2:11

God is not partial.

What is the summary in verses 12-13? Ask about the cross-references.

True Christians, those who are doers of the Word and not deceiving their own hearts, are to speak and act as those who'll be judged by the law of liberty.

John 8:31-32; 12:47-48

Jesus said the truth, His word, will set people free. What He said will judge men at the last day.

Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:17; 16:18-20; and Psalm 82:1-4
God's law instructed Israel not to be partial in judgments.

Believers are not to be judges, but are to realize that they'll be judged.

And that judgment is merciless to those who have shown no mercy, particularly in this chapter to the poor Christians.

But mercy triumphs over judgment. Those who show mercy now, receive mercy in judgment.

NOTE: Since your group observed all of chapter 2, you can ask what they saw in the rest of this chapter if you have time left.

Verses 14-26

What is the main statement in these verses and what does it have to do with being a doer of the Word / perfect law of liberty / royal law?

Faith without works is dead. Works of faith are obedience to God's Word, law.

What are the two questions this section opens with? What are the answers?

What use / good is it if a man says he has faith but he has no works?
Can that faith save him?

The answer is no use, no salvation.
Faith without works is dead, useless, does not result in righteousness.

What are the examples James used to illustrate his point?

The demons believe God is one, but they have no works—no eternal life, no salvation.
Abraham was justified when he offered Isaac.
Rahab was justified by her work.
Works prove faith.

Ask your group to consider where they are in all of this.

JAMES 1–2

Faith—tested
Do the Word
Faith—no favoritism / partiality
Fulfill royal law
Faith—no works=dead

**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 5**

Lesson emphasis

- James 2:14-26
- Faith without / apart from works is dead

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you can ask your group what they remember as the main points of James 1 and 2.

James wrote to the twelve tribes dispersed, the tribes of Israel—Jews
Brethren—brothers in the body of Christ

He wrote about their faith being tested. He told them to resist temptation to sin when they were in trials.

He called believers to be doers of the Word, not just hearers.

In chapter 2, he wrote about favoritism, partiality—specifically treating the rich who come to the assembly better than the poor. One who does this is not a doer of the Word, not fulfilling, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” It’s sin.

Don’t forget those like orphans and widows and pay special attention to the rich. The world would say to cater to the rich for what you can benefit—evil motive. Don’t let the world stain your thinking.

Ask your group what the verses they studied this week are about and how that relates to previous study in James.

Faith without / apart from works is dead.
The doer of the Word will be doing works of faith.

At the end of this lesson’s guide there is a short list to use as a visual aid.

JAMES 2:14-26

Verses 14-17

What questions did James pose in these verses and how did he begin to answer them?

What use / good is it if someone says he has faith but he has no works?
Can that faith save him?

He answers with an illustration: It's useless to tell the cold and hungry to go in peace and be warmed and filled but not help them. In the same way, faith with no action to show evidence of that faith, is dead, useless. Compare this with the religion of the one who doesn't bridle his tongue—worthless.

Ask your group if they can think of some other illustrations and let them share.

According to the cross-references on Days Two and Three of the lesson, how is a person saved and how do works relate to salvation?

Romans 3:9-18, 23 and 5:6-8

No one is righteous on his own, and none seek God.
All have sinned and are ungodly—sinners.
That's who Christ died for.

Ephesians 2:8-9

Man is saved by grace through faith. It's a gift of God, not a result of works.

2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4

Believers are new creatures in Christ; the old has passed away. Christians walk in newness of life.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. People are saved from their old way of life, from their sins. First Corinthians 6 says, "Such were some of you; but you were washed"

Matthew 7:13-29

Jesus warned of false prophets—those who speak false messages. He told how to recognize them, by their fruit, even though they look like sheep. They are really wolves.

Some say, "Lord, Lord," but it's the one who does God's will who will enter heaven.

Jesus illustrated this with the contrast of the two men who built houses. The wise man whose house withstood the floods and the rain is the one who heard the words of Jesus and acted on them—a doer of the word. This man showed his faith by his actions. The foolish man whose house fell is the one who heard Jesus' words but did not act on them. Faith without / apart from works—dead, useless, worthless.

Verses 18-20

What does James say about faith in these verses? Discuss cross-references when relevant.

There's no tangible way to show the presence of faith in a life except by actions.

James wrote to Jews who would have known and believed that God is one. Even the demons believe God is one. To have that knowledge is not enough.

Deuteronomy 6

This is about the importance of the Word—speak of it to your children at all times. Obedience to the Word shows love for the Lord. The command is to love Him with all one’s heart, soul, and might.

Verses 21-26

Who are the examples of being justified by faith?

Abraham was justified—shown to be righteous—by works when he offered up Isaac.

His faith was perfected / completed by his works.

perfect(ed), *teleioo*, “*make complete. . .make mature*”²⁸

Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac was evidence that he believed, that he had faith.

Hebrews says it was a test of his faith. It was outward proof of what had taken place in Abraham. Relate this to James 1:2-4.

Rahab is also an example. Her faith is seen in that she received Israel’s messengers and sent them out another way so that they wouldn’t be found.

What do the cross-references say about faith, justification, and salvation?

Romans 3 and 4; Galatians 3

Christians are justified—declared righteous—at salvation through Christ’s redemption. It’s from hearing the Word and believing Him—faith, apart from works of the Law.

This is how Abraham was made righteous; he believed.

Titus 2:14; 3:8

Jesus gave Himself to redeem believers from lawless deeds and purify them as a people zealous for good deeds. If the word concerning this is spoken, it will encourage believers to engage in good deeds, a result of their redemption. Relate this to being new creatures in Christ; all things have become new.

Ephesians 2:10

Believers are created for His plans.
God prepared those good works beforehand for them to walk in.

Galatians 5:6

In Christ it is not whether a person is physically circumcised or not that means anything. It’s faith working through love. The works are because of the believer’s love for Christ, not because of a law.

²⁸Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 180.

Ask your group if living out their faith has caused them to mature spiritually, has caused their faith to grow.

What is the comparison in verse 26?

Without a spirit, there is no life in a body; it's dead.

In the same way, without works, there is no life in that person's faith.
It's not truly faith; it's empty, worthless, useless, dead.

You might end by encouraging your group to examine themselves to see if they are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5). Do people see their faith by their works?

Faith

doesn't save if no works
dead if no works
seen by works
useless if no works
perfected / completed by works

**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 6**

Lesson emphasis

- James 3

REVIEW

You might begin this discussion by asking your group if anything in this lesson spoke directly to them. Give time for them to briefly share applications or questions.

What is the flow of thought in James 1–2?

James 1

Trials test one's faith.
Be a doer of the word of truth, able to save souls.
Prove to be doers, not just hearers.

James 2

In faith, don't favor / be partial to the rich.
God chose poor to be rich in faith.
Royal law—love neighbor as self. Judged by law of liberty.
Faith without / apart from works is dead, useless.
As a result of works, faith is perfected.

JAMES 3

What is this chapter about?

The main emphasis of verses 1-12 is the tongue.

Verses 13-18 are about wisdom.

What is the connection of these two subjects?

The wise person tames his tongue.

Verses 1-12

Who is verse 1 about? What did James say in this verse?

Teachers incur a stricter judgment (ESV—judged with greater strictness).

Therefore, let not many become teachers.

Ask your group what they learned about teachers from the other passages in this lesson. Ask about application when it's appropriate.

Romans 12:6-7

This passage is one that teaches about spiritual gifts given to believers by God's Spirit. But not all are given the same gifts.

One spiritual gift, given to some believers, is teaching.

1 Corinthians 12:27-29

God appointed these gifts or functions within the church. One of the gifts is teaching. Not all are teachers; there is no gift that has been given to every believer. Therefore, some in the church are teachers, but not all.

1 Peter 4:10-11

Those who speak are to speak God's Word.

Ephesians 4:11-16

This is another passage about gifts. And here the teaching gift is connected with pastoring / shepherding. The people with these specific speaking gifts are to equip the saints for the work of service / ministry.

God's Word grows up believers, tells them what to do, leads them to be doers who have works of service / ministry with their faith.

God's Word prevents the saints from being tossed and carried about by every wind of doctrine.

Therefore, all in the body of Christ who have speaking gifts, teachers included, should be speaking God's Word, not some new wind of doctrine.

1 Timothy 1:3-7

Some who want to be teachers have strayed / swerved from the truth and teach strange / different doctrines. But they don't understand what they're saying. They don't understand the coming judgment for what they're doing.

The goal / aim of godly teaching is: love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.

Ask what they learned from the cross-references about all believers' responsibility to teach or share God's Word.

2 Timothy 2:24

The Lord's bond-servant (ESV—servant), whoever he is, must be able to teach. Teach God's Word to others with whom he communicates. Not the gift of teaching, as his main ministry, but sharing the Word of God with others.

Hebrews 5:12

Growth brings the responsibility to instruct others in God's Word.

Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20

Bringing one in sin to restoration is part of communicating the Word to brothers and sisters.

1 Corinthians 3:10-17

Each one must be careful how he builds on the foundation which is Jesus Christ.
This seems to refer to those who speak God's Word, teachers.

The fire will test the quality of each one's building materials.
Teachers are to use God's Word to build up the body of Christ.

Only those with works that remain when tested by fire will have reward from the Lord.

Why will teachers incur a stricter judgment, as James said?

What they teach can lead people to grow up in the Lord and be prepared for service
or
it can lead them into strange doctrine and keep them stumbling in immaturity.

How does verse 2 flow from the warning statement in verse 1?

“For” indicates a continuation of thought.

The “perfect” man does not stumble in what he says.

“Perfect” can mean “complete. . .whole. . .full-grown, mature”²⁹
Compare this with James 1:26.

The believer who controls what he says on a regular basis is a mature Christian.
All believers sin, but one does not constantly live in the sin of a loose, uncontrolled tongue.

That one is able to bridle, control, his whole body.
Therefore, teachers are to control what they teach and how they act.

How does this relate to James 1 and 2?

If one endures / is steadfast in trials, he is perfect and complete.

1:26 says that one's religion is worthless if he doesn't bridle his tongue.
He deceives his own heart; he's not a doer of the word, but a hearer who deludes himself.

²⁹Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 180.

2:12 says speak and act as those who'll be judged by the law of liberty.
2:22 tells about Abraham's faith "perfected / completed" by his works (actions and speech).

Ask what they learned from James 3:2 and the related cross-references.

James says everyone stumbles in many ways.

Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 Kings 8:46 and 1 John 1:8
No one continually does good, everyone sins.

What are the illustrations of controlling the tongue in James 3:3-5?

A bit in a horse's mouth controls the whole horse.
The rudder of a ship directs the whole ship.
A small fire sets a great forest aflame.

What's the comparison in verses 5-6?

The tongue is a small body part, yet can boast great things.
It's small, but can defile the whole body by what it says.
It can set on fire, direct, the course of one's life.

The tongue is a fire, the world of iniquity / unrighteousness.
It sets one's life on fire and is set on fire by hell.

Ask about a list they might have made on the tongue from verses 1-10.

Tongue

- A small part of the body
- Boasts of great things
- A fire of iniquity / unrighteousness
- Defiles / staining the entire body
- No one can tame it
- A restless evil
- Full of deadly poison
- Bless our Lord and Father
- Curse men in His image

How important it is to control what we say? Let them discuss this application. What is the result of not controlling what we say?

As a visual aid, you might draw a mouth sending out flames to another person, boasting, etc.

What illustrations are in verses 11-12, and what are they about? What truth?

Blessing and cursing cannot come from the same source.
A fountain / spring cannot send out fresh and bitter / salt water.
A fig tree cannot produce olives.
A (ESV—grapevine) vine cannot produce figs.
Salt water / pond cannot produce fresh water.

The problem is in the source—what lies behind what the tongue says.

What did Jesus say about this, and how does the new covenant relate?

Matthew 12 and 15

The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.
What comes out of the mouth tells what one's heart is really like.
Every spoken word will bring an accounting before the Lord, justification, or condemnation.

Ezekiel and Jeremiah spoke from God the promise of the new covenant.

God's Spirit within to cause believers to walk in His statutes
God's law written on the new heart
Not turn away from Him

John 7:37-39

Jesus told about the Holy Spirit indwelling every believer.

Verses 13-18

How do these verses relate to the rest of this chapter? What do they have to do with the tongue?

On your visual aid you might draw a contrasting stick figure speaking wisdom to another person.

The wise and understanding person shows his deeds in gentleness / meekness.
Works (deeds) show one's faith.
His deeds / works are shown in his good behavior / conduct.

Gentleness / meekness and wisdom produce fresh water, blessing, not bitter words.

Wisdom is careful in what is said.

What is contrast in these verses?

Wisdom not from above
Bitter jealousy
Selfish ambition
Arrogant / boast
Lie / false against the truth

Earthly wisdom
Natural / unspiritual
Demonic

The result is disorder and evil things / vile practice. Compare with verse 8.

NOTE: Some in your group may have looked up these words. The lesson instructed to do so if needed.

Wisdom from above

pure—“without moral defect or blemish”³⁰

peaceable—“freedom from anxiety and inner turmoil”³¹

gentle—“*forbearing, considerate*”³²

reasonable (ESV—open to reason) and merciful

good fruits

unwavering / impartial—“*without . . . favoritism*”³³; “*without uncertainty*”³⁴

without hypocrisy / sincere—“*sincere . . . lacking in pretense*”³⁵

The result is righteousness and peace.

Ask your group which they want to be like.

How does 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 compare with James 3?

Wisdom from God is opposite from the world’s wisdom, fleshly wisdom.

God’s wisdom sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross so men might know God.

Men in their pursuit of signs or wisdom don’t come to know God.

All believers in Jesus Christ have God’s wisdom.

How does wisdom affect the tongue?

Lack wisdom, ask God—James 1:5

Especially in trials

Be slow to speak—James 1:19

Man’s anger does not achieve God’s righteousness.

³⁰Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:745.

³¹Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:314.

³²Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 68.

³³Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 3.

³⁴Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981). G87.

³⁵Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:674.

Bridle the tongue and not deceive self about worthless religion, James 1:26.

Speak as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty, James 2:12.

Don't just say you have faith—prove it by works, doing what the word of truth says to do.

Acquiring wisdom from above is part of one's faith being perfected.

Learning to control what one says is part of acquiring wisdom from above.

Consider speech that is from a heart filled with God's Spirit.

Wisdom of the Spirit guides what comes out of one's mouth.

Give time for your group to discuss how they might grow in controlling what they say.

**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 7**

Lesson emphasis

- James 4:1-5

REVIEW

You might begin this discussion by asking your group what they remember as some of the main subjects in James.

Trials, God's Word, partiality, faith and works, the tongue, wisdom

James wrote to the twelve dispersed tribes of Israel.

They knew God's Law. James told them to do it, not just hear it.

JAMES 4

There are two lists at the end of this guide which might be helpful as a visual aid.

Verses 1-5

How does this chapter begin?

It begins with two questions about the source of quarrels and conflicts / fights.

Relate that with what James 3 is about—controlling the tongue and wisdom.

Quarrels and conflicts / fights begin with one's pleasures / passions and are carried out by one's tongue. Wisdom from above is how to stay away from quarrels.

The source is one's pleasures / passions.

You can ask your group what they remember from James 1:13-15 that relates to 4:1-3.

Pleasures lead to temptation, which can lead to sin and death.

Pleasures can lead to murder according to verse 2, literal and metaphorical.

Envy, desiring what someone else has, leads to fighting and quarreling with one another.

But it doesn't have to. James tells how to take care of lust / desire and pleasures / passions. Ask God for what you want. Resist temptation to sin. True believers are able to do that.

And ask Him for wisdom, James 1:5. The wisdom described in James 3:13-18.

Believers are to ask in faith without doubting (1:6).

Put their focus on God; trust in His provision for them in all areas of life.

Lead the discussion back to James 4:3. Why doesn't the person have what he wants?

He didn't ask God for it,
or
He asked with wrong motive (ESV—ask wrongly), to spend it on his pleasures / passions.

God does not give to people what they want for spending on selfish pleasures / passions.
He gives to believers all they need and want to live a life honoring and pleasing Him.

Trusting God with what He gives is living a life of faith.

Asking Him is being a doer of the Word, as opposed to trying to get what we want by quarreling and fighting.

Being a doer of the Word means to ask God, then wait for what He gives and use it for His glory and pleasure.

How does verse 4 connect with 1-3?

Adulteresses / adulterous people
Verses 1-3 can lead to spiritual adultery.

That is friendship with the world,
which is hostility toward (ESV—enmity with) God, being His enemy.

If a person is constantly friends with the world, that one has never been saved.

Ask your group what they learned from the cross-references.

2 Corinthians 11:2-3

Paul mentions a godly jealousy for believers who are betrothed to Christ as husband. He cautions believers about being deceived by the devil, by going astray from devotion to Christ, the husband. The Christian life is simplicity and purity.

Not only the world but also the devil can tempt believers to stray temporarily.

Ephesians 5:23-32

This is the clearest illustration of marriage representing the relationship between Christ and His church, His bride.

The church is to be subject / submit to Christ.

He does everything else.

- Head, Savior
- Loves, gave Himself up for her
- Sanctify her, cleanse by washing of water of Word
- Present her holy and blameless to Himself
- Nourishes and cherishes

Ask your group to consider what He did to make them part of His bride, what He continues to do, and what He asks them to do as part of His body, the church.

When believers study His Word, they help with washing and sanctifying themselves for Him. Knowing His Word helps them see when they are being tempted by the world and / or the devil to go astray from that purity of devotion to Christ.

Revelation 19:7-8

The Lamb's (Christ's) marriage supper is a future event for the bride, the church, to look forward to. The wedding dress is made up of the saints' righteous acts.

- Works of faith
- Be doers of the Word

Ask what else they learned about friendship with the world.

“Friendship,” *philia*, is “fondness”³⁶; “affection, love”³⁷

The “world” in verse 4 is *kosmos* and can mean “something well-arranged,” or “this planet inhabited by mankind.”³⁸ But in this context it means the “world system,”³⁹ the world's thinking as opposed to God's.

It's not the physical world God created, but that which is hostile / enmity toward God.

Ephesians 2:1-2

Before being saved all believers lived according to the course (“a space of time, an age.”⁴⁰; practices and standards of those without God”⁴¹) of this world and the devil's course. He is the ruler of this world, John 16:11.

³⁶James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G5373.

³⁷Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 399.

³⁸Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 235.

³⁹James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK3180.

⁴⁰Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981). G165.

⁴¹James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK172.

John 15:18-21

Jesus chose believers out of this world. Therefore, Christians are hated by the world just as He was. We are different, separate from the world.

1 John 2:15-17

If one who claims to be saved continually loves the world, then that one has never been saved—he does not have the Father’s love within him, the Holy Spirit.

The world and all in it are passing away.

Only true believers will live forever—those who are doers of the Word, have works of faith, obey the Father’s will.

Titus 2:12

The grace of God instructs believers to deny / renounce worldly desires / passions. James says to ask God for wisdom in how to do this.

Romans 8:5-9, 14

The mind set on the flesh is death and hostile toward God. Compare this with James 4:4. That mind-set doesn’t submit to God because it’s not able to. It can’t please Him.

There is a contrast in these verses—the mind set on the Spirit.
The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.
The sons of God are led by the Spirit.

Romans 12:2

Paul wrote that believers can renew their minds, change their thinking from the world’s way to God’s thinking. Studying God’s Word and living by it is how this is done. It’s how believers keep from being conformed to the world.

You might give your group some time to discuss application.

How does verse 5 connect with 1-4?

Possible interpretations which fit the context of James and the immediate context of James 4:1-6 are the following:

- God jealously desires the leading of His Spirit which He placed within believers.
- The Spirit of God within believers jealously desires / yearns for their complete devotion to Christ.
- The spirit of a person, whom God made, desires / yearns enviously toward the pleasures of the world.

Since they observed all of James 4, you can ask what they saw in the rest of this chapter.

Verses 6-10

What are these verses about, and how do they fit with verses 1-5?

This is about pride and humility before God, submitting to God's will for one's life, not living according to one's own desires / pleasures.

These verses tell how this is done.

- Submit to God
- Resist the devil
- Draw near to God
- Cleanse your hands
- Purify your hearts
- Be miserable / wretched, mourn and weep
- Let your laughter turn to mourning and joy to gloom
- Humble yourselves in the Lord's presence

Tell your group that they'll study these verses in the next lesson.

Verses 11-17

What are the subjects in these verses?

Don't speak against brothers.

James mentioned this before more than once.

Judging and the law

He wrote about that before, too, in chapter 2.

Boasting in arrogance

They'll study all of this in Lesson 8.

Ask what your group learned from their study this week which can help them be doers of the Word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

Ask what works of faith they learned from this lesson.

Ask what they learned about their faith being tested in this lesson.

Quarrels and Conflicts / Fights	The World
Source = our pleasures / passions Use God's wisdom to control our tongues Ask God for what we want with proper motive	Friendship = adultery hostility / enmity toward God God's enemy

**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 8**

Lesson emphasis

- James 4:6-17

REVIEW

You might begin this discussion by asking your group what they remember from their study of James.

This letter is about doing what God says in His Word.
It tells what real faith is.

There might be some in your group who are not sure if they're saved. This letter tells them how they can know for sure.

Ask specifically what they remember about James 4:1-5.

Don't participate in quarrels and conflicts / fights.
Pleasures / passions lead to quarrels and conflicts / fights.
This can lead to being friends with the world because these are things of the world.

Adulteresses / adulterous people

Friendship with the world

- Hostility toward (ESV—enmity with) God
- Enemy of God

If a person is constantly friends with the world, then that one has never been saved.

JAMES 4:6-17

How does James 4:6 connect with verses 1-5? What is the flow of thought?

“But”; this conjunction usually signifies a contrast.

God gives greater grace contrasted with man's hostility toward Him.

According to verse 6, the humble receives this grace.

God opposes the proud—those who are hostile to Him, who choose to be His enemies by loving the world.

You might write the contrast in verse 6 as a visual aid to point back to:

God
is opposed to the proud
but
gives grace to the humble

So is there no hope for the proud, those hostile to God? Can they never receive God's grace?

Verses 7-10 list what to do to become the humble so that one can receive God's grace.

Submit to God.

Resist the devil—when he tempts with the things of the world.

Draw near to God.

Through prayer and His Word

The devil will flee when resisted, and God will draw near when believers draw near to Him.

Cleanse your hands.

Jews understood the symbolism of this—cleansing.

Purify your hearts.

Not just hands, but the heart; to love God, not the world.

Be miserable / wretched.

Mourn.

Weep.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning, joy to gloom.

These last things represent repentance and godly sorrow over sin.

Humble yourselves.

Ask your group how these commands relate to them. Give time for application discussion.

Verses 11-12

What are these verses about? What is the flow of thought from verses 1-10?

This is about judging one another.

It comes after the sections about quarrels and then humility before God.

Speaking against one another can definitely cause quarrels and conflicts / fights.

Judging one another is a form of pride.

It's also judging the law, not obeying it.

There is only one Judge.

What does “judge” mean?

“pass judgment on . . . decide, determine”⁴²; “to conclude for oneself”⁴³

What does the rest of James say about judging?

James 2:4, 6

Favoritism, partiality toward the rich is making distinctions.

God, through James, said that is setting oneself up as a judge with evil motives / thoughts.

The rich drag you into court.

James 2:12-13

Believers are to speak and act as those who’ll be judged by the law of liberty.

That judgment will be merciless to the one who showed no mercy to others.

This relates to the situation in James 2:1-4.

James 5:9

Don’t complain / grumble against one another so that you won’t be judged.

That’s the same thing he wrote in 4:11-12.

The Judge is standing at the door, and there is only one Judge—God, not man.

If one spoke against a brother, what law would he be speaking against?

Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:13-16

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Love is the fulfillment of the law.

Serve one another in love.

Walk by the Spirit and you won’t carry out the desires of the flesh.

What is the problem in James 4:13-17?

This is about people making their own business plans to gain profit, but not considering God in those plans. James says that is:

Arrogance

Boasting

Sin / evil

This is describing a person whose life’s focus is business and making a profit.

⁴² Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 104.

⁴³James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G2919.

According to verse 14, what problems does that kind of focus have?

No one knows what his life will be like in the future, even tomorrow.
One's life is like a vapor / mist, and then it vanishes.
James 1:10 says that the rich man's life is like a flowering grass which passes away.

Ask your group what they learned from the cross-references. What is man's length of days like?

Life is like a breath.
God alone determines how long each person lives.

Psalm 139:16

God decided how long each person's life would be even before that one was born.
The length of a person's life, his days, are written in God's book.

Therefore, what should one's attitude toward his life be? Ask your group what their attitude is.

It should be trust and humility toward God.

Ask your group what they learned from Luke 12:13-53 and how it parallels James.

Jesus was asked a question about a family inheritance. So He took the opportunity to teach about greed, life, and possessions.

In verses 16-21, Jesus told a parable of the rich man. He was very productive in his life. He made plans to live a long, prosperous, and easy life. God called him a fool. His life was taken in the midst of his pursuits, James 1:11.

The point of this parable is to be rich toward God, not treasure on earth.

Verses 22-40 give some instructions or commands for Jesus' followers.

Don't be anxious about your life—specifically food and clothing, the necessities.
Consider how God feeds and clothes the birds and the flowers.
Don't seek what you'll eat and drink.
Don't keep worrying about these things.
Seek God's kingdom, and these things will be added to you.
Don't be afraid / fear.
Give to charity / the needy.
Make money belts / moneybags for an unfailing treasure in heaven.

His point in verses 22-34 is that a person's heart (focus of life) is where he stores his treasure—earth or heaven. The rich James addressed had the wrong heart, focus.

Verses 35-40 focus on being ready for the Lord's coming.

Verses 41-53

The faithful (James is about the faithful) is the one who does what is right.

The unbelievers, unfaithful, do not expect the master and therefore are not doing what's right in looking forward to His return.

NOTE: Be careful that you don't get off focus on this discussion by verses 49 and 50. Just stay with the facts clearly stated and don't get into a debate about the "baptism" Jesus had to undergo.

Jesus said He came to bring division on the earth.

The division is between the righteous faithful and the unbelieving.

James also wrote about that division.

Ask your group what they learned in this lesson which is beneficial to their everyday lives. Give them time to discuss application of these truths.

**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 9**

Lesson emphasis

- James 5:1-12

REVIEW

You might begin this discussion by asking your group what they remember from what they've studied in James. Give a brief time for them to share relevant application.

This letter is about doing what God says in His Word.
It tells what real faith is.

There might be some in your group who are not sure if they're saved. This letter tells them how they can know for sure.

Ask specifically what they remember about James 4.

Don't participate in quarrels and conflicts / fights.
Friendship with the world is hostility / enmity with God.
Submit to God, draw near to Him.
Humble yourselves.

Don't speak against or judge brothers.
It's judging the law.

"Come now," signifying great disapproval, is used for those who focus on making their own plans to make a profit. They don't consult God in their plans. That's boasting in arrogance; it's evil. To know the right thing and not do it is sin.

JAMES 5

Verses 1-6

How does James 5:1 begin?

"Come now"
James 5:1-6 is a warning to the rich.

There is a short list at the end of this guide which you can use as a visual aid.

What do verses 1-6 say about the rich? About others?

James calls the rich to weep and howl.
Miseries are coming on them.

Verses 2-3 speak as though those things had already happened, as though they were already reaping miseries.

The time reference is the last days. They stored up treasure in the last days.

When are the last days? Ask what your group learned from the cross-references.

Tell your group to look at the chart at the end of the lesson, “God’s Plan of the Ages.”

Hebrews 1:2

The last days began when Jesus came to earth as the Word of God, His first coming.

Acts 2:17

Peter quoted Joel when he said that God poured forth / out His Spirit in the last days. This was the beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost.

1 John 2:18

John warned that antichrists have already appeared in the last hour.
They are in the world.

2 Peter 3:3-4 and Jude 18

Peter and Jude both warned of mockers / scoffers “in the last time.”

These will follow their ungodly lusts. That sounds like the rich described in James 5.

Peter said that they’ll question the promise of the Lord’s second coming.
They’re doing the work of antichrist, against Christ.

Lead the discussion back to James 5:4-6. How do these verses relate to 1-3?

The rich didn’t pay their laborers who cried to the Lord of Sabaoth—the Lord of hosts.
The cries against the rich reached the Lord’s ears.

The rich lived luxuriously in pleasure, but misery was coming.
It is their day of slaughter when they’ll pay for withholding payment.

Verse 6 makes it clear that these rich were not believers. They were persecutors of the righteous.

How does James 5:7-11 relate to verses 1-6?

There is a contrast, a subject change, from the unsaved rich to the brethren who are to wait patiently, even though mistreated and suffering trials, for the Lord's coming.

Be patient, verses 7, 8, and 10

until the Lords' coming

The brethren who were mistreated by the unsaved rich are told to wait until the Lord's coming. Then the rich will be judged for their treatment of the saved.

What did Peter write about the Lord's coming?

2 Peter 3:7-14

In the same chapter about the mockers / scoffers Peter also wrote about the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. Compare this with James 5:3-4 and 9.

The day of the Lord, Peter says, is the time when the heavens and earth will be destroyed, burned up.

But believers are to be looking for a new heavens and earth in which righteousness dwells. Contrast this with the situation for believers in James 5:1-11.

Therefore, be diligent to be found in peace, spotless and blameless.
James said to be patient.

We have the Spirit of God dwelling within us—we can endure patiently. We can be diligent, spotless, and blameless, not speaking against one another, living lives of faith, looking forward to the time when righteousness lives in the new heaven and earth.

Ask your group to look at the things they studied in this lesson which are on the chart "God's Plan of the Ages."

Christ's first coming
His second coming
Judgment and fire destroys the earth
The new heaven and new earth

NOTE: Some might have questions about the Lord's second coming because of the chart. Watch your time. It's best not to get into a discussion of things not studied in this course.

How are the brethren told to wait for the Lord's coming? What are the illustrations?
Ask your group if this applies to them, too.

The farmer waits for his produce, being patient until he gets rains.

Strengthen / establish your hearts. Contrast this with verse 5.

Don't complain against one another so that you won't be judged.

The Judge is standing at the door.

The prophets waited and suffered patiently. They endured.

Matthew 5:12 and 23:29-37

Jesus told about the prophets being persecuted by their Jewish brothers. Is that what was happening to the believing Jews James wrote to? Were they being persecuted by their rich Jewish brothers who were not really believers in Jesus?

Jesus also said that there is a great reward in heaven which can bring rejoicing and gladness now, even when going through persecution.

The scribes and Pharisees were Jewish religious leaders who didn't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. They were just like those before them who didn't believe and killed the prophets who spoke for the Lord God.

The prophets of the New Testament were men like Peter and John. They knew what it was like to endure persecution, as did James and Jude.

1 Thessalonians 2:14-15

Paul also told of the New Testament Jewish persecutors who killed Jesus and the prophets sent to them.

Matthew 21:33-41

Jesus told a parable about the prophets God sent to Israel.

Those who killed the slaves (prophets) and son (Jesus) were wretches and came to a wretched end (ESV—miserable death). But still face the judgment of God.

Job endured through sufferings, knowing the Lord as compassionate and merciful.

He was a righteous man before the Lord. God described him as

- blameless,
- upright
- fearing God
- turning away from evil.

There was no one like him on the earth.

He was God's servant.

He held fast to his integrity.

The Lord allowed the devil to destroy Job's possessions and family, even make him sick. But in all that Job did not sin nor blame God.

That is a primary lesson for many now—accept everything as coming from God, but don't blame Him for misery or temptation, James 1:12-18.

Even his friends didn't speak to him what was correct about God.

Job stated in 42:5 that he had heard of God, but after his suffering and endurance he saw God. Then he was restored to health and wealth and comfort.

What can we learn from Psalm 73 which can help us when we see the prosperity of the wicked, even as those James wrote to saw it?

Verse 17—I perceived / discerned their end . . . destruction because they're far from God.

Verse 28—The nearness of God is my good; He's my refuge. It's good to be near God. Relate this to James 4:8.

How does 2 Corinthians 4:7-10, 16-18 relate to patience endurance?

Paul was an example of endurance and God's surpassing power within believers. All believers have the same power.

Encourage your group to endure instead of losing heart. The eternal benefits far outweigh the temporary afflictions.

Give time for your group to discuss application.

What does James 5:12 have to do with the context of the rest of James?

This is something else James said that will bring one under judgment, 5:9 and 12.

This is another admonition regarding saying something, using the tongue. James had just said not to complain against a brother in verse 9.

The patient believer who is enduring / steadfast in his trials is not to swear by heaven or earth or anything else—no need for it.

How do the cross-references relate to this?

Matthew 5:33-37

Jesus addressed this in the Sermon on the Mount. He said to simply say yes or no. Don't make oaths or swear by anything.

Leviticus 19:12

Don't falsely swear by God's name. It profanes His name.

Deuteronomy 23:21-23

Not fulfilling vows is sin. So, don't vow, and you won't sin.

To close this discussion, you might ask your group what they have learned from all of James about what they say.

You might ask if they are looking forward to the coming of the Lord.

If you have time, ask what your group observed in James 5:13-20.

It's about the suffering, the sick and the prayer of faith.
Elijah is the Old Testament example of one who prayed effectively.
The last two verses conclude the letter.

Come now, you rich
Laid up treasure in the last days
Cries against them to Lord of Sabaoth / hosts

Be patient, brothers
Until Lord's coming
Judge is standing at the door
Examples: prophets and Job

Do not swear, make oaths

**JAMES
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 10**

Lesson emphasis:

- James 5:13-20
- Prayer

REVIEW

You might begin this discussion by asking about the themes of James 1–5. Tell your group to use their At a Glance charts as a visual aid.

Be doers of the Word, not just hearers

James 1 By persevering / being steadfast in trials
 Receiving the Word and doing it

James 2 By showing no partiality
 Knowing faith without works is dead

James 3 By taming their tongues
 With wisdom from above

James 4 By humbling themselves
 By not speaking against a brother

James 5 Regarding the rich, the Lord's coming, and prayer
 To turn / bring back a sinner and save his soul from death

James wrote to the twelve dispersed tribes of Israel who were in trials. They knew God's Law. So, he told them to do it, not just listen to it. The same is true for believers now. Those who know God's Word need to obey it.

JAMES 5:13-18

What is the main subject in these verses?

Prayer

As the group discusses, you can list some of the main points about prayer as a visual aid.

What are James's three questions, and what did he say to do?
Discuss word studies and cross-reference where applicable.

Is anyone among you suffering?

If so, he's to pray.

Relate this to James 1 about various trials. Ask God for wisdom in those trials. Believers might also pray for endurance and that God will help them remember His eternal perspective—the result of enduring is that one will be perfect, complete, lacking in nothing, and will receive the crown of life.

Is anyone cheerful?

He is to sing praises.

Praising God is part of prayer. Some may have marked it as a synonym for prayer.

Even one in a trial can be cheerful . . . if he's considering it all joy.

Is anyone among you sick?

He is to call for the elders.

The elders are to pray for him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

The prayer offered in faith will restore / save the sick one and the Lord will raise him up.

restore—*sozo*—“*save, rescue, deliver. . . make well*”⁴⁴

The elders are the ones offering prayer, so the faith would be faith God gives the elders. And it's the faith of the sick one to call for the elders to pray over him and anoint him.

And the Lord will raise that person up.

It is the Lord who restores / saves. The faith of the elders is faith in the Lord, not in their prayers. The oil is not the healing agent; it is by the name of the Lord that restoration takes place.

Matthew 15:21-28

A Gentile woman asked Jesus for mercy. He answered because of her faith.

⁴⁴Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 177.

What else can be a result?

If he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

Sometimes sin is involved. The sickness is spiritual or there is both spiritual and physical weakness.

How does verse 16 connect with the previous verses?

“Therefore”—in light of what was just said.

Confess your sins to one another

confess—*exomologeō*—“*admit; acknowledge*”⁴⁵; “*agree*”⁴⁶

We’re to agree with God about our sin and confess that sin to one another,

and

pray for one another so that you may be healed.

Ask what they learned from the cross-references using the same Greek word for healing.

Luke 22 was a physical healing, and Luke 6 was physical and spiritual; they were all healed—those with diseases and those troubled with unclean spirits. Matthew 15 was healing of a demon-possessed daughter.

The contexts of Matthew 13 and 1 Peter 2 are spiritual healing from sin, and Hebrews 12:13 uses the description of physical healing as a picture of spiritual healing that is to take place in the body of Christ.

James 5:16 involves a confession of sin, so it is spiritual healing. If physical sickness is also involved, God still heals physically also.

When might believers confess their sins to one another, and what does Ecclesiastes 4 say about this?

If we have wronged that other person.

When we are struggling with something and need someone else to pray with us.

Ecclesiastes 4 says that two are better than one; they lift one another up and keep one another from being overpowered. And it’s difficult to tear apart a cord of three strands.

⁴⁵Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 64.

⁴⁶Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981). G1843.

You might ask what could keep us from confessing our sins to one another and what kind of a person we would confess to.

Pride

Fear of the other person not keeping the information confidential.

We should confess to the righteous man.

righteous—*dikaios*—“conforming to the standard . . . in a right relationship with God”⁴⁷

That one will keep a confidence shared.

That righteous one’s effective prayer can accomplish much (ESV—has great power as it is working).

“effective / as it is working”
energeo—“to be operative, be at work, put forth power”⁴⁸

“can accomplish / has power”
ischuo—“to be strong, to be powerful . . . to be able”⁴⁹; “be capable of.”⁵⁰

Discuss what they learned from the cross-references about the effect of sin in one’s life.

Sin separates us from God. If we confess our sins to God, He is faithful to forgive and cleanse us. Then we can be that righteous one whose prayers can accomplish much (ESV—have great power as they are working).

If we struggle with sin, we may need to confess that sin to another so that they will pray for us. This is for the purpose of healing.

Verses 17-18

Discuss James’s example of a righteous man whose prayers accomplished much. Bring in word studies and cross-references where appropriate.

Elijah was a man with a nature like ours.

Elijah needed food and drink. He feared, felt alone, and wanted to die. A man with a nature like ours.

⁴⁷Barclay Moon Newman, *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993). 46.

⁴⁸James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995). G1754.

⁴⁹Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), p. 565.

⁵⁰James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK2710.

Yet he prayed earnestly / fervently that it wouldn't rain and it didn't, for three years and six months.

Elijah prayed prayers and it didn't rain. He wasn't just mouthing words; he was sincerely making request of God with his words.

Then he prayed again and it rained.

Why could he pray these things? Why were his prayers answered?

Elijah knew God's Word—that God had said in Deuteronomy that if Israel did not obey, He would shut up the heavens so that there would be no rain and no fruit of the ground.

Elijah prophesied during the time of King Ahab, who did evil in the Lord's sight more than all before him. He built the house of Baal in Samaria and worshiped Baal.

Based on God's Word, Elijah could say in 1 Kings 17:1 that there would be no rain. He evidently heard from God, "before whom I stand," that this was when He would shut up the heavens.

Like Elijah's example, Luke 11 and 18 speak of persistence in prayer. Jesus told "a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart." Believers need to do this in the midst of suffering and struggles.

JAMES 5:19-20

How did James end his letter?

This might be his purpose statement for writing the whole letter.

If anyone in the group he wrote to strayed / wandered from the truth and someone turned / brought him back

That one's soul is saved from death.

The death of a soul is spiritual death, unbelievers.
Compare this with James 1:14-15.

A multitude of sins is covered.

The one who is turned from his sin to God has his sin forgiven, covered by the blood of Jesus.

NOTE: Some think that the sinner is a saved person who strayed temporarily. Others think it is a reference to a lost person among true believers.

You might end your time by letting the group share how God has spoken to them through James.