

CONNECT **GROUP** GUIDE

Faith **that** WORKS

The Lesson of James



Faith that WORKS

James 1 - Trials and Talk

James 2 - Favourites and Faith

James 3 - Words and Wisdom

James 4 - Battles and Boasting

James 5 - Patience and Prayer

INTRO TO JAMES

The letter of James is a practical and pastoral book. James gives down to earth advice to believers on living wisely and with integrity. He tells Christians to endure whatever difficulties come their way, with the knowledge that God will help them grow in maturity.

James is thought to be the brother of Jesus, and not necessarily one of the twelve disciples. James was a prominent leader of the church in Jerusalem.

This little letter is addressed to the dispersed tribes of Israel, which could be a way of describing the global church, or simply Jewish Christians living away from Israel, possibly having left following the persecution in Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen in Acts 8.

There are two main concerns in this letter - the attitude of Christians to adversity, and living with true wisdom from God, especially concerning speech and wealth.

Some guidelines for Connect Group ...

- Come to the study prepared; preparation will greatly enrich your time together; it is recommended to take notes during the Sunday sermon, and to write down your thoughts as you prepare
- As part of your preparation, why not listen to the sermon again during the week (*most sermons are recorded and available on [Apple Podcasts](#), and also on the [website](#)*)
- As you prepare, pray that God will speak to you through his word
- Be willing to participate in your group. Your sharing will greatly encourage all the other members as you grow together
- Stick to the topic - this allows everyone to participate on level ground and to go deeper into the Bible
- Be sensitive to others and listen attentively; affirm others, especially those who may feel timid or don't often share
- Your leader won't be lecturing, but helping members to think through the questions. Many questions don't have a 'right' answer, especially those that apply the Bible to our lives
- Be careful not to dominate, as it could inhibit others from sharing
- Expect God to teach you through the passage and through other members, and always pray that it will be a profitable time together

Sermon Notes

4. How do we gain wisdom?
Why might we want wisdom?

5. Where does temptation come from
and what happens to us if we give
in to it?

6. What is God's promise for those
who listen to his word and do what
is says?

6. How do you live out your faith
practically, putting the 'talk' of
your faith into action?

7. How might you better implement
'quick listening, slow speaking,
slow anger' in your daily
interactions?

8. What changes are you inspired to
make in your personal life?



- Pray for wisdom to endure challenges with faith and pure joy
- Ask for God to guide your life during times of abundance and hardship
- Ask God to guide you as you love him, and practically love your neighbour each day

Sermon Notes

INTRO

Has there been a time in your life when favouritism benefitted you?

Has there been a time in your life when favouritism discriminated against you?

Martin Luther,
the 16th century reformer,
put it very helpfully:
"We are saved by faith alone,
but the faith that saves
is never alone."

Read James 2

1. How does James describe his readers? How should this impact our treatment of others?
2. How does society today favour certain individuals over others? How does this compare to James' teaching?
3. In vv.5-7, what is the contrast James draws between rich and poor? How does this challenge society's values?

Sermon Notes

4. v.8 Why does James use the term 'royal law'? (*hint* - Matt 22:35-40)

5. How does v.10 challenge you and your attempts to live a faithful Godly life?

6. vv. 12-13 Why do you think James says that those who show no mercy will be judged without mercy?

7. What shocks you about v.14?

8. v.17-18 What is 'faith' if it never leads to action?
The hypothetical challenge in v.18 tries to split works and faith. What does James do in his reply?

Extension Question

9. How do we reconcile the apostle Paul saying we are saved by faith alone (Romans 4:28) with what James says in 2:24?



- Thank God that you have a relationship with King Jesus, and thank him that he doesn't have favourites
- Pray that you, your group and your church would be ever more welcoming and accepting of others
- Thank God for the opportunities he gives us to show our living faith through what we do

Sermon Notes

INTRO

Recall a teacher who had a significant impact in your life. [It may be from school or training at work, or a Christian leader.]

Did they ever say something which disappointed you?

Read James 3

1. James uses a number of metaphors for the tongue. Which image speaks to you about the power of the tongue?

2. How would you describe the power of words?

Sermon Notes

3. How have you grown in wisdom over the years in the use of your tongue?
4. How has faith in Christ helped you to be wiser in the use of words?
5. vv.9-12. This paragraph describes the conflict between the old Adam and the new person we are in Christ. How does it speak to you about living out of your new identity in Christ?
6. vv. 13-16. How have you worked to overcome envy and selfish ambition in your life?
7. vv. 17-18. Where is it hardest of you to show this type of wisdom?
At home?
At work?
At church?
In particular types of situations?
8. How does knowing you are saved by grace through faith, help you to put into practice the teaching of this chapter?

Extension Question



- Ask for God's forgiveness where you have been unwise with your choice of words
- Pray for wisdom in how you interact in all your relationships James 1:5

Sermon Notes

INTRO

Do you have a goal you've wanted to achieve but have found yourself distracted? What is your goal and what has kept you from achieving it?

Read James 4

1. Are you driven by your head or your heart?
Do you desire things and justify the desires with your mind, or ...
do you choose your desires with your mind?

2. How do your desires impact your relationships with others?
Have there been times when your desires have led to conflict?

Sermon Notes

3. What does it mean to have friendship with the world, and why does friendship with the world mean being an enemy of God?
4. What does it mean to submit to God and resist the devil?
5. How can we draw near to God each day?
How do you experience his presence?
6. How can we help each other draw near to God?
7. How is your humility?
Does God's promise to the humble help you to remain humble?
8. What could help you grow in humility?



- Ask God to help you submit to him in every part of life
- Pray that as you draw near to God he would reveal more of himself to you, including an awareness of your sin
- Pray that he would grant you humility, true repentance and a deep understanding of his forgiveness

Sermon Notes

INTRO

How easy do you find it to pray?

Read James 5:1-6

1. Why do you think money is such a common idol in our culture?
Are you ever susceptible?

2. How does having an 'eternal' perspective change the way that we accumulate and view wealth?

Sermon Notes

Read James 5:7-12

3. According to James, what is the main reason for patience even amidst trial?
4. Where is God calling you to be patient?

Read James 5:13-20

5. According to James, when should we pray? Are there any times you find it particularly easy or hard to pray?

6. How is your prayer life in this current season? Are there any rhythms or patterns of prayer that you have found especially helpful over the course of your life?
7. Looking back through this book of James, has there been something that has particularly challenged or encouraged you? Share this with the group

Extension Question

8. How does this chapter illustrate the power and importance of prayer?



- Pray for an eternal perspective on the money and belongings entrusted to us
- Pray for those who are particularly struggling in the current economic climate
- Pray for your group and your church to grow in its prayer life
- Pray for patience, especially for anyone sick or struggling

Sermon Notes



*Living to Love and
Proclaim Jesus*

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