

James: Succeeding in faith.

James has been described as being composed of short moral essays, emphasizing endurance in hardship and responsible Christian living. James specifically concentrates on believers *practicing what they preach* and *living together in harmony*.

It has generally been agreed that the author is the brother of Jesus, who led the church in Jerusalem for many years. (Acts 15, Galatians 2:1-13). James led the church in Jerusalem during a difficult time, a time of transition, which can be demanding and trying.

James emphasizes practical faith on the part of believers; joy and patience in the midst of trials; the character of true Christian wisdom; attitudes of the rich towards the poor; abuse and proper use of the tongue.

James is directed at practical Christian behavior and not so much doctrine.

I suggest we follow the advice of James 1:22 and examine our lives in light of God's Word.

The main points in James are found in James 1:2-18.

- Trials may serve to test for the good (2-4, 12), or they may tempt us towards evil.
- Wisdom is God's good gift for enduring and profiting from trials (5-8, 16-18).
- In the eyes of God the low and high position of poor & rich are reversed (9-11).

James_1:1-8

1. As Christians, what does James tell us we can expect in life?
2. How does submission factor into this? (Verse 4)
3. How does "*outlook determines outcome*" apply?
4. How should we view our struggle?
5. How has James 1:2-4 impacted your life in the past?

6. *“Consider = count = evaluate.”*
7. How do trials help our faith, our relationship with God?
8. What do you think as you read the word *“perseverance.”*?
9. Why is patience, or waiting upon the Lord, so key to our faith?
10. What does verse 5 impart to you personally?
11. How does doubt affect our faith?

Verses 9-12:

1. What point is James making in verses 9-11?
2. What should our mindset be regarding our possessions and status on earth?
3. What word in verse 12 answers these questions?
 - Why do we have a joyful attitude during trials?
 - Why do we look to God for wisdom?
 - Why do we surrender our wills, our lives to God?
4. Love needs to keep us faithful to God. We cannot love both God and the world, it's like the unfaithful spouse trying to love two people at once.

James 1:13-18

1. Why did James connect trials and temptations?

2. How can difficult circumstances lead us to temptations?
3. What does Satan provide us when we encounter hardships?
4. *Illus. After Israel was delivered from Egypt their water supply vanished and they had to travel three days without water. When they found water it was bitter and they muttered and complained against God.*
5. What are practical ways to overcome temptations?
6. Verse 14; how do we lose the battle to our evil desires?
7. What ways can we win this battle?
8. Who is immune to evil desires?
9. What precautions do we need to set up in our lives?
10. Who is in your life who you have given permission to aggressively get in your face if need be?
11. Choose life – birth through God and His Word over death by deception.

Barriers to temptations:

- God's judgment.
- The goodness of God; balance the fear of the Lord with the goodness of the Lord.
- Verse 18 – understand you have been born again and have the nature of God in you.

James_1:19-27.

1. Summarize verse 19. How does it apply to us today?
2. What is verse 21 speaking to?

3. **Verses 22-25; how can we look intently into the Word of God ?**
4. **How do you interpret James definition of pure & faultless religion?**