

Study of the Book of James
Lesson 1 Trials and Temptations

Opening Discussion: ‘Getting in shape is simple. Just eat right and exercise regularly.’
Do you agree or disagree? If so why or why not?

What are the similarities and differences in keeping in shape physically and keeping in shape spiritually?

Read James 1: 1 to 12

1. How is joy different from happiness?
2. What do you think of the idea that we should “consider it pure joy whenever we face trials of many kinds”.
3. Can you describe a time when you were better able to endure a trial because you had endured it before?
4. How does enduring trials develop perseverance and maturity?

How does our attitude toward these trials affect our growth?

5. What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?
6. What do you think James meant when he said that a person who doubts is like a wave of the sea tossed by the wind?
7. What are the “high position” of the humble (poor) man in vs. 9 and the “low position” of the rich man in vs.10?

8. Are there any ways you consider yourself to be like the rich man? In what ways do you rely on your possessions or other things for your joy?

9. What is the crown of life the Lord promises us in vs. 12? How can this promise increase our joy in the midst of trials?

Read James 1: 13-18

10. What has tempted you or does tempt you today?

Do your sources of temptation concur with what James says in vs. 14?

11. How can you successfully overcome these temptations? (See Philippians 4:8, 13; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Corinthians 6:18, 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:11, 2:22)

12. What is the ultimate result of yielding to temptations?

13. How is God the ultimate example of goodness and dependability?

14. What is the difference between trials and temptations?

How does James describe the differences in God's involvement in our trials vs. our temptations?

15. How can these passages help you face trials and temptations?

Lesson 2: Listening and Doing

Read James 1: 19-21

1. Place the following in the order of difficulty for you to do: be quick to listen, be slow to speak, be slow to anger.
2. What problems have resulted from your not being quick to listen, slow to speak or slow to anger?
3. What specific actions will you take to improve in these areas?
4. What does James say results from our anger?

Can you relate a time when you saw these results from someone's anger?

Read James 1:22-25

5. Summarize the verses above in one short sentence.
6. In what ways does God's perfect law give freedom?

Read James 1: 26-27

7. How can the improper use of our tongue make our religion worthless?
8. What does God accept as a pure and faultless religion?

Are these items the primary focus of the church today? Why or why not?

Lesson 3

Comment [VGC1]:

Read James 2: 1-13 Favoritism Forbidden

1. Have you ever felt discriminated against or put down by others due to your clothes, possessions, family status, etc? If you have, how did you feel?

2. Do we ever show favoritism in our local church? If so in what way.

After thinking about it honestly, what would your reaction be to a person who came to our services in dirty, ragged clothes, who hadn't bathed and smelled strongly of alcohol?

Why do you think all of our members and visitors are of the same race and similar living standards?

3. Is it easier to have faith when you are poor than when you are rich?

4. "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it". What is the significance of this verse to you? (See 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

5. How can we show mercy to others, as God requires (vs. 13)?

Read James 2: 14-26 Faith and Deeds

6. Summarize the message of these verses in a short sentence.

7. In your opinion are people today generally doing a good or poor job of showing their faith through deeds as James discusses in these verses?

How is our local church doing?

How are you doing?

Should we know how others are doing or should these deeds be done confidentially?
Why or why not?

8. What justified Abraham and Rahab as righteous in God's view?

9. How do you respond when people's professed faith and their actions are far apart?

Discussion questions on James 4

James 4: 1a (first sentence)

What have been the primary causes of fights or quarrels you've had in the past? Please think of the root causes not the specific issues involved. i.e. were you or the one you were quarreling with angry, jealous, hurt emotionally etc.

1b and 2: Which of the above listed causes were tied to you or someone else not getting what you or he/she wanted?

Vs 3: Are there specific types of things we should or should not ask God for?

Vs 4: a. How can we be adulterous to God?

b. What type of actions show we are a "friend of the world and an enemy of God"?

c. Can inaction make us a "friend of the world and an enemy of God"?
i.e. Remaining silent when people are putting down Christians and Christianity?

Vs 5: How has God shown that He is a jealous envious God?

Vs 6: What grace has God given us? What should we do with that grace? See 1 Peter 4:10

Vs 7a: How do we submit ourselves to God as we are told in vs. 7? Think of other situations in which you submit to someone or some organization and relate that to your submission to God. See 1 Peter 2:13&14, 18; 3:1&2; 5:5

Vs 7b: How do we resist the devil?

Vs 8a. How do we come near to God? How does God come near to us?

Vs 8b-10 What is the anticipated result of the actions called for in these three sentences, the purpose of these instructions?

Vs 11-12 What is James purpose in telling us to not slander or judge one another? What is he trying to prevent? What is he trying to foster? See Titus 3: 1- 2 and 8 -11 where Paul addresses similar issues in more detail.

Vs 13-17

1. Summarize the message of verses 13 to 16.

2. What does vs. 17 mean to you personally?

Read James 3: 1- 12 Taming the tongue

1. James suggests that not many people should become teachers. (v1) Why do you think he said that?

What examples come to your mind of religious leaders or teachers whose lives people judged more strictly than others?

Why were they judged in this way? Do you agree with making these judgements?

2. Why do you think the tongue has such control over our lives as to be compared to a bit and a rudder? (v 3-4)
3. Why is it so difficult to control the tongue? (v 7-8)
4. If no one can tame the tongue then does this mean we aren't responsible for what we say? (v 8) Why or why not?
5. In what way can the tongue be poisonous? (v 8)
6. What inconsistencies do you see in the way you talk to others? Does fresh water ever flow at one time and salty water at another? (v 9-12)
7. James has focused mainly on the destructive power of the tongue. In what ways can the tongue also bring refreshment and healing?
8. What can you do to give God more praise? Be specific.
9. How can you give more affirmation and encouragement to those you come in contact with each day?

James 4: 1a (first sentence)

What have been the primary causes of fights or quarrels you've had in the past? Please think of the root causes not the specific issues involved. i.e. were you or the one you were quarreling with angry, jealous, hurt emotionally etc.

1b and 2: Which of the above listed causes were tied to you or someone else not getting what you or he or she wanted?

Vs 3: Are there specific types of things we should or should not ask God for? Should we ask for more than the basic needs God has promised to provide for us? Does asking for more imply wrong motives since we just want that for our personal pleasure?

Vs 4: a. How can we be adulterous to God?

b. What type of actions show we are a "friend of the world and an enemy of God"?

c. Can inaction make us a "friend of the world and an enemy of God"?
i.e. Remaining silent when people are putting down Christians and Christianity?

Vs 5: How has God shown that He is a jealous envious God?

Vs 6: What grace has God given us?

What should we do with that grace? See 1 Peter 4:10

Vs7: How do we submit ourselves to God ? Think of other situations in which you submit to someone or some organization and relate that to your submission to God. See 1 Peter 2:13&14, 18; 3:1&2; 5:5

7. How do we come near to God?

How does God come near to us?

8. How do we resist the devil?

9. What is James purpose in telling us in verses 11 and 12 to not slander or judge one another? What is he trying to foster? What is he trying to prevent? See Titus 3: 1- 2 and 8 -11 where Paul addresses similar issues in more detail.

James 4: 13-17

1. Summarize the message of verses 13 to 16.

2. What does vs. 17 mean to you personally?

