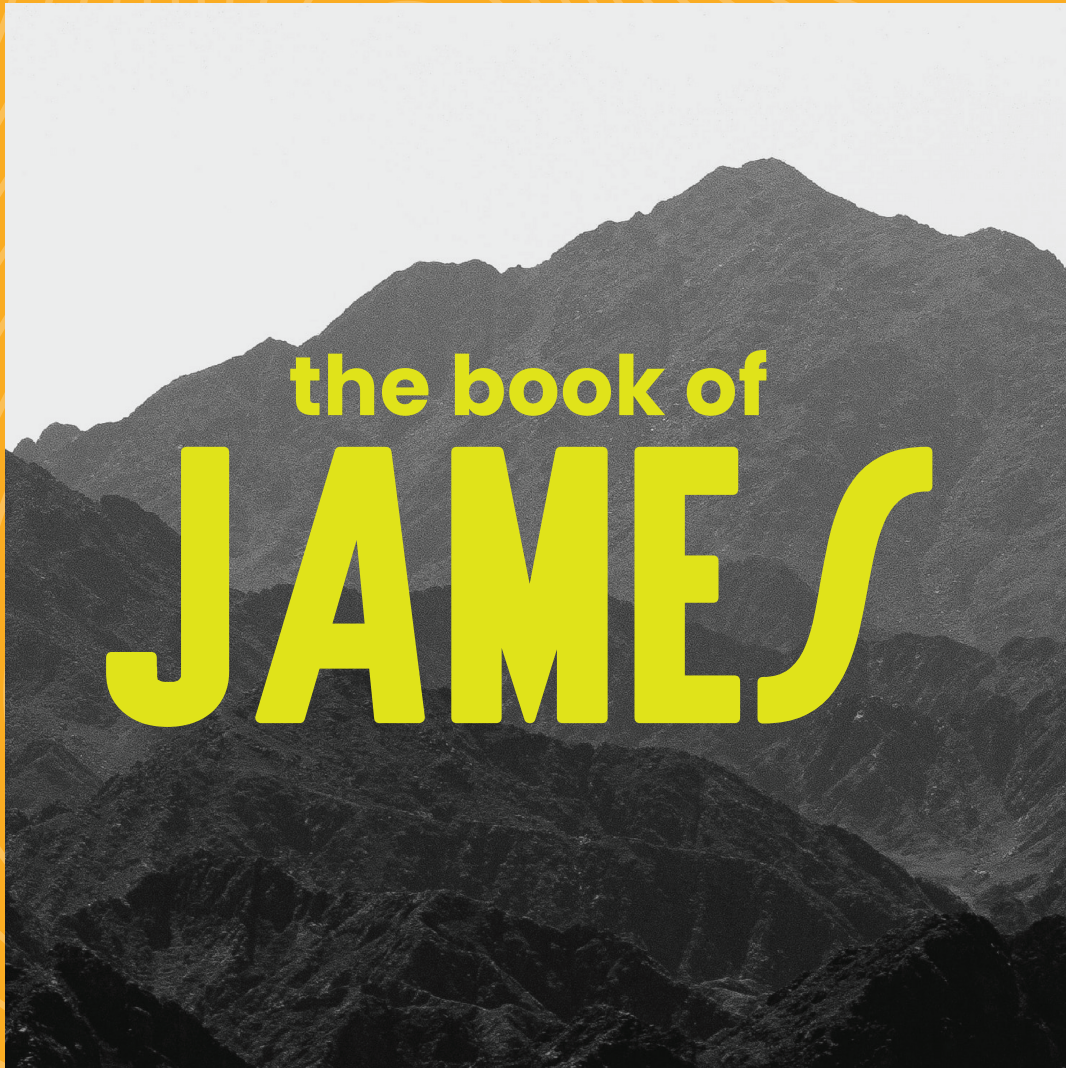




▶ **GRACEPOINT**
CHURCH



small group study guide
fall 2025



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fall 2025



table of contents

▪ Table of Contents	2
▪ A Guide to the Series Discussion	3
▪ The Book of James: An Overview	5
▪ Weekly Guides:	
○ Week 1: James 1:1-8 (How Bad Can Be Good)	6
○ Week 2: James 1:9-12 (Humility and the Crown of Life)	8
○ Week 3: James 1:13-15	10
○ Week 4: James 1:19-21	12
○ Week 5: James 1:21-25	14
○ Week 6: James 1:26-27	16

A GUIDE TO THE SERIES DISCUSSION

This guide can be used like any other small group guide you've ever seen. Instead of following the cookie-cutter of each previous series, I've tailored it to fit the book of James, a series which is sure to challenge us all into action.

Each week is built around four sections that flow directly from themes found in the book of James. The content of these sections will change each week. Sometimes they'll be questions from the Scripture, things to discuss from the sermon, and practical examinations on the application of the lesson. The last section of each week's guide is the same.

I hope and pray that this series is fruitful for you and your group, and you see God's hand in each and every revelation along the way!

Onward, Canaan

Let's look at the four sections:

section 1: hear it

Purpose: Slow down and really hear the Word.

How to lead this section: Read the passage out loud (twice if possible, using two different translations). Ask: "What word, phrase, or image stands out?" Keep this short and simple. It warms the group up and sets the text at the center.

section 2: check the mirror

Purpose: Help the group examine themselves honestly.

How to lead this section: Ask the included questions. These are about self-awareness, not just "what does this mean," but "what does this reveal about my life, our culture, or our blind spots?" Allow silence, encourage honesty, and model vulnerability.

section 3: put it to work

Purpose: Move from talk to action. James insists faith must show up in works.

How to lead this section: Each week has a practical challenge. Push your each person in your group to commit to one clear, simple action step. Encourage people to write it down or share aloud. Follow up next week with: "How did it go?"

section 4: wisdom in action

Purpose: Apply wisdom principles to life situations.

How to lead this section: These are "big-picture" reflection questions. Don't rush — sometimes this section leads to the richest conversations.

weekly rituals: things to do each week

- **Memory Verse:** Each week has one. Encourage the group to memorize together. The next week, bring it back and start with a review of the memory verse.
- **Action Step Journal:** Suggest that members jot their weekly steps in a notebook. (See the "Put It To Work" section)
- **Closing Ritual:** End by reading James 1:22 together: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

the book of James: an overview

author

The book of James was written by James, the half-brother of Jesus (not James the son of Zebedee, who was martyred early in Acts 12). James became a key leader in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15; Galatians 1–2).

audience

His letter is addressed “to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion” (James 1:1; also known as “diaspora”), meaning Jewish Christians scattered outside of Jerusalem, likely facing trials, poverty, and pressure to compromise their faith.

date and context

Most scholars place James among the earlier of the New Testament writings, in the 40s–50s AD. It reflects the early church’s struggles: poverty and riches, the testing of faith, divisions in the community, and the tension between believing in Jesus and living out that belief in everyday life.

major themes

- Faith in Action: Genuine faith expresses itself in obedience and works (2:14–26).
- Wisdom from Above: God gives wisdom for trials and daily life (1:5; 3:17).
- Trials and Endurance: Hardship refines believers and produces maturity (1:2–4).
- Riches and Poverty: God honors the poor; the rich must not oppress or boast (1:9–11; 5:1–6).
- The Tongue: Words have destructive or healing power (3:1–12).
- Prayer and Community: Confession, intercession, and restoration mark God’s people (5:13–20).

relevance

James is practical, direct, and confrontational. It calls believers to live an integrated life where belief and behavior match. It exposes self-deception, challenges favoritism, demands action, and ends with a call to prayer and restoration.

In a world quick with words but slow to act, James is a pertinent reminder...
...faith without works is dead.

hear it *(Slow down and hear the Word)*

Read James 1:1–8 aloud (twice if possible, using two different translations).

- ASK: What word, phrase, or image stands out to you—and why?

check the mirror *(Help the group examine themselves honestly by asking questions)*

- When pressure hits, what story do you start telling yourself about what’s happening and what it means?
 - How does that story shape your feelings and reactions? (See James’s call to consider and know... thinking before feeling.)
- Where have you been tempted to “bail out” instead of letting perseverance finish its work?
 - What would it look like to endure (James says “remain under”) in that specific situation this week?
- In hard moments, do your prayers lean more toward “God, get me out” or “God, give me wisdom”?
 - What might asking for wisdom in any current trial practically look like, and what would “pre-deciding to obey what He shows me to do” change?

put it to work *(Move from talk to action)*

This week’s practice: **Choose one pressure point you’re facing and pray.**

Something like: “Father, give me wisdom in this trial. If it’s Your will, deliver me through it, but no matter what happens, by Your grace I will do what You say.”

Have your group discuss pressure points they’re facing, and how they can pray to God to weather the situation.

wisdom in action *(Apply wisdom principles to life situations.)*

- How would believing that God is using trials to produce perseverance and maturity reshape the way you approach work, parenting, finances, or a strained relationship this week?
- Where might you be treating God like a consultant (i.e. *taking advice you'll weigh later*) rather than Lord (i.e. *obeying even when you don't yet understand*)?
 - What's one next faithful step of obedience you can take?

weekly rituals

- Memory Verse:
"2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." James 1:2-4
- Action Step Journal:

- Series memory verse:
"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." James 1:22

week 2: James 1:9-12 | “humility and the crown of life” 9/14/2025

Coming soon.

