

BOOK OF JAMES

What to expect

Each section of scripture follows our Summer Sermon Series through the book of James. There is one study section per week!

Prepare your heart

- #1 Remember that the Bible is God's Word - God's voice is speaking directly to your life.
- #2 Expect God to move when you read - The Holy Spirit is at work as you read.
- #3 Pray as you read - pause for a moment before you begin.
- #4 Read with your heart open - be willing to hear what He is offering to you .
- #5 Understand the context - look at what He points out before and after to understand more fully.

Preparing to Listen

Find a place free from distraction - spend a few seconds in silence before you begin.

HEAD (Think) As we come to each time of reading we ask the question: What do I learn in this passage? Consider: What does the passage teach about God? The Human Condition? Our Purpose? How to live (or not live)? What are the promises made, commands given, or warnings to be heeded? As you read, be alert for words or phrases that grab your attention and talk with God about why He highlighted them to you.

HEART (Feel) Read through the passage slowly and pay attention to your affective response to what you read. What are your emotional responses to the various phrases you read? Do you feel encouraged? Convicted? Guilty? Sorrowful? Anxious? Comforted? Confused? As you acknowledge your emotional responses, talk with God about WHY you feel this way. Why did you feel encouraged by the passage? Why did you feel anxious in response to the words? Allow God to use your emotions to reveal the issues in your heart in a deeper way.

HANDS (Acts)

Lastly, we read again, and consider the question: What might I do in response to the passage? More importantly, what is God inviting you to do in response? Is there an action to take? A truth to meditate on? A confession to make? If how we are living is not in alignment with what we read, we ask for God's help as we begin the process of change.

Conclude with a time of thanks to God for meeting with you.

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Week 1 James 1:1-18

HEAD (Think)

HEART (Feel)

HANDS (Act)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

v 2-4 Do you find you experience the most growth in times of ease or times of trial?

Share one time in your life that you have seen growth through a trial. What might it look like to be able to 'consider it pure joy' when you face trials? Share about someone you know who embodies this.

v 5-8 When is a time that you have asked God for wisdom and He has given it to you? Why is it hard to believe that He will give us wisdom when we ask for it?

v 9-11 What things does the world consider valuable? What does God say about those things? What does God consider valuable?

Week 2 James 1: 19-27

HEAD (Think)

HEART (Feel)

HANDS (Act)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

v 19 "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry." Which of these is hardest for you? At work? In your marriage? In your parenting? In your neighborhood? In your car?

v 22-25 Are you taking responsibility for what you hear in God's Word? Are you allowing it to change how you live? What has changed in your life as a result of reading God's Word?

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Week 3 James 2:1-13

HEAD (Think)

HEART (Feel)

HANDS (Act)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

v 1-9 James is challenging the believers of his day on this point of favoritism. That said, favoritism is something we all struggle with! Who do you have a hard time loving well? How do we see people with God's eyes rather than our own? Have you ever been judged because of something in your outward appearance? Name a time that you benefited by stepping out in a place where it was hard or not your instinct with somebody.

v 12 "Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom." We often feel like the law restricts us rather than giving us freedom. What could it mean to follow a law that gives freedom?

Week 4 James 2:14-26

HEAD (Think)

HEART (Feel)

HANDS (Act)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

v 14-26 Faith is an action word - we often think of it as a thinking word, but it is a doing word. Faith is acting on what we believe in therefore, "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead". Is there something God is calling you to 'do' based on what you believe about who God is and/or who He says you are? What often stops us from acting on our beliefs?

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Week 5 James 3:1-18

HEAD (Think)

HEART (Feel)

HANDS (Act)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

v 3-6 James uses the examples of a bit in a horse's mouth and a rudder on a ship to describe the impact our tongue can have on our lives. How have you seen someone's life affected by their speech? Has there been a time that your life (work, a relationship, etc) has been affected by your speech? Whether spoken or written?

v 9-12 Have you paid attention lately to your speech? Is there a disconnect between your praise to God and how you interact with others? What aspect of your speech is God inviting you to change? How are you representing your faith through your speech to your spouse, your children, your coworkers, or on social media?

v 13-18 When/where do you find yourself being drawn into the 'wisdom' of this world?

Pray:

God, give us the wisdom that comes from heaven! Your wisdom that is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. God may we be peacemakers who sow in peace that we may raise a harvest of righteousness. Amen

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Week 6 James 4:1-12

HEAD (Think)

HEART (Feel)

HANDS (Act)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

v 1-2 It is commonly acknowledged that our behavior usually stems from deeper heart issues. 'What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?' When you notice more anger or frustration or have less patience, do you know where that is coming from? How do you do the work of tracing it back to a root desire? How has that helped you in your relationships? What is true humility versus setting yourself up to be taken advantage of?

v 3 As you look back at some asks you've made of God, what has been your attitude in the ask? What wrong motives have you seen in yourself as you ask of God?

v 4-5 How could being a friend to the world make you an enemy of God? What areas of your life are you living as an enemy of God rather than a friend of God?

v 6-10 As you read these verses, identify the things that are hard for you to do. What benefits do you see from living a life of humility and purity?

v 12 We all sometimes struggle not to judge others. Who is the 'neighbor' you are struggling with? If you are in a small group or cohort take a moment and pray together for these relationships.

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Week 7 James 4:13 - 5:12

HEAD (Think)

HEART (Feel)

HANDS (Act)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

v 13-17 Why is it so hard for us not to be in control? How do you feel when you have a 'next week, next month, next year, next 10 years' plan in place? How do you feel when that plan gets changed by things outside of your control? What area of your life do you tend to start trusting your own plans, rather than submitting them to God's will?

v 1-6 Just as we talked about holding our plans and time with open hands, we need also to hold our money with open hands. What is the hardest about this for you? Is God talking to you about a specific area of your finances that He wants you to change?

v 7-11 'Be patient...stand firm...be patient in suffering. We are living in a time when being a follower of Jesus may bring suffering. James is encouraging the church to stand firm and be patient, trusting that God is moving and working in it all. Is there a way that you feel as if you are suffering because of being a Jesus follower right now? What does it look like to stand firm? (reference James 4: 6-12)

v 12 Is your yes, yes? Is your no, no? At work? At home? In your relationships? What do you need to do to shift to a place of deeper integrity with your yes and no?

Pray:

God, You know that I carry judgment in my heart for Please give me Your eyes to see then rather than my own. Help me to remember that we are all equal in Your sight, You love each of us the same, and You died for all of us. Help me to keep my eyes on You rather than on others. Give me a deep desire to align with you in how I see others!

Thank You for not judging me, but instead for giving Your life for me! Amen!

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Week 8 James 5:13-20

HEAD (Think)

HEART (Feel)

HANDS (Act)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

v 13 Do you naturally turn to God in both suffering and celebration—or only one more than the other?

v 16 Why is confession so difficult—and yet so powerful—in Christian community? What might it look like to build a safe space for this kind of honesty in your group or church?

v 19 How can we lovingly help someone who is drifting in their faith without judging or pushing them away?
Has anyone ever helped bring you back when you were struggling?

Pray:

Thank You for the time we've spent in Your Word. We are reminded through James that You are near in both our pain and our joy. Teach us, Lord, to turn to You in every season—not just when we are desperate, but also when we are delighted. Let prayer and praise be the rhythm of our lives. God, we confess that vulnerability doesn't come easy to us. Confession can feel risky and exposing, yet You tell us that healing flows through honesty. Help us to be people who create safe spaces—where truth is spoken in love, where brokenness is met with grace, and where no one feels alone in their struggle. And Lord, give us Your heart for those who wander. Help us to see with compassion and not with condemnation. When someone drifts from Your truth, may we be the gentle hands that guide them back, just as others have done for us when we were weak. Lord, strengthen the bonds in our community. Make us a people of prayer, of grace, and of restoration. And as we go forward from this study, may we carry these truths into our lives, living them out for Your glory.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.