

## James Series – Chapter 1

Faith in Action

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July 5, 2020

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### Intro:

Good morning and Happy 5<sup>th</sup> of July. I hope that you were able to enjoy yourselves yesterday. I'm still so grateful for this nation. Even for all our shortcomings!

Imagine with me if you had the opportunity to speak with someone who was a skeptic of Christianity, who didn't believe the claims that Jesus was Messiah, but then that person had an inexplicable supernatural encounter and became a devoted follower of Jesus, even giving their life. Would it interest you to listen to what that person had to say?

### James Study

Sermon Series. The book of James was written by Jesus' younger brother—Jacob. James was a skeptic. He thought his older brother was a fraud, even when he died on the cross. It wasn't until after Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to Jacob that he became a follower. Jacob became a leader in the early church for 20 years before he was murdered for his faith in his brother Jesus. With his life, he left us a circular letter of his wisdom.

Today we're going to stampede through chapter 1. Before we do, I wanted to show a one-minute excerpt from a really helpful Bible resource--Bible Project. They give us a few background details for the book of James.

**VIDEO:** <https://bibleproject.com/explore/james/> [timing -- 1:11-2:27]

In James 1 he introduces you to all of the key words and themes you're going to meet throughout the rest of the book. Chopped up like a salad, in these disconnected pieces.

**Theme/Memory verse:** [James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.](#)

**Analogy:** Faith is like an architectural blueprint. That's the idea of it. But then you have to roll up your sleeves and build it. The loftiest skyscrapers that touch the heavens start by digging in the dirt. You say *God is Love*. So what! You've got to show me!

### Vs.23-25

- Vs 23 reminiscent of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 7
- “Perfect Law” -- the force of God's holy love as articulated in the law.

An easy action step in my daily time spent with Jesus in his word:

Holy Spirit -- what is one step you are taking today to conform my life to the truth I just read in your Word?

#### Vs. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God

- Wisdom isn't some academic abstract thought bubble you learn in a University.
- This is very Hebraic. In proverbs Wisdom is personified as a master builder.
- **Proverbs 8:27** "Then I (wisdom) was the craftsman at his side."
- The Spirit of Wisdom is the Holy Spirit. He's like a carpenter who looks at God's blueprints and then figures out of the details of how to construct them in your life.
- We all need more wisdom. None of us live up to the ideals that we profess.
  - We say that we have compassion, but I steam and roll over my children all the time.
  - I say that I trust in God and yet I act out of insecurity...
  - I need the master craftsman to build these truths into my life.

#### Vs. 6

- "believe and not doubt" – "have dedicated faith and not waver..."
- God is not finding fault with us... "why are you so bad at that."
- **Wisdom is something we're supposed to chase down.**
- **Proverbs 4:7** Wisdom is supreme therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.
- You have to chase it down, pursue it regularly.

#### Vs. 7-8

- Like a squirrel crossing the road in oncoming traffic.
- Am I chasing after God? Am I chasing after this?

#### Vs 13-14

- As soon as you make up your mind, I'm going to pursue God, there's a choice...
- God will never remove the choice because your heart has decided what's more valuable.
- **Genesis 4 – "Sin is crouching at your door. Its desire is to have you. You must master it."**
- Humans have a complexity of appetites: food, intimacy, meaning, beauty, vindication, jealousy, control, significance
- How do we regulate these? How do we distinguish which appetites are healthy and when they become illegitimate?

#### Vs. 16-18

- **Slide: How do we distinguish which appetites are healthy and when they become illegitimate? A: The Father decides.**
- We live through the Father. The Father decides.
- V. 17 The Father decides what are good and perfect gifts: "Every good and perfect gift..."

- Psalm 103:4-5 “(The Lord) crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things.
- Slide: How do we distinguish which appetites are healthy and when they become illegitimate? A: The word of truth regulates my appetites.

#### Vs 19-21 Correcting appetites of anger.

- The advantage of talking to yourself is that at least you know someone is listening.

#### Vs 26-27 Correcting appetites of Pride and self-righteousness and judgment. (James 3)

- Stop judging everyone else. -- Jesus
- You want to change the world? Orphan – justice; unpolluted – righteousness.
- Righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

#### Vs. 9-12 Correcting appetites of favoritism & superiority

- The world teaches us to exert our superiority over the things that make us different: class, gender, ethnicity, culture, talent
- Christ didn’t come to erase those distinctions. He didn’t come to say, “there’s no such thing as a man and a woman.”
- Jesus came to show us how to value each person’s distinctiveness and honor the creative potential they were designed uniquely with.
- The soul and personality of every person is distinctly one of a kind, an infinitely creative and treasured by the Father. And responsible to God alone for their actions. In chapter 2:4 he’s going to crank hard in this bolt.
- Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7
- Stop judging by mere appearances and make a right judgment. John 7:24
- Oreo Cookie: “The magic is in the middle.”
- Slide: Oreo Cookie
- It has to do with the human soul.
- Ill: “Only God can call an African to pastor to an English-speaking Chinese Church in French-speaking Quebec in North America.”

#### Vs.2-4, 12

The Lord is making you champions of love. And how does he do it?

- He allows that person in your life that drives you bonkers, that person is your ticket to practicing patience when it’s the hardest.
- That situation that has you stressed out, is your onramp to trust in your heavenly Father.
- “Mature and complete” you are fully integrated...the blueprints match the building.
- The Ideals of your faith that you subscribe to match the practice of your lifestyle

**Slide: Application Step:** Holy Spirit -- what is one step you are taking today to conform my life to the truth I just read in your Word?

**Unused Notes:**

James 2:1-13 Favoritism Verses Love Matthew 5:46-48

James 2:14-26 Genuine Faith Matthew 7:21-27

James 3:1-12 The Tongue Luke 6:43-45

James 3:13-18 True Verses False Wisdom

James 4:1-10 Divided Heart

James 4:11-12 Condemning Others Matthew 12:36-37

James 4:13-17 The Arrogance of Wealth Matthew 6:28-34

James 5:1-6 The Danger of Wealth Matthew 6:19-21

James 5:7-11 Patience & Endurance Matthew 24:13

James 5:12 Speaking Truth Matthew 5:37

James 5:13-18 Faith Filled Prayer Mathew 21:21-22

James 5:19-20 Restoring Others Matthew 18:15