



Go for God!

“A PLAN OF ACTION!”

The Epistle of JAMES

Introduction & Chapter 1

> **AUTHOR:** James, the half-brother of Jesus.

> **DATE WRITTEN:** A.D. 45 – 50

> **THEME:** *“Faithful Christian Living”* – James’ theme is faith, true faith that produces Christian works. One author wrote; *“Faith is the root of salvation . . . works are the fruit of salvation.”*

> **KEY VERSES:** **James 1:22** - *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.* **James 2:5-6** - *Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?* **James 2:26** - *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

> **Introduction:** Don’t confuse this James with another James in Scripture, the brother of John, they were called the *“sons of thunder”* (Mark 3:17), that James, John’s brother was martyred by Herod according to Acts 12:1-2.

The James who wrote this epistle was the son of Mary and Joseph, which makes him the half-brother of Jesus - **Matthew 13:55-56** - *Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?* James did not believe in Jesus during His earthly ministry (Mk. 3:31-35; Jn. 7:1-5). James came to faith in Christ after Jesus’ death and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7); then we find James in the *“upper room”* waiting for the **promise of the Father**; which is the outpouring of the **Holy Spirit** (Acts 1:14). Paul wrote that James was a pillar in the early church (Galatians 2:9 - *and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*) James, the author of this epistle, became the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts Ch. 15). Tradition tells us that James died a martyrs’ death in A.D. 62 praying for his killers while they clubbed him to death, while dying he prayed for his murderers just like His Savior, ***“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”***

This letter is known as a general epistle along with 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude; general means ***“universal”*** - written to all believers, not being addressed to a specific church, person or area of believers.

> **JAMES OUTLINE:**

Chapter 1 – “The Testing of Our Faith!”

Chapter 2 – “The Working of Our Faith!”

Chapter 3 – “The Communication of Our Faith!”

Chapter 4 – “The Life of Our Faith!”

Chapter 5 – “The Hope of Our Faith!”

CHAPTER 1 – OVERCOMING TRIALS! (v1-8)

> (v1-2) Life Lesson #1 - TRIALS – COUNT IT ALL JOY!

(v1) James describes himself as “*bondservant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ*;” James understood that to be the greatest in the Kingdom was to be a servant of all! The twelve tribes (Jewish believers) were scattered due to persecution in Jerusalem according to **Acts 8:1**. The word “*Greetings*” is literally “*Rejoice*.”

- How do you serve others? _____

(v2) Let's define a **TRIAL** - A *trial* is a temptation or an adversity, the enduring of which proves the merit of an individual's faith. For the Christian, to encounter adversity is to undergo a trial in which his faith is proved either true or false before God, the highest judge. Since many positive things come about through such trials, Christians are urged to rejoice at their occurrence (James 1:2; 1 Peter 4:13). (From Nelson's Bible Dictionary)

- Trials are not an “IF” they are a “When!” What trials have you experienced or are experiencing? _____

- How's your FAITH and JOY doing? 1 (awful) to 10 (great) _____

- Count it all JOY (*JESUS – OTHERS – YOU*) when we FALL into various trials!

- Trials come in many forms:

- SPIRITUAL trials (Acts 16:16-34)
- PHYSICAL trials (2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Job)
- KINGDOM trials (Hebrews chapter 11)
- FINANCIAL trials (Philippians 4:10-13)
- MARRIAGE trials (1 Peter 3:1-7)

> (v3-4) Lesson #2 – TRIALS DEVELOPS CHRISTIAN CHARACTER!

- What do we know about trials?

> TRIALS:

- (1) Build our FAITH;
- (2) Produce PATIENCE;
- (3) Create a PERFECT WORK (maturity in Christ);
- (4) A COMPLETENESS of our character!

> (v5-8) Lesson #3 - OVERCOME TRIALS THROUGH PRAYER!

(v5) If we “lack WISDOM” in the midst of the trial then “ASK GOD” for help, which means PRAY! How do we pray?

- PRAY with the right MOTIVATION – 1 Kings 3:5-28
- PRAY according to GOD'S WORD & WILL – John 15:7
- PRAY in the name JESUS – John 15:16

(v6-8) When we pray make sure you “ASK IN FAITH – NO DOUBTING!” – – – Double mindedness is double trouble!

- FAITH must overcome FEAR – Mark 4:35-41
- FAITH must overcome DOUBT - Matthew 14:22-33