


# FAITH THAT WORKS

THE BOOK OF JAMES



**TERM 4, 2022**

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**St Matthews Anglican Church  
Life Group Booklet**

**St MATTHEW**  **s**  
Anglican  
Church

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# Introduction

Famously Martin Luther has called James an epistle of straw when compared to other books in the New Testament. Jesus is only mentioned twice in the letter (1:1, 2:1) and the ethical commands given do not seem to be tied to the work of Christ. However, James is a deeply practical book and a good ballast for us to remember that the Christian life is not one of thinking, but one of doing.

The main theme of the letter is maturity. James wants his readers to take responsibility for their Christian growth, to be transformed by the word and then for this to be showed in loving actions towards others. Genuine faith is demonstrated in good deeds.

The author of this letter is most likely to be James, the brother of Jesus. After Jesus' resurrection James was a respected figure in the early church, especially among Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. His death is confirmed by Josephus around 62 AD. Some suggest this letter could be written as early as 45-47<sup>1</sup>. This letter was possibly sent to those from the home church in Jerusalem who had been scattered after persecution broke out. James is writing to primarily Jewish Christians encouraging them to grow in the faith, even in hard circumstances.

In this short letter topics such as trials, money, favouritism, fighting, pride, planning and prayer are touched on, but almost in a haphazard way. Finding an overall structure can be hard, and in each of our studies we will be addressing at least two different, but perhaps related themes.

Like a good sermon, James writes with great imagery to make his points more memorable. We will encounter illustrations of the sea, withered flowers, looking in a mirror, a bit in a horses' mouth, a rudder of a ship, bush fires, and arrogant businessmen. The tone we encounter may not be what we are used to. James can sometimes be direct and almost harsh, but he does that for the sake of those he is looking out for: the poor, the oppressed, the slandered and the widows.

May we be challenged as we look at this letter to think about how we might demonstrate our faith to those around us. How we can be *doers* and not simply *hearer* of God's word?

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas Moo, James (Tyndale New Testament Commentary)

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# About these studies

One of the goals of our St Matt's Life Groups is to help give everyone a tool to be able to read and understand the Bible for themselves. What we hope for in our Life Groups is to be guided primarily by the text in front of us, as we seek to look hard at the text, understanding the illustrations and their purpose, along with what the text is telling us to do. In our series break up, in some weeks, James maybe telling us more than one thing we are to do. May we seek to find what this is, and be dependent on God to help us to put into practice what He has said in His word.

The basic elements of how we teach people to read the Bible for themselves is as follows:

**Observations** – *Seeing what the text says.* We need to look objectively at the text and see what is there. The text is our only “evidence” in our “crime scene”, so any detail, which may not seem significant can and should be noted. These could be repeating words, ideas or themes. Look at the structure or the flow of the passage, pay attention to the pronouns, locations, conjunctions, etc. Note the verses where these appear.

**Questions** – *Going deeper in understanding the text.* Using the standard Who? What? When? Where? How? questions on the text can help us go deeper in our understanding. We may have questions that the text doesn't answer. We can ask, but we must not force an answer from the text if an answer simply isn't there. We are letting the text guide us and not our own hang ups, hobby horses or even theology.

**Key** – *Summarising the main point of the text.* After analysing the text, we step back and work out what is the main point of the passage. Why is this section of scripture written here? What would we lose if this text wasn't in our Bible? What key verse holds this whole passage together, so if that verse wasn't there the rest wouldn't make sense?

**Application** – *Applying the Key of the text to our lives today.* The Key may adjust or reinforce a belief we may have or may call us to a behaviour or action. How might we now live after reading and understanding the text? The more specific and contextual the better.

**Prayer** – *Thanking God for the main point and asking for help to apply the text.* All of the Christian life is by grace, from salvation, through sanctification to our glorification. We need to thank God for the truths He has revealed to us and ask Him for help to live out our faith to those around us.

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# James 1:1-18 – Trials and Temptations

<sup>1</sup> James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

<sup>2</sup> Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. <sup>5</sup> If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. <sup>6</sup> But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. <sup>8</sup> Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

<sup>9</sup> Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. <sup>10</sup> But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. <sup>11</sup> For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

<sup>12</sup> Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

<sup>13</sup> When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup> but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

<sup>16</sup> Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. <sup>18</sup> He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

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## Sermon Notes

### Observations

(Mark up the text, noting ideas, and the flow of the passage. Share something that stands out to you)

### Questions

(List your questions & then after a re-read, answer questions that the text itself addresses.)

### Key

(What is the big idea or principal of this passage?)

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## Application

(This is based on the principal above. What does this mean for us today?)

## Extra Questions

When faced with a trial, what should you pray and how should you pray?

In James 1:12, what relationship do you see between enduring temptation and loving the Lord?

What temptations are you regularly battling (or giving in to) at the moment?  
Has this passage (v17-18) helped and reassured you when you fail?

What is the distinction between testing on the outside and temptation on the inside?  
What must we understand if we are to overcome temptation?

## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

God of salvation,  
you straighten the winding ways of our hearts  
and smooth the paths made rough by sin:  
keep our hearts watchful in holiness,  
and bring to perfection  
    the good you have begun in us.  
We ask this through him whose coming is certain,  
whose Day draw nears,  
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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## James 1:19-27 – Speaking and Doing

<sup>19</sup> My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, <sup>20</sup> because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. <sup>21</sup> Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

<sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

<sup>26</sup> Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup> Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Sermon Notes



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## Application

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## Extra Questions

What kind of listener of God's word are you? Can you think of recent examples in your own life where you have listened well to the Lord? Do you need to make practical changes in your life to be a better listener?

"We can have no assurance that we really have received God's truth until such care is evidenced in our lives." Does this reassure you, or challenge you, or both?

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Is your religion worthless or pure? How are you practicing the religion that God accepts?

## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

Almighty God,  
we thank you for your holy word.  
May it be a lantern to our feet,  
a light to our paths,  
and strength to our lives,  
in the name of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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Prayer is an important theme in James. In five chapters prayer is mentioned six times and asking God is mentioned four more times. While we are to be doing and behaving a certain way, James does not overlook God who is at work in us. One of the big rocks of the Weekend Away is prayer, below is a passage to help us reorient ourselves and depend more on our good God who gives gifts to His children.

## Luke 11:1-13 – Prayer

**11** One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

<sup>2</sup> He said to them, “When you pray, say:

“‘Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come.

<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup> Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.’”

<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; <sup>6</sup> a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.’ <sup>7</sup> And suppose the one inside answers, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up and give you anything.’ <sup>8</sup> I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

<sup>9</sup> “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

<sup>11</sup> “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? <sup>12</sup> Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

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## Observations

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## Application

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## Extra Questions

Why should we have “shameless audacity” when praying to God? Do you? What might that sound like when praying to your heavenly Father?

Why should we ask for the Holy Spirit? Why is He a good gift?

J. C. Ryle said, “It is absolutely needful to salvation that a person should pray.” What do you think? Do you have a regular time of the day when you pray? If you are comfortable, share with your group your habit of prayer.

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## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. **Amen.**



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## James 2:1-13 – Favouritism and Law

<sup>1</sup> My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favouritism. <sup>2</sup> Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. <sup>3</sup> If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” <sup>4</sup> have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

<sup>5</sup> Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonoured the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

<sup>8</sup> If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbour as yourself,” you are doing right. <sup>9</sup> But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. <sup>11</sup> For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

<sup>12</sup> Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, <sup>13</sup> because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Sermon Notes

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## Extra Questions

Are you in danger of showing favouritism in some way? How? How can the gospel change your heart?

According to James why is it ridiculous to dishonour the poor, and likewise, why is it ridiculous to honour the rich? How might we do both?

Reflect on God's mercy to you in Christ. Is there anyone today whom you need to extend that same quality of mercy and not judgement? How will you do that?

## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

God of mercy and pity,  
remember the homeless, the destitute, the sick, the aged,  
and all who have none to care for them.  
Heal those who are broken in body or spirit,  
and turn their sorrow into joy.  
Help us to minister to their needs,  
for the love of your Son,  
who for our sake became poor,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



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## James 2:14-26 – Faith and Action

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. <sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

<sup>20</sup> You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. <sup>23</sup> And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

<sup>25</sup> In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? <sup>26</sup> As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Sermon Notes

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## Questions

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## Extra Questions

How can you recognize people with useless faith? How can you tell if a person is justified? What would someone say about you and your faith?

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James uses Abraham and Rahab as examples. How do you see their faith cooperating with their works in this passage? Are there any similarities and differences?

How do you want to grow as a person of faith that is demonstrated and fulfilled by a life of works?

## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

Almighty God,  
in your wisdom you have so ordered our earthly life  
that we must walk by faith and not by sight:  
give us such trust in your fatherly care  
that in the face of all perplexities  
we may give proof of our faith by the courage of our lives;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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Baptism and confirmation are a time for individuals to make a public statement about their belief. But they are not on their own, they are part of a community of people who also make the same public statements. James says a lot about how we are to treat each other. His brother Jesus also has many things to say about this. As we celebrate baptisms and confirmations in our community, let's reflect on how important we behave towards each other.

## From Jesus – Love and Good works

John 13:34-35

<sup>34</sup> “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Matthew 25:31-46

<sup>31</sup> “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

<sup>41</sup> “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> For I

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was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

<sup>44</sup> "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

<sup>45</sup> "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'

<sup>46</sup> "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

## Observations

(Mark up the text, noting ideas, and the flow of the passage. Share something that stands out to you)

## Questions

(List your questions & then after a re-read, answer questions that the text itself addresses.)

## Key

(What is the big idea or principal of this passage?)

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## Application

(This is based on the principal above. What does this mean for us today?)

## Extra Questions

From the John 13 passage, why is it important for Christians to love one another? (see also John 17:20-23)

Who do you think are the brothers and sisters in verse 40? Do you love who God loves? How do you show this love?

What is the main principle of this story that Jesus tells? Do you find it challenging? In what ways?

In what practical ways can we love one another in our Life Groups this week?

## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

O God,  
your Son has taught us  
that those who give a cup of water in his name  
will not lose their reward:  
open our eyes to see those who are in need,  
and teach us to see no store by riches and earthly rewards,  
so that, in surrendering ourselves to serve you  
in your children,  
we may labour for the treasure that endures;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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## James 3:1-18 – Speech and Wisdom

<sup>1</sup> Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. <sup>2</sup> We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

<sup>3</sup> When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. <sup>4</sup> Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. <sup>5</sup> Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. <sup>6</sup> The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

<sup>7</sup> All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, <sup>8</sup> but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

<sup>9</sup> With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. <sup>11</sup> Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? <sup>12</sup> My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

<sup>13</sup> Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. <sup>15</sup> Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

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<sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. <sup>18</sup> Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

## Sermon Notes

### Observations

(Mark up the text, noting ideas, and the flow of the passage. Share something that stands out to you)

### Questions

(List your questions & then after a re-read, answer questions that the text itself addresses.)

### Key

(What is the big idea or principal of this passage?)



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## Application

(This is based on the principal above. What does this mean for us today?)

## Extra Questions

What is the significance of the illustrations of the bit and the rudder? How is the tongue like a fire and like an animal?

Is there a way you have used your tongue, perhaps recently or years ago, that you need to repent of and seek someone's forgiveness for? How will you go about doing that today?

In James 3:13–18, what are the evidences of false wisdom? What are the evidences of true wisdom?

## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

God of compassion,  
you have shown us in Christ  
that your love is never ending:  
enable us both to love you with all our heart  
and to love one another as Christ loved us.  
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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## James 4:1-12 – Discord and Slander

<sup>1</sup> What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup> You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup> When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

<sup>4</sup> You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? <sup>6</sup> But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

“God opposes the proud  
but shows favour to the humble.”

<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

<sup>11</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. <sup>12</sup> There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbour?

Sermon Notes

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(What is the big idea or principal of this passage?)

## Application

(This is based on the principal above. What does this mean for us today?)

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## Extra Questions

Consider a conflict you have been involved in. What did it reveal about your heart?  
How did it affect your prayers?

How does verse 4 cause you to take your sin more seriously? Why do you think it is often easy for the Christians to be drawn into friendship with the world?

James sandwiches his advice on resisting the devil, drawing near to God and having pure hearts between comments on humility in verses 6 and 10. Apparently humility has something to do with these directions. What is the connection?

## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

O God,  
who alone can probe the depths of the heart,  
you hear the prayer of the humble  
and justify the repentant sinner:  
grant us the gift of humility,  
that, seeing our own faults clearly,  
we may refrain from judging our neighbour  
but rely solely upon your saving grace.  
We make our prayer through your Son, our Saviour,  
who lives and reigns with you in unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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## James 4:13-5:6 – God’s Will and Money

<sup>13</sup> Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” <sup>14</sup> Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” <sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn’t do it, it is sin for them.

<sup>5</sup> Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. <sup>2</sup> Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. <sup>4</sup> Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. <sup>5</sup> You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

Sermon Notes

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## Observations

(Mark up the text, noting ideas, and the flow of the passage. Share something that stands out to you)

## Questions

(List your questions & then after a re-read, answer questions that the text itself addresses.)

## Key

(What is the big idea or principal of this passage?)

## Application

(This is based on the principal above. What does this mean for us today?)

## Extra Questions

Are there ways in which your plans don't really reflect God's will? What needs to change?

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Why is it great news that God is in control of the future?

Verses 5:1-6 is one of the sharpest warnings against careless luxury anywhere in the Bible. Why do you think that James took the fact that they "stored up riches in the last days" so seriously? Why should the rich weep and wail?

## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

O God,  
you are rich in love for your people:  
show us the reassurance that endures  
and, when we are tempted by greed,  
call us back into your service  
and make us worthy to be  
entrusted with the wealth that never fails.  
We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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## James 5:7-20 – Patience and Prayer

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. <sup>8</sup> You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. <sup>9</sup> Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

<sup>10</sup> Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. <sup>11</sup> As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

<sup>12</sup> Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned.

<sup>13</sup> Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. <sup>14</sup> Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup> And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

<sup>17</sup> Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. <sup>18</sup> Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

<sup>19</sup> My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, <sup>20</sup> remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.



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## Sermon Notes

### Observations

(Mark up the text, noting ideas, and the flow of the passage. Share something that stands out to you)

### Questions

(List your questions & then after a re-read, answer questions that the text itself addresses.)

### Key

(What is the big idea or principal of this passage?)

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## Application

(This is based on the principal above. What does this mean for us today?)

## Extra Questions

How does a firm grasp of God's coming justice change our view of our sufferings now?  
Why is hard to think like this? Why is it liberating to do so?

In what way do you need to make your "yes" truly mean "yes", and your "no" mean "no"?

To what extent is prayer your first response to both the ups and the downs of life?  
Why is this, do you think?

James' letter is a deeply practical part of Scripture. After studying James, how has the Spirit been prompting you to love Jesus more, and work harder and more wholeheartedly in living for him?

## Prayer

(Don't forget to pray the application of the text, asking God to help you put it into practice.)

Everliving God,  
increase in us your gift of faith,  
that, forsaking sin and all that hinders us,  
we may run with perseverance the race that is set before us,  
looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith;  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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# References and Resources

Some of the questions in this booklet have been taken from:

- James for You by Sam Allberry
- Be Mature (James): Growing Up in Christ by Warren W. Wiersbe
- James for Everyone Bible Study Guide by N. T. Wright

The introduction used the above resource and the following:

- James (Tyndale New Testament Commentary) by Douglas J. Moo
- James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Jude (Teach the Text) by Jim Samra

All prayers have been taken from A Prayer Book for Australia.