

# THE *Brothers*



A STUDY OF JAMES & JUDE

Written by Janet Fulmer  
Edited by Karen Nabers  
Designed by Ava Carothers

*Welcome* to our study of James and Jude, two books of the New Testament which have a lot to say about living the Christian Life. The book cover reveals our symbol for this study: sailboats. Writers of the New Testament have been described as sailboats which were guided along by the Holy Spirit who was the wind in their sails.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 state that,

*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

As part of Scripture, we can be confident that the words of James and Jude were directly from God, and therefore, valuable instruction for all believers.

# Introduction

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*“When Jesus had finished telling these stories... He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When He taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, ‘Where does he get this wisdom and the power to do miracles? He’s just the carpenter’s son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers- James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?’”*

MATTHEW 13:53-56 NLT

The Gospels tell us James and Jude were two of Jesus’ brothers, and we know throughout His earthly ministry, they did not believe in Him (John 7:5). But something happened after Jesus was crucified which changed these men forever. We know little of how or when their transformation began. We are given a glimpse of the brothers right after Jesus’ death, and find they were hiding in the upper room with the disciples, who were praying and waiting for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14). Paul recorded that after Christ’s resurrection, He specifically appeared to His brother James (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). And as the New Testament narrative continues, it becomes quite evident James and Jude came to the profound realization that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.

James went on to become the leader of the early church after Peter. We know from the book of Acts, he gave wise counsel, and set precedents (Acts 15 and 21). And we know he was a man of prayer. Church tradition tells us his nickname was “Old Camel Knees,” because of the calluses on his knees from praying.

Less is known about brother Jude, but we know both men were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write books of the New Testament. And both men began their books by referring to themselves as servants or slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ.

James wrote a practical “How To” book on living the Christian life. He discussed trials, prejudice, controlling the tongue, and a faith that works, among other topics. James wrote with authority. Half of his verses contain a call to action.

Jude on the other hand, said he wanted to write about “our common salvation,” but was compelled to write a warning about false teachers instead. Jude’s book is small but mighty. In just one chapter he delivers a powerful warning against people with wrong motives who worm their way in among believers and cause untold damage. Jude cites intriguing Old Testament examples of false believers, and he includes several new details about these events; details which could only have come through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

It is evident the brothers were radically changed after meeting their Risen Lord, and receiving the Holy Spirit. As believers, we can learn a lot from these two men about what our lives should look like as followers of Christ.



# How to Handle Trials Well

JAMES 1:1-18

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*“Dear brothers and sisters,  
when troubles of any kind come your way,  
consider it an opportunity for great joy.  
For you know that when your faith is tested,  
your endurance has a chance to grow.”*

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JAMES 1:2 NLT





Read JAMES 1:1-4

What difficulties are you facing right now?

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*“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”*

HEBREWS 12:11 NIV

**Group Question:** Do you believe God knows about, and is willing to walk through this tough time with you, or do you feel you are on your own?



### Don't waste the trial!

Trials will come, but we have a choice:  
To become bitter, angry, and unbelieving,

**OR**

To grow in patient endurance,  
maturity, and hope!

If Jesus were sitting here with you, what would you like to tell Him about what you are going through?

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*“We glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”*

ROMANS 5:3-4 NIV



Read JAMES 1:5-8

*“Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents, and the floodwaters rise, and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse in a mighty crash.”*

MATTHEW 7:24-27 NLT

What promises are made in verse 5?

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What do you learn about God from these promises?

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**Group Question:** Have you ever felt so uncertain in a situation, it seemed like you were being tossed around like a wave? How could the Lord’s offer of wisdom help?




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*The sea never rests.*



Pray

Prepare

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..."*

- PROVERBS 9:10 NIV

Consider what it means to "fear the Lord."

Honor

*"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."*

- JAMES 1:17 NIV

Spend a few moments thanking God for His generosity to you.

Ask

If you feel you lack the wisdom to handle your current situation, ask your generous God, who loves to answer this request.

(Think about Solomon: 1 Kings 3:5-15)

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Read JAMES 1:9-11

**Group Question:** What do you think poor believers should be proud of?




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**Group Question:** What do you think rich believers should trust in? What should they not trust in?




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**Group Question:** Has there been a time when you were physically poor, but felt spiritually rich?




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*“If you have Me, your Savior, Lord, and Friend, you have everything that really matters. You may not have riches, fame, or success, but don’t let that discourage you.... Nothing can be compared to the priceless treasure of eternal life!”*

JESUS ALWAYS BY SARAH YOUNG

Pray

Prepare

*“Look at the flowers of the field and how they grow. They do not work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are.”*

- MATTHEW 6:28-29 NLT

Picture a beautiful field of wildflowers and how our creative God has designed each one.

Honor

*“If God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, He will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?”*

- MATTHEW 6:30 NLT

Thank God for His care for you. Write a few words about what He has done for you this week.

Ask

*“So don’t worry about what you will eat or wear, because your heavenly Father knows all your needs. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be added to you.”*

- MATTHEW 6:31-33

Bring your current needs to the Lord, and in faith wait and watch for how He will answer you.

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Read JAMES 1:12-16

*There are **Five Reward Crowns** Mentioned in the Bible...*

1) **The Crown of Life**

Given to those who persevere under trial. (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)

2) **The Imperishable Crown**

Unlike earthly rewards which will fade away, this crown is an eternal reward given to believers. (1 Corinthians 9:25)

3) **The Crown of Righteousness**

Given to those who love the Lord, and long for His return. (2 Timothy 4:8)

4) **The Crown of Glory**

Given to Christian leaders who have been good shepherds to their flock in unselfish love, and who exemplify right living. (1 Peter 5:2-4)

5) **The Crown of Rejoicing**

Given to Evangelists for Christ and the Gospel. (1 Thessalonians 2:19, Phillipians 4:1)

*GotQuestions.org*

Read Matthew 5:10. For what specific trial does Jesus say believers will be blessed?

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**Group Question:** James 1:13 clearly says God cannot be tempted, nor will He tempt anyone. If this is true, how can you explain the temptation of Christ? (See Matthew 4:1-11)




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*It is against God's character to lead someone into sin. His desire is always to develop godly character.*

Looking back at James, where does human temptation come from? How do you think this kind of temptation can deceive us?

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*"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure."*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 NLT

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**Pray**

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**Prepare**

If you are feeling tempted, you are in good company. Come as you are and sit with the Lord for a few minutes. Listen to what He has to say to you.

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**Honor**

Praise God as the One who is faithful and true in every situation. Thank Him for His very present help in time of need.

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**Ask**

*“Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him, and He will do this...”*

- PSALM 37:5 NIV

This is a safe space. Have an honest conversation with the Lord about what is going on. Ask for the faith to commit your way to Him.

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Read JAMES 1:17-18

In contrast to temptation, which does not come from God (vs. 13), list the good gifts God gives us.

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Group Question: What is the *Word of Truth*?



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Group Question: Share with the group what good and perfect gifts you have received from God. What do these mean to you?



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Pray

Prepare

Invite the Lord into this time of prayer. Ask Him to silence any distractions so you can focus on Him, and what He would like to tell you.

Honor

*“Your love, Oh Lord, reaches to the heavens  
Your faithfulness stretches to the sky  
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains  
Your justice flows like the ocean’s tide...”*

*Your Love, Oh Lord* by Third Day

Picture what these lyrics describe, and praise God for His majestic character.

Ask

The Lord’s love for you is perfect and does not vary. The only thing which varies is your awareness of His loving presence. Ask the Lord to make you aware of His presence as you walk through this day.

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# Hearing and Doing

JAMES 1:19-27

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*“Don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.”*

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JAMES 1:22 NLT



Read

JAMES 1:19-20

*Quick to Listen  
Slow to Speak  
Slow to Anger*

When someone fills the air with their own words, what does it say to those they are talking to?

**Group Question:** Do you know anyone who is a good listener? How do they make you feel? Would you say you are a good listener?



What does a "short fuse" do to one's witness to others?



Pray

Prepare

“Be still, and know that I am God.”

- PSALM 46:10 NLT

Find a quiet place away from distractions and sit in silence with the Lord. Just listen for a moment...

Honor

“When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was unaware of it.’”

- GENESIS 28:16 NIV

Thank the Lord for His presence with you.

Ask

Human anger can erupt without warning. It rarely helps anyone, and it does not leave room for God’s justice. Pray that when your ego is hurt, you will have the grace to pause and give the situation to the Lord.

# Notes

Lined area for taking notes.

Read JAMES 1:21-22

*Humble acceptance includes having a teachable spirit.*

Would you say you are open and teachable when you hear God's Word? Why or why not?

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How would you define the saving Word of God (the Gospel) to a friend?

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**Group Question:** Describe the contrast between the empty religion of just hearing God's Word versus true faith which produces good actions.



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Pray

Prepare

*“Humbly accept the word God has planted in your heart.”*

- JAMES 1:21 NLT

Pray for a teachable spirit as you take a few moments to talk to God.

Honor

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

- JOHN 3:16 NIV

Praise God for His wonderful gift of salvation.

Ask

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

- EPHESIANS 2:10 NIV

What an amazing thought that God planned good work for you to do before you were even born. Ask God to show you this work, and to give you the ability to accomplish it.

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Read JAMES 1:23-25

The modern-day expression “to hold a mirror up to,” means to examine, reflect upon, or gain insight into. If we hold a mirror up to ourselves, examining our character, but make no changes, the process is worthless. How is listening to God’s word without letting it make any difference in our lives, just as worthless?

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**Group Question:** God’s Word is “living and active” (Hebrews 4:12) and should inform our thoughts and actions. Studying the Bible should affect how we daily live. Is there anything in your study of James so far that has changed or further developed your thoughts on how to live as a follower of Christ?




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What promises are you given in verse 25 for being a doer of the word?

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***The Perfect Law***

*“The Law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing to the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.”*

PSALM 19:7-9 NIV

Pray

Prepare

*“For with you is the fountain of life. In Your light we see light.”*

- PSALM 36:9 NIV

Sit for a moment in the light of God’s Presence.

Honor

*“Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I now know is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, **just as God now knows me completely.**”*

- 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12 NLT

Praise God for knowing you completely and accepting you into His family. Thank Him that one day all the mysteries of this life will be made clear.

Ask

Ask the Lord to help you remember and do what you have read in His perfect word, the Bible. Thank Him for the freedom and blessing which come from living by His Word.

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Read JAMES 1:26-27

**WORDS  
MATTER.**

James will have a lot more to say about controlling the tongue in Chapter 3, but what two things does he say here about a loose tongue?

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**Group Question:** Twice in verse 26, James uses the word “religious” or “religion”. How would you define these words in this context?



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**Group Question:** From verse 27, what kind of religion does God accept?



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Pray

Prepare

Invite the Lord into this time of prayer. Then spend a moment resting in the peace of the Lord's Presence.

Honor

*"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

- MATTHEW 11:28-29 NLT

Praise the Lord for calling you to come to Him when you are weary or burdened. Thank Him for His gentleness, and the rest only He can give.

Ask

*"The Sovereign Lord has given me His words of wisdom, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning He awakens me and opens my understanding to His will. The Sovereign Lord has spoken to me, and I have listened. I have not rebelled or turned away."*

- ISAIAH 50:4-5 NLT

Just as the Lord has comforted you, ask to see who needs the same encouragement from you today.

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Read JAMES 1:27

**Group Question:** This verse encourages believers to refuse the corruption of the world. Discuss with your group ways believers can avoid the world's corruption.



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**Group Question:** Re-read James 1. In contrast to the world, from James 1, list the actions God values.



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**Group Question:** From James 1, what did you learn about God's character?



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## Pray

## Prepare

*“Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near.”*

- ISAIAH 55:6 NIV

The Lord is near, what would you like to say to Him?

## Honor

*“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,’ declares the Lord.  
‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.’”*

- ISAIAH 55:8-9 NIV

Praise the Lord for His majestic thoughts and ways which are so much better than ours.

## Ask

*“My Word that goes out from my mouth will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

- ISAIAH 55:11 NIV

Ask the Lord for His words spoken through brother James to make a difference in your life.

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# *Favoritism Forbidden*

JAMES 2:1-13

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*“My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our Glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?”*

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JAMES 2:1 NLT



Read JAMES 2:1-4

**“Our Glorious Lord Jesus Christ”**

*God’s glory speaks of His moral beauty and perfection of character. His glory reflects His supreme power, authority, and greatness. This divine quality is beyond human understanding.*

*In Old Testament times, God visibly revealed the glory of His divine presence to the children of Israel. Sometimes called the “Shekinah Glory,” this luminescent phenomenon was seen in the pillars of cloud and fire which led the Israelites through the desert. In the New Testament, God’s glory was primarily shown through Christ, and in our day, Scripture tells us Christ shares His glory with His followers in The Church (John 17:22).*

NELSON’S NEW ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY

Knowing that brother James did not believe Jesus was the Messiah before His crucifixion, what does verse 1 reveal about his change of heart?

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**Group Question:** What wrong motives could cause someone to show special treatment to a rich person, but not to a poor one?




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How should believers treat the wealthy?  
How should they treat the poor?

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Pray

Prepare

Give yourself permission to simply sit with the Lord, enjoying His presence.

Honor

*“For the Lord delights in His people. He crowns the humble with victory.”*

- PSALM 149:4 NLT

Praise God for who He is and how He loves His people.

Ask

*“Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream.”*

- AMOS 5:24 NIV

Pray for the ability to treat all people as deserving of love and the knowledge of salvation.

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Read

JAMES 2:5

*“There is nothing men dread more than poverty. They will break every commandment rather than be poor. But it was Christ’s chosen lot. He had one opportunity of living our life, and He chose to be born to poor parents.... all His life was spent among the poor.... He lived on charity, rode in triumph on a borrowed donkey, ate His last meal in a borrowed room, and lay in a borrowed grave.” The poor of the world are dear to God. Why? Poverty “compels a simpler faith in God: the rich man may trust Him, but the poor man must.”*

GREAT VERSES THROUGH THE BIBLE

BY F.B. MEYER

What has God chosen the poor of this world to receive?

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**Group Question:** How can you see this principle playing out on the world stage today?




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What does this tell you about God’s character?

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Pray

Prepare

Know that you matter to God. He wants to hear from you.

Honor

*“The kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”*

- MATTHEW 13:45-46 NIV

Praise God that as a believer, your inheritance is in the kingdom of heaven!

Ask

Ask the Lord to give you a heart for the poor, the eyes to see them, and the ability to help.

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Read JAMES 2:6-7 & ACTS 9:1-2

No doubt James had witnessed this behavior, especially from the religious elite. For example, what was Paul doing right up to the time of his conversion?

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**Group Question:** The Jews thought the new believers were blaspheming God and deserved to die, but what were the Jews guilty of doing?




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*To blaspheme means to slander, show contempt for, or have a lack of reverence for God.*

One of the Ten Commandments is to not use the Name of the Lord in vain (Exodus 20:7). As believers, how can we purpose to honor God's Name, and not disrespect Him?

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Pray

Prepare

*“You are my lamp, O Lord. The Lord turns my darkness into light.”*

- 2 SAMUEL 22:29 NIV

Sit quietly in the Lord’s light for a moment.

Honor

*“Therefore, God has highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the Name that is above every name, so that at the Name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

- PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11 NIV

Spend a few minutes praising the Name of Jesus.

Ask

If you have a habit of using the Lord’s Name in vain, ask the Holy Spirit to help you break this habit and only express reverence for God.

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Read JAMES 2:8-11 & MATTHEW 22:36-40

What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?

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Therefore, how are we to treat everyone?

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**Group Question:** We are not called to selective obedience; picking what we will do and what we won't. God's divine law is His will for His people. Violating any of His Law separates us from Him. How do these verses show our need for a Savior?



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Pray

Prepare

*“The Lord appeared to us in the past saying, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have drawn you with loving-kindness.’”*

- JEREMIAH 31:3 NIV

For a few moments think about God’s everlasting love for you; a love whose beginning and end are hidden in eternity.

Honor

*“I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.”*

- ISAIAH 61:10 NIV

Praise God for His marvelous salvation. Thank him for clothing you in His righteousness.

Ask

Ask the Lord to help you share His love with others. Pray for eyes to see opportunities to share His Gospel with those you meet.

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Read JAMES 2:12-13

*“When God our Savior revealed His kindness and love, He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of His grace, He made us right in His sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.”*

TITUS 3:4-7 NLT

**Group Question:** In Chapter 1, James told us that as believers who have the word of salvation implanted in our hearts, we are to live by God’s Law of Freedom. God’s Law is an expression of His character and of His love for His people. In this law, we are called to be merciful to others just as He has been merciful to us. How have you seen God’s mercy in your life recently?




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How could you show God’s love to someone who is struggling by offering them mercy?

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What does James say you will receive if you show others mercy?

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*“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”*

MATTHEW 5:7 NIV

Pray

Prepare

Take a quiet moment to prepare your heart to meet with God.

Honor

Recite this Doxology in honor to God:

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him all creatures here below  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Amen*

Ask

*“He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”*

- MICAH 6:8 NIV

**To act justly:** Ask that you will be able to treat everyone with respect, not favoring those you think can do something for you in return.

**To love mercy:** Pray for a heart of love for all who are hurting, or sick, or are simply acting out because of fear or pain.

**To walk humbly with God:** Pray to have a heart of reverence for our Glorious Lord Jesus Christ, who deserves all worship, honor, and praise.

# Notes

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

# A Faith that Works

JAMES 2:14-26

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*“Suppose a brother or a sister is without food or clothes... And you say, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but you do nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?”*

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JAMES 2:15-16 NIV





Read JAMES 2:14-17

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.”*

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 NIV

Martin Luther was among those who were concerned that James’ words contradicted this foundational truth about salvation. But James did not. His letter was written to believers, those who were already saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. James wrote to explain what genuine faith looked like when walked out in a believer’s life. True faith is not just intellectual consent (James 2:19), but a deep commitment which will naturally produce loving acts of service. When a person accepts Jesus Christ as Lord, and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, how can they not be changed? How can such a person not reflect Christ by what they do, say, and believe?

What do these verses say faith without works looks like?

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**Group Question:** Read Luke 6:43-45. Where does Jesus say good works and words come from?




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**Group Question:** Do you think it is possible for a person to be saved but not show any “good fruit” in their life?




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Pray

Prepare

The Lord is richly present in the world, in your heart and in all your moments. Find comfort in His presence.

Honor

*“O Lord, I will honor and praise your name, for you are my God. You do such wonderful things! You planned them long ago, and now you have accomplished them.”*

- ISAIAH 25:1 NLT

Praise God for His faithfulness. He has planned good work for you to do. Thank Him for His plan.

Ask

*“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.”*

- GALATIANS 6:9 NLT

Ask the Lord to help you demonstrate faith through your actions and words this week.

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Read JAMES 2:18-20

**Group Question:** Say you meet a known philanthropist who, when asked about salvation, begins to talk of good outweighing the bad? If you could speak freely, what would you say to him?



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Read Mark 5:1-10 and Acts 16:16-17. Are you surprised by what the demons said in these passages? Why or why not?

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From James, what did you learn salvation is not? In contrast, what is God's criteria for salvation?

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## Pray

## Prepare

The Jewish confession of faith, the *Shema*, is found in Deuteronomy 6. It begins with “Hear O Israel.” Take a moment to be quiet and prepare to hear from your God.

## Honor

“The Lord our God, the Lord is One.”

- DEUTERONOMY 6:4 NIV

Praise God who is three in one: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

## Ask

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

- DEUTERONOMY 6:5-7 NIV

Pray for a deep faith that is evident to your family and all those you meet.

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Read JAMES 2:21-23

*“The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.’ But Abram said, ‘Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless, and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?’... Then the word of the Lord came to him: ‘This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.’ He took him outside and said, ‘Look up at the sky and count the stars. If you can indeed count them so shall your offspring be.’ Abram believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteous.”*

GENESIS 15:1-6 NIV

From the Genesis passage, what did Abram believe? How did the Lord see Abram because of his faith?

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Read Genesis 22:1-14. How did Abraham prove his faith?

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**Group Question:** How does this event foreshadow what God did to provide us with salvation?




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Many scholars believe that *Mount Moriah* and *Golgotha* were names for the same mountain.

Pray

Prepare

*“Look to the Lord and His strength; seek His face always.”*

- 1 CHRONICLES 16:11 NIV

In this quiet moment, prepare to meet with the Lord.

Honor

*“But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my God. My times are in your hand.’”*

- PSALM 31:14-15 NKJV

Praise God as the one who holds your life and times in His hands.

Ask

*“We pray that you’ll have the strength to stick it out over the long haul; not the grim gritting of your teeth, but the glory-strength God gives. It is strength that endures the unendurable, and spills over into joy, thanking the Father who makes us strong enough to take part in everything bright and beautiful that He has for us.”*

- COLOSSIANS 1:11-12 MSG

Although we will not have to endure a test like Abraham did, this life can be hard. Ask the Lord for *glory-strength* to handle what you are facing right now.

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Read JAMES 2:24

*“So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do.”*

JAMES 2:24 NLT

**Group Question:** How does the Bible say one receives salvation? (For help see John 3:16; Acts 2:21; and Romans 10:9.)



**Group Question:** From the James passage, how is someone *shown to be righteous*?



**Group Question:** What does this tell you about God?



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## Pray

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## Prepare

*“Come close to God, and God will come close to you.”*

- JAMES 4:8 NLT

Quiet your mind and prepare to talk to God.

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## Honor

*“I am the Lord, the God of all the peoples of the world. Is anything too hard for me?”*

- JEREMIAH 32:27 NLT

Praise God, who is almighty. Thank Him for the mighty work He will do in and through your life.

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## Ask

What do you need the Lord’s help with this week? Speak to Him about it now.

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Read JAMES 2:25-26, JOSHUA 2 & JOSHUA 6:24-25

Because Rahab believed in God and His plan for Israel (Joshua 2:9-11), what did she do?

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Read Hebrews 11:31. What does the “Hall of Faith” in Hebrews 11 say about Rahab?

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**Group Question:** In considering the connection between faith and works, what can you learn from Rahab?



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Rahab was blessed by God for her demonstration of faith. She was even included in the line of Christ. (Matthew 1:5)

Pray

Prepare

The Lord promises to guide our feet into the path of peace (Luke 1:79). Picture walking on a peaceful path with the Lord right now.

Honor

*“By day the Lord directs His love; at night His song is with me; a prayer to the God of my life.”*

- PSALM 42:8 NIV

Praise God for His unfailing love, and His continual presence with you.

Ask

*“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow Him. Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.”*

- COLOSSIANS 2:6-7 NLT

Since you have been included in the family of faith, with a thankful heart ask the Lord to help you continue to live in Him.

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# Controlling Our Words

JAMES 3:1-12

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*“Indeed, we all make mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.”*

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JAMES 3:2 NLT



Read JAMES 3:1-2

As the leader of the Jerusalem church, James no doubt had seen the damage people's words could do to others. This week, he will explain that, humanly speaking, it is impossible to always control what comes out of our mouths. Our words can cause untold damage, ruining relationships, causing deep wounds, and destroying lives. But, there is good news! As believers, we have the Holy Spirit to help us control what we say. If we ask, He will give us new thoughts; thoughts which are pleasing to God, and thoughts which will lead to the right words. Also, it is good to remember that God is a God of redemption. He can repair past damage caused by hateful words. Whether they were words of another or our own words, when placed in the hands of the Savior, healing can take place, restoration of relationships can happen, and joy can return.

Do you think teachers and leaders should be held to a higher standard? Why or why not?

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*“If you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.”*

MATTHEW 5:19 NLT

**Group Question:** What do you think it would take to control your words in a difficult situation?




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**Group Question:** Read Galatians 5:22-23. What does the Holy Spirit offer believers which will help control their words?




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*“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”*

PSALM 19:14 NLT

Pray

Prepare

The Lord meets you in the present. We are not to wallow in the past, nor worry about the future; He is trustworthy with both. Focus on His presence with you right now.

Honor

*“The words of the Lord are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.”*

- PSALM 12:6 NIV

Praise God, whose words are always true, pure, and timeless.

Ask

*“For it is God who is at work in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.”*

- PHILIPPIANS 2:13 NIV

Ask the Holy Spirit for the self-control you need to guard your words this week.

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Read JAMES 3:3-5

What 3 examples are described in these verses of a small thing, like the tongue, controlling something large?

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**Group Question:** List ways your words can hurt others. (Examples: gossip or bragging)



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How can remaining silent, or not saying the right thing, also cause damage?

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*“Set a guard over my mouth Lord;  
Keep watch over the door of my lips.”*

PSALM 141:3 NIV

Pray

Prepare

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand."

- JOHN 10:27-28 NIV

Picture holding the Lord's hand. It is virtually impossible to stumble while walking with Him.

Honor

"He is the Rock, His deeds are perfect. Everything He does is just and fair. He is a faithful God who does no wrong; how just and upright He is!"

- DEUTERONOMY 32:4 NLT

Praise God for who He is, His flawless character, and for His work in your life.

Ask

"The Lord is my strength and my shield. I trust Him with all my heart. He helps me..."

- PSALM 28:7 NLT

Ask the Lord to help you find the right words for a difficult situation you are facing this week.

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Read

JAMES 3:6 & JOHN 8:44

**Group Question:** From the verse in John, who is the source of fiery, hellish words?



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Was there a time in your past when harsh words seemed to set your life on fire? Does that situation still affect or hurt you today?

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Would you like to be free from this pain?  
Do you think it is possible with the Lord?

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*“I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten.”*

JOEL 2:25 NKJV



Pray

Prepare

God loves you and is ready to help you. Sit for a moment in His healing, holy Presence.

Honor

*“For I am the Lord your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, ‘Do not fear. I will help you.’”*

- ISAIAH 41:13 NIV

Be confident the Lord is near. Thank Him for His presence and His willingness to help you.

Ask

*“Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him. God is a refuge for us.”*

- PSALM 62:8 NKJV

Speak openly to the Lord about a time words hurt deeply. It could have been words someone else said, or you could have been the one who caused the pain. Place the situation in His open hands and ask for healing. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you new thoughts about this situation, thoughts about forgiveness, and the ability to believe in the Lord’s restoration.

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Read JAMES 3:7-12

**Group Question:** Why does God take offense when we criticize someone else?



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Have you ever been surprised by what you said in a rash moment, when you weren't really thinking? How did this make you feel?

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**Group Question:** As believers, how does the ability to bless and curse others with our words, mirror the battle between our heavenly and earthly natures?



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Pray

Prepare

*“God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female, He created them. And God blessed them.”*

- GENESIS 1:27-28 NIV

Consider for a moment how amazing it is that you were created in God’s image.

Honor

*“You have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when He adopted you as His own children. Now we call Him, ‘Abba. Father.’ For His Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children.”*

- ROMANS 8:15-16 NLT

Praise God for adopting you into His family, and giving you the Holy Spirit who confirms that you are God’s child. We are not slaves to our old natures any more!

Ask

Ask the Holy Spirit to let you know when you are about to say something regrettable. Ask for the ability to recognize His nudge, and then follow His lead.

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Read

EPHESIANS 4:21-32

From these verses, list the characteristics of our old sinful nature versus our new, heavenly nature.

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**Group Question:** How does this passage explain why it is so difficult for us to control our words?




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What does this passage say about how God wants us to live?

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*“Finally believers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable and worthy of respect, whatever is right and confirmed by God’s Word, whatever is pure and wholesome, whatever is lovely and brings peace, whatever is admirable and of good reputation; if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think continually on these things (center your mind on them, and implant them in your heart).”*

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 AMP

Pray

Prepare

Sit for a moment in silence and ask the Holy Spirit to renew your thoughts and attitudes. (Ephesians 4:23)

Honor

*“He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then He said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”*

- REVELATION 21:5 NIV

Praise God that one day all will be made new! The old will be gone, and only the new will remain!

Ask

*“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

- JOHN 14:26 NIV

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you represent the Lord well in what you say and do this week.

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# Two Kinds of Wisdom

JAMES 3:13-18 & JUDE 1-11

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*“The wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.”*

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JAMES 3:17 NLT



Read JAMES 3:13-18

A Master Class on Wisdom by James

List the characteristics of godly wisdom versus earthly wisdom.

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

Where do jealousy and selfish ambition lead? Where does peacemaking lead?

Horizontal lines for writing notes.

How to recognize a counterfeit: Get to know the real thing.

Group Question: How can believers get to know God's truth well enough to recognize false teaching when they hear it?



Horizontal lines for writing notes.

"For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the congregations of the Lord's people."

1 CORINTHIANS 14:33 NIV

Dark teal background box for the quote.

Pray

Prepare

The world wants to squeeze us into its mold and crowd out any thought of God. Technology distractions are at an epic high. Spending time in the Lord's presence requires conscious effort and planning. Sit still for a moment now, and prepare to meet with Him.

Honor

*"I, Wisdom, live together with good judgment. I know where to discover knowledge and discernment... The Lord formed me from the beginning, before He created anything else. I was appointed in ages past, at the very first, before the earth began."*

- PROVERBS 8:12, 22-23 NLT

God is wisdom. Praise Him for this majestic fact.

Ask

*"I recall all you have done, O Lord; I remember your deeds of long ago. They are constantly in my thoughts."*

- PSALM 77:11 NLT

It is always good to remember what the Lord has done for us in the past. It gives us confidence that He will be just as faithful in the future. Take a moment to thank Him for His past work, and then ask for His wisdom to handle what you are facing this week.

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Read JUDE 1-4

Our discussion of godly wisdom versus earthly wisdom is a perfect segue into the book of Jude. Jude tells us that although he wanted to write about salvation, he was compelled to write a warning about false teachers, whose earthly wisdom threatened to destroy the church. Christ and the Apostles warned believers about these false teachers (Jude 17-18), but in Jude's day, Christians were no longer on guard. They were lulled into complacency, and not concerned about the untruths which were circling around their congregations. Jude gives a call to all believers to "contend" for the faith, which has been entrusted to us by God. Since we are in the same battle today, we must recognize false teaching for what it is, and stand firm in God's truth.

From verse 4, which two heresies were the false teachers spreading?

**Heresy:** *false teaching that goes against one of the foundational beliefs of the church.*

Read Romans 6:1-14. What does the apostle Paul say about using grace as an excuse for sin? In your own words, explain how baptism demonstrates a believer's death to sin and resurrection to new life in Christ.

**Group Question:** Have you ever met someone who thinks Jesus was just a good man but not God's Son? How is that belief incompatible with the rest of Christianity?



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Pray

Prepare

“May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.”

- PSALM 33:22 NIV

Rest for a moment in the Lord’s unfailing love. Think about the hope you have in Him.

Honor

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope...one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all, and in all. To each of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”

- EPHESIANS 4:4-7 NIV

Praise God for who He is and for the marvelous grace He has given to you.

Ask

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”

- EPHESIANS 4:1-3 NIV

Ask that the fingerprints of God on your life will be evident to those around you this week.

Read JUDE 5-7

What 3 Old Testament examples did Jude give to illustrate God’s judgment of man’s sin?

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**For further study:**

**Jude 5:** see *Numbers 13:1, 21-33, 14:1-4, 26-35.*  
**Jude 6:** see *Genesis 6:1-8; and 2 Peter 2:4-5.*  
**Jude 7:** see *Genesis 19:1-5, 23-26 and 2 Peter 2:6.*

Let’s consider Jude 6 and Genesis 6:1-8. What happened to the angels or “sons of God” who rejected their proper place and married human women? What does this tell you about God’s character?

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Many scholars believe that the “sons of God” were fallen angels who came to earth and married human women resulting in an evil nation of giants called the Nephilim. This abhorrent breach of God’s divine order resulted in His judgment on the world through The Flood.

**Group Question:** Considering these three Old Testament examples, do you think God was just in punishing their sin? If God did not ever punish sin, what do you think the world would look like today?




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Pray

Prepare

*“The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.’”*

- JOHN 1:29 NLT

Take a moment to consider what Jesus did to take away your sin.

Honor

*“Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. For our God is a consuming fire.”*

- HEBREWS 12:28-29 NIV

Praise God for His justice and mercy.

Ask

Ask the Holy Spirit to give you understanding as we study the deep truths of Jude.

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Read JUDE 8-10

Returning to the false teachers of Jude's day, which three sins were they accused of in verse 8?

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The false teachers claimed their dreams were divine revelation.

**Group Question:** How does the example of the archangel Michael show the reckless arrogance of the false teachers? What was their fate? (Vs. 10)




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**Group Question:** Read Deuteronomy 34:4-7 with Jude 9. Jude was inspired by the Holy Spirit to include new information about the death of Moses. Why do you think Satan wanted Moses' body?




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Pray

Prepare

*“Yet, a time is coming and has now come when true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.”*

- JOHN 4:23 NIV

Take a moment to prepare your heart to meet with God.

Honor

Praise God for the mysterious wonder of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Ask

*“Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.”*

- PROVERBS 4:23 NLT

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you safeguard your heart against lies and untruth.

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Read JUDE 11

Jude concludes this section with three Old Testament examples of rebellious men: Cain, Balaam, and Korah. Today, let's consider the story of Korah. A story which at first glance was a dramatic, shocking example of God's judgment, but when traced throughout the Old Testament, becomes a shining glimpse into God's marvelous grace.

Read Numbers 16:1-3; 23-35. In the NIV, Verse 1 says that these men became insolent, meaning "boldly disrespectful in speech and behavior, arrogant, and overbearing." (Webster) List the ways Korah and his followers were insolent toward Moses and God.

Describe what happened to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

God, in His great mercy did not destroy all of Korah's descendants, but preserved those who were not involved in the rebellion. God redeemed and blessed the Korahites, and they went on to be guardians of the doors of the tabernacle, warriors and musicians with King David, and were responsible for writing 12 Psalms. (See Psalm 42-49, 84, 85, 87, and 88)

Read 1 Chronicles 9:19 and Psalm 84. It is interesting to read the psalms "of the sons of Korah," knowing something about their history. How do you see God's grace to the sons of Korah shining through the words of Psalm 84?

Pray

Prepare

*“Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.”*

- PSALM 84:10 NLT

Sit for a moment with the Lord, and thank Him for His presence with you.

Honor

*“For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and His faithfulness continues to each generation.”*

- PSALM 100:5 NLT

Praise God for His unfailing love.

Ask

Spend a few moments praying for your family, your children and your children’s children. Ask God for His continued blessing, grace, and mercy on your family line.

*“The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.”*

NUMBERS 6:24 NIV

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# A Call to Remain Faithful

JUDE 12-23 & JAMES 4:1-6

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*“You, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith, pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will bring you eternal life. In this way, you will keep yourselves safe in God’s love.”*

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JUDE 20-21 NLT



Read JUDE 12-13

In the early church, a meal was shared by the believers before taking communion together. This meal was called a “love feast.” The purpose was to remember Christ, encourage believers, and to share provisions with the poor. Unfortunately, these feasts became corrupted with feasting and drunkenness and therefore, were first separated from the Eucharist in the 2nd century, and ultimately abolished altogether by the 7th century.

NELSON’S NEW ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY

According to Jude, who had joined the believers’ love feasts?

List the ways Jude describes the false Christians in verses 12 and 13.

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**Group Question:** What character quality would you say best describes these troublemakers?




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Pray

Prepare

*“But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.”*

- JEREMIAH 17:7-8 NLT

Sit for a moment and think about what confident trust in the Lord looks like in your current situation.

Honor

Praise the God who offers you a deep well of salvation and a living fountain of eternal life.

Ask

Ask the Lord to help you bear good fruit, even when you feel you are facing a drought.

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Read JUDE 14-19

Read Genesis 5:21-24. What remarkable event happened to Enoch? Why?

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Enoch's prophecy, mentioned in these verses, was a quote from the apocrypha, but this end time event is well documented in Scripture:

*"I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but Himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His Name is The Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of His mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule with an iron scepter. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords."*

REVELATION 19:11-16 NIV

Although the false teachers might not face judgment in this life, from Jude and Revelation what will ultimately be their fate?

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**Group Question:** It is interesting that while believers are well-warned about false teachers coming in and causing divisions, Jude does not tell us how to deal with them. He never calls us to confront them or impose disciplinary action. So how do you think believers should prepare for and handle nonbelievers who come in speaking falsehood and try to undermine our faith?




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Pray

Prepare

*“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.”*

- PSALM 1:1-2 NASB

Sit for a moment and meditate on these verses (picture the images and consider the meaning).

Honor

Praise God for His Holy Word given to us in the Bible.

Ask

Psalm 1 shows us the progression of a fall into sin: walking in the counsel, standing in the path, and then sitting in the seat of sinners. Pray for the wisdom to recognize when you are in danger of being indoctrinated into wrong thinking and actions.

# Notes

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Read JAMES 4:1-6

**Group Question:** James begins Chapter 4 with the question: "What is causing the quarrels and fights among you?" In light of our discussion of false teachers, how would you answer this question?



From verses 1-3, what toll did James say earthly wisdom had taken on the believers?

From verses 4-6, what does friendship with the world lead to? In contrast, what is God's desire for His people?

Pray

Prepare

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”*

- MATTHEW 5:9 NIV

God is a God of peace. Sit quietly for a moment in His peaceful presence right now.

Honor

Praise the Lord as the Prince of Peace, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God and Everlasting Father.

Ask

Ask the Holy Spirit to develop His peace within you. Ask Him to show you how to exhibit peace in a world where people are constantly fighting to get ahead, jealous of others’ success, and willing to do whatever it takes to get what they want.

Notes

Lined area for taking notes.

Read

JUDE 20-21

***“Keep yourselves safe in God’s love.”***

*“There is a strong current running. If you keep in its mainstream, it will bear you gently but irresistibly forward; but there are so many side currents that we must be very careful to not be swept out of it. You are in (the right stream) by grace, now keep in it.”*

GREAT VERSES THROUGH THE BIBLE

BY F.B. MEYER

Although Jude never tells us what to do about false teachers, from these verses, what does he encourage believers to do?

**Group Question:** In what ways can we build up ourselves and each other in the faith? How can we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit?



**Group Question:** The Bible has a lot to say about waiting on the Lord. After “do not fear,” “wait,” is possibly one of the most frequently repeated commands found in Scripture. There are many examples of ancient heroes who made mistakes and did not wait on the Lord, for example Abraham with his son Ishmael. Why do you think it is so important to wait for God’s answer to your prayers, and to follow in His way and His timing?





Pray

Prepare

*"Blessed are those who dwell in the house of the Lord, for they are ever praising You. Selah"*

- PSALM 84:4 NIV

Selah means to quietly pause and consider. You are in the Lord's presence right now. What does this mean to you?

Honor

Praise God as the Great I Am, who was, and is, and is to come.

Ask

*"The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will."*

- ROMANS 8:26-27 NLT

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to pray for whatever you are facing today.

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Read JUDE 22-23

**Group Question:** Have you ever hit a point in your life when you sincerely doubted your faith? What were the circumstances that led up to this crisis?



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**Group Question:** Were you able to see God's mercy in restoring your faith? How could you offer the same mercy to someone else who is struggling?



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**Group Question:** Read Galatians 6:1. What caution should believers take when trying to help another who is caught up in sin?



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# Submit to God

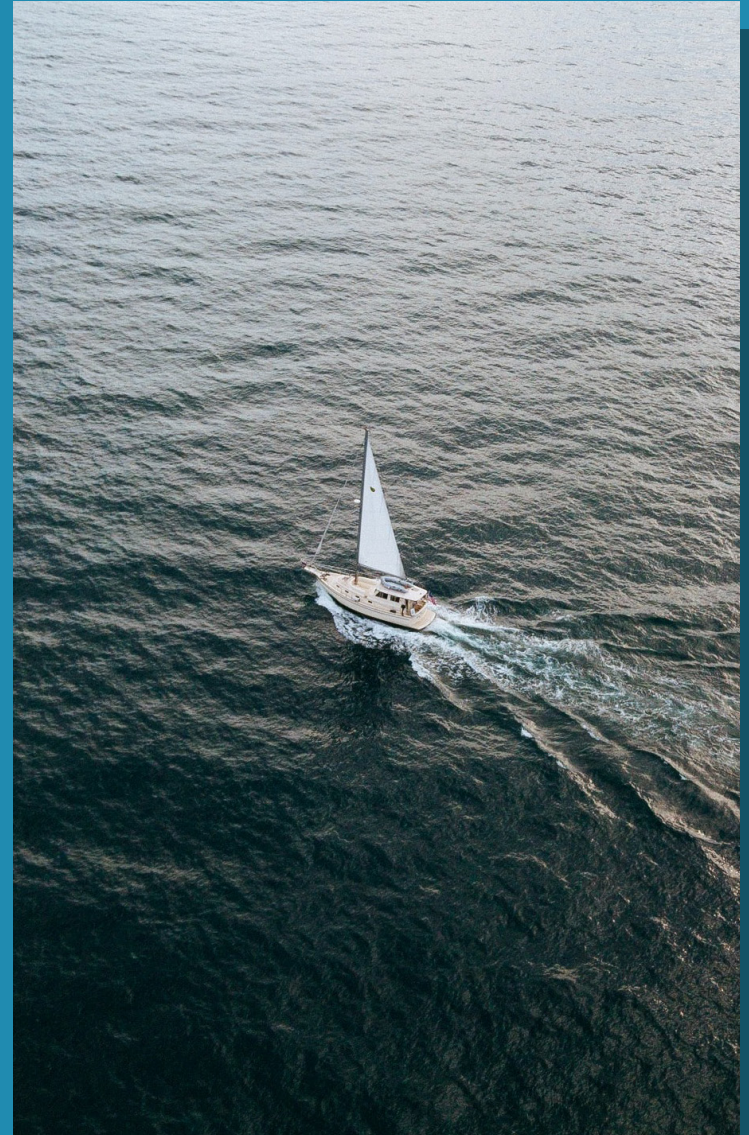
JAMES 4:7-17

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*“Come close to God,  
and He will come close to you.”*

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JAMES 4:8 NLT



Read JAMES 4:7

What two commands are given in verse 7?

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This is war! The first thing we must do in this battle is to submit to God, which means to order ourselves under His authority. In order to do this, we must know how He wants us to live, think, and act by studying His Word, the Bible. Secondly, we must seek His direction for specific situations through prayer. Psalm 18:30 tells us, “As for God, His way is perfect: The Lord’s Word is flawless; He shields all who take refuge in Him.” This is great news! God is completely trustworthy with our path today and our path in the future. He never changes and will never fail.

Do you remember a time when you submitted to the Lord’s direction in a difficult situation? What was the result?

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**Group Question:** In order to resist the devil, it is helpful to be ready in advance for his attacks. Read Ephesians 6:10-17. List the pieces of *The Armor of God*, and as you do, consider how each piece can help you resist the devil. Why would it be important to resolve ahead of time to resist the devil?



Satan is a defeated foe. Christ won the battle over evil at the cross, so Satan has no choice but to flee when we stand firm in our faith.

*“Humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time, He will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you. Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are. In His kindness, God called you to share in His eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So, after you have suffered a little while, He will restore, support, and strengthen you, and He will place you on a firm foundation. To Him be the power forever and ever. Amen.”*

1 PETER 5:6-11 NLT

Pray

Prepare

“Trust in the Lord always, for the Lord God is the Eternal Rock.”

- ISAIAH 26:4 NLT

Take a moment to consider how the Lord has been trustworthy to guide and protect you in the past.

Honor

“Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say, ‘Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.’”

- REVELATION 12:10 NIV

Praise God whose name is Victory! Praise Him that He defeated Satan at the cross, and we do not have to live under evil accusations anymore.

Ask

Speak to the Lord about what you are facing this week. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you submit to God and follow His guidance as you face this problem. Ask for protection from evil, and the ability to stand firm in your faith.

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Read JAMES 4:8-10

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near!”*

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-5 NIV

As a believer, how can you know God is always near?

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**Group Question:** Read Matthew 6:24. What does it mean to have a divided loyalty or to be double-minded?



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Has there been a time when you felt grief over something wrong you had done? Did you speak to God about it? What was the result?

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## Pray

### Prepare

*“Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ‘I will be found by you,’ declares the Lord.”*

- JEREMIAH 29:12-14 NIV

If we look for the Lord, He promises we will find Him. Take a moment to prayerfully look for the Lord.

### Honor

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”*

- MATTHEW 5:8 NIV

Praise God that one day you will see Him face to face!

### Ask

*“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens... a time to weep, and a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them.”*

- ECCLESIASTES 3:1, 4-5 NIV

If there is a sin that you know you need to repent of and grieve over, will you ask the Holy Spirit to walk you through this process? Will you trust God that there will be freedom and rejoicing on the other side of grief?

*“Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them.”*

PSALM 32:1-2 NIV

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Read JAMES 4:11-12 & JAMES 3:9

From James 3 and 4, what are the reasons we are not to speak evil against each other?

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**Group Question:** Although James never quotes Jesus' words, he does echo them in fresh ways. It is almost as if James had grown up with the Lord, heard his words, and now understood their meaning. Read Matthew 7:1-5. What do you learn about judging others from this passage?



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Who alone is worthy to judge?

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Pray

Prepare

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”*

- 1 PETER 1:3 NIV

Sit for a moment in thankfulness for your new birth, your living hope, and your future resurrection with Christ!

Honor

*“For we know Him who said, ‘It is mine to avenge. I will repay. The Lord will judge His people.’”*

- HEBREWS 10:30 NIV

Praise God as the only Lawgiver and Judge.

Ask

*“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”*

- 1 CORINTHIANS 15:57 NIV

We live in a society where gossip, criticism, and slander are rampant, but we do not have to fall into this trap. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you victory in this area, and to give you words that build others up and not tear them down.

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Read JAMES 4:13-16

Making plans and setting goals is not wrong, it is wise. But what is the problem with leaving God out of those plans?

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**Group Question:** What do you think is the root cause or characteristic which leads someone to make plans and reject the Lord's involvement?



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**Group Question:** In thinking about God's character, why is it wise to include Him in all our plans and goals?



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Pray

Prepare

Prepare to meet with the Lord in a spirit of thankfulness and trust.

Honor

*“For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

- JEREMIAH 29:11 NIV

Praise God as the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the One who knows the future as well as He knows the past. Thank Him for promising to have good plans for you.

Ask

*“Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”*

- PSALM 37:4 NASB

As you walk with the Lord step by step this week, ask Him to show you what plans to desire. Ask for the faith to believe He knows what is best for you.

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Read JAMES 4:17

### The Sin of Omission

**Group Question:** In the context of James 4, verse 17 is speaking about the foolishness of leaving God out of your work plans. Why is it dangerous to know something God is directing you to do at work, but not do it?



In a broader sense, how is it wrong to know the truth, but not speak up; to not come to another's defense? Why would it be wrong to feel the Holy Spirit guiding you to help someone, but to do nothing?

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What does this tell you about God's character, and what He expects of His followers?

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# Wealth and Patience

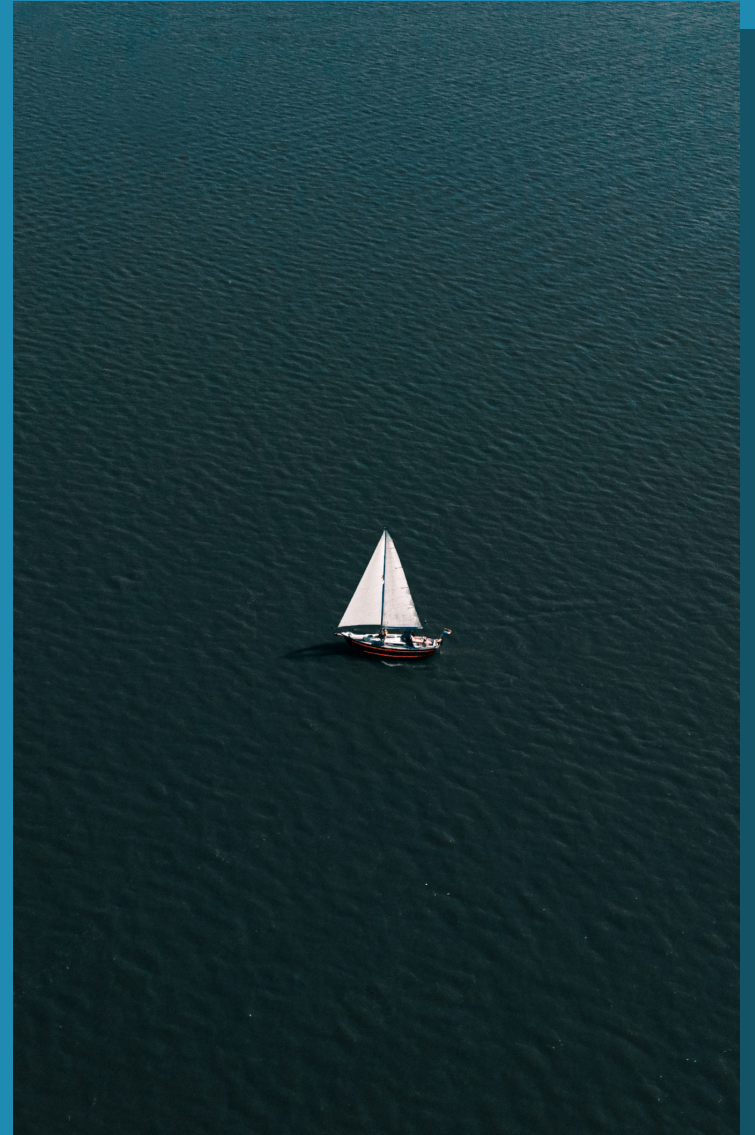
JAMES 5:1-12

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*“You must be patient. Take courage, for  
the coming of the Lord is near.”*

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JAMES 5:8 NLT



Read JAMES 5:1-3 & MATTHEW 6:19-21

### *The Truth about Wealth*

Wealth is not evil, it is a gift from God. We all need money to survive, but the love of wealth can lead to sin and spiritual bankruptcy. In Chapter 5, James gives a warning to everyone: money can corrupt. It can tempt us to hoard, to cheat, and to take advantage of others. The results of this wrong path are deadly. The apostle Paul agreed with this warning, and told Timothy:

*“Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap, and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*

1 TIMOTHY 6:9-10 NIV

Why is it foolish to put your trust in wealth?

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**Group Question:** Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. How should believers think about their money? What are we called to do?




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It is a blessing to be able to be generous!

*“Whoever is kind to the poor, lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done.”*

PROVERBS 19:17 NIV

*“For all the animals of the forest are mine, and I own the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for all the world is mine and everything in it.”*

PSALM 50:10-12 NLT

How do you think God looks at human wealth?

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## Pray

## Prepare

*“This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel says: ‘Only in returning to Me and resting in Me will you be saved. In quietness and trust is your strength...’”*

- ISAIAH 30:15 NLT

Worrying about not having enough can also tempt us to do wrong things. If you are having anxiety today over financial issues, will you take a quiet moment to sit with the Lord, and think about how trustworthy He is in everything.

## Honor

*“Forget the former things; Do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness (of lost dreams), and streams in the wasteland (of financial issues). The Lord gives water to His chosen, the people He formed for Himself, that they may proclaim His praise.”*

- ISAIAH 43:18-21 NIV

Praise God for His continual work in your life, which is ever new. Thank Him for the hope only He can bring.

## Ask

*“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.”*

- PHILIPPIANS 4:19 NIV

Bring your pressing needs to Him right now, and then watch in expectation to see Him work!

# Notes

Read JAMES 5:4-6

In James' day, when the poor owed money, they would often be forced to sell their possessions, or even sell family members into slavery. They could be thrown into debtor's prison, where they most likely stayed until they died, because they had no way of earning the money to pay off their debts.

What part did James say the rich had in the poor workers' fate?

*"This is what the Lord says, 'For three sins of Israel, even four, I will not relent. They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor and deny justice to the oppressed...'"*

AMOS 2:6-7 NIV

What wrong character qualities led to the mistreatment of employees?

In verse 4, *The Lord Almighty* can also be translated as *The Lord Sabaoth*. This is a specific name of God which refers to Him being *The Lord of Hosts*, or *The Lord of Heaven's Armies*.

What does *The Lord Sabaoth* know about the plight of the poor? What does this tell you about God's character?

Pray

Prepare

*“Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in Him, for He shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between His shoulders.”*

- DEUTERONOMY 33:12 NIV

Think about how the Lord has provided for you and protected you recently. Rest for a moment in His Presence.

Honor

*“The Lord gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from the upright. O Lord of Hosts, how blessed is the man who trusts in You!”*

- PSALM 84:11-12 NASB

Praise the Lord of Hosts for being trustworthy to supply everything you need.

Ask

*“For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.”*

- 1 TIMOTHY 6:7-8 NIV

As the Lord’s people, we are called to be gratefully content in His provision. This mindset can bring peace and freedom. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to develop grateful contentment in your life.

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Read JAMES 5:7-9

The New Testament believers thought the Lord would return very soon. Picture Christ's first and second comings as mountain peaks, seen in the distance. At first glance the peaks look very close together, but on closer inspection, they are actually a great distance apart. The early believers did not know about the Church Age, also called the Age of Grace, which occurs between Christ's two comings. This age has been going on for thousands of years, and is the time period we are currently living in.

What characteristics does James encourage believers to have as they wait for the Lord's return? How are farmers, who continue to work as they wait for rain, an example for us today?

**Group Question:** Read Philippians 2:12-15. From James and Philippians, how are we to be godly examples in our generation, while we wait on the Lord?



**Group Question:** Even though the subject of the James passage is about patiently waiting, he also seems to suggest that when the Lord does return, it will seem sudden; maybe even unexpected. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:1-9 and Matthew 24:36. What do these two passages tell you about Christ's return?



Pray

Prepare

*“People get ready, Jesus is coming, soon we’ll be going home...”*

- BY CRYSTAL LEWIS

Picture what it will be like when Jesus comes back.

Honor

*“For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”*

- 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16 NIV

Praise God for His promise of return!

Ask

*“He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”*

- ECCLESIASTES 3:11 NIV

We should live as people of Advent. Will you ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to live now as you watch and wait for Christ’s return?

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Read JAMES 5:10-11

### Purpose and Patience in Suffering

**Group Question:** The age-old question is: Why do bad things happen to good people? As a believer, how would you respond?



*“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.”*

ROMANS 8:28 NLT

When you are going through a time of suffering, do you usually feel God is still trustworthy to help you, and to have a purpose for the trial? Or do you struggle in this area?

*“I am certain that God, who began a good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”*

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 NLT

What did you learn about God’s character from these verses and discussion?

Pray

Prepare

Job said, *“For sighing has become my daily food; my groans pour out like water. What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.”*

- JOB 3:24-26 NIV

Have you ever felt like Job? Maybe you feel like this right now. Know that the Lord is near. He cares about you and will help you.

Honor

*“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed. The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.”*

- PSALM 34:18-19 NLT

Praise God for His compassion and mercy. He is mighty to save.

Ask

*“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”*

- ROMANS 12:12 NIV

Specifically ask for hope, patience, and faithfulness in what you are facing this week.

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Read

JAMES 5:12

In ancient times, people commonly swore by objects which were thought to contain spirits who would attest to the truth of their words. This practice was very close to idolatry.

**Group Question:** How can the words in your head be a barometer of your faith in God during a tough time? What should you do if you find your thoughts are wrong, hurtful, or damaging?



*“Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering... above all do not swear.”*

JAMES 5:10,12 NIV

As believers, often our most significant time of witness to others is when we are suffering. How can the words you use reveal to others what you believe about God?

*“For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts.”*

1 THESSALONIANS 2:4 NLT

Re-read James 5:10-12. What do you learn about God’s character from these verses?



Pray

Prepare

Take a moment to just listen to what the Lord would like to say to you.

Honor

*“He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.”*

- ISAIAH 53:7 NIV

Praise the Lord for giving up His right to argue His case, in order to save you from sin.

Ask

*“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”*

- ROMANS 12:2 NLT

Asking the Holy Spirit to renew your thoughts is a powerful way to pray. Ask Him to give you the right thoughts about your current situation, and to remind you of God’s faithfulness.

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# Prayer and Praise

JAMES 5:13-20 & JUDE 24-25

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*“The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”*

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JAMES 5:16 NIV



Read JAMES 5:13-14

What 3 questions does James ask in these verses? What 3 answers does he give?

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**Group Question:** Both prayer and praise are vital to healthy congregations, but unfortunately, they are often neglected in the modern-day church. Why do you think this is? How well would you say our church handles prayer and praise?




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**Group Question:** The Greek word for sick in these verses literally means “to be weak,” and can refer to physical illness, but also weakness in faith; possibly someone who has grown weary in suffering. Anointing oil is something that refreshes; it is good medicine, and the healing power of the Holy Spirit. What ways can a compassionate, healthy church offer a weakened member this type of help?




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*“We urge you, brothers and sisters...to encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone...always strive to do what is good for each other.”*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:14-15 NIV

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Pray

Prepare

*“Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, His praise in the assembly of His faithful people.”*

- PSALM 149:1 NIV

Meditate on this verse for a few moments. Sometimes it’s wonderful to turn the page; to entertain the idea of something new. What new song would you like to sing to the Lord?

Honor

*“For the Lord takes delight in His people; He crowns the humble with victory. Let His faithful people rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds.”*

- PSALM 149:4-5 NIV

Praise the Lord for taking delight in you and crowning you with victory. If you find yourself awake at night, consider using that opportunity to praise God.

Ask

Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you to pray and praise the Lord as you walk through this week.

Read JAMES 5:15-16

The Lord is the Great Physician, and He alone heals. But, He has ordained our prayers to be part of the healing process. Have you ever experienced the comfort of another believer's prayers when you were really suffering? How did this lift your spirits?

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**Group Question:** Read John 9:1-3 and John 11:4. What purpose did Jesus say physical suffering is intended to have?




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Read Matthew 9:2-8. If sin is involved in a person's suffering, what does the Lord offer?

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*"The Gentle Healer came into our town today, He touched blind eyes and the darkness left to stay, But more than the blindness, He took their sins away, The Gentle Healer came into our town today..."*

GENTLE HEALER BY CASTING CROWNS

Pray

Prepare

*“Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, my soul. I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.”*

- PSALM 146:1-2 NIV

We are to live as people of Praise. Think for a moment about what this would look like.

Honor

*“He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them. He remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord gives sight to the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.”*

- PSALM 146:6-8 NIV

Praise the Lord as Creator of heaven and earth. Thank Him for faithfully being your loving healer.

Ask

It is true that some sicknesses are not to be healed this side of heaven, but rest assured, for believers, healing will come in eternity. Pray for anyone you know who is deathly ill right now. Trust God with their life, and praise Him for His faithfulness.

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Read JAMES 5:17-18

*“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”*

JAMES 5:16 NKJV

In verses 17-18, James presents Elijah, one of Israel’s greatest prophets, as a man of effective prayer. Read 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:41-46. What did Elijah’s prayer help accomplish in this event? What do you think this proved to the evil King Ahab?

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**Group Question:** What do you think “effective prayer” involves?



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What does this discussion tell you about God’s desire to communicate with us?

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Pray

Prepare

*“Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise Him... the Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.”*

- PSALM 147:1,11 NIV

Consider the hope that God’s unfailing love brings.

Honor

*“He determines the number of stars and calls them each by name...He covers the sky with clouds; He supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills...He sends His command to the earth; His word runs swiftly. He spreads the snow like wool, and scatters the frost like ashes. He hurls down His hail like pebbles. Who can withstand His icy blast? He sends His word and melts them, He stirs up His breezes, and the waters flow.”*

- PSALM 147:4, 8, 15-18 NIV

Praise God as the Ruler over all creation.

Ask

**Effective prayer involves several components:**

First, we must actually pray. Next, we are to pray in line with Scripture, and pray expecting results. Present your requests to the Lord today, and watch and wait for His answer.

# Notes

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Read

JAMES 5:19-20 & JUDE 22-23

What do you think it means to “wander from the truth?” How is this person in serious trouble?

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**Group Question:** In what ways could a believer help to bring someone back to their faith? From Jude, what characteristics are important when trying to help someone in trouble?




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Reading between the lines, what is God’s desire for both the wayward and the helper?

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*“For all the transgressions which we have committed in the past year, against our fellow creatures, or against Thee, we implore forgiveness. Enter not into judgment with us, and regard with compassion our weakness. Confiding in the merits of the Saviour, O Lord, we crave pardon for the past, and strength to avoid a repetition of our errors in the days that approach... And for those who have wandered from the right path, be graciously pleased to enable them to retrace their steps. Console the afflicted in sickness and danger, and cheer the dying with a lively prospect of a blessed eternity. Thou only can guide us into paths of peace, and to thee, O God, who can accomplish all that Thy creatures can require, and more than they can imagine, be praise, gratitude, and everlasting glory. Amen.”*

FAMILY DEVOTIONS FOR EVERY MORNING  
AND EVENING BY STURM AND TIEDE.

Pray

Prepare

*“Praise the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary;  
praise Him in His mighty heavens.”*

- PSALM 150:1 NIV

Picture God in His throne room in Heaven.  
What images come to mind?

Honor

*“Praise Him for His acts of power; Praise Him for  
His surpassing greatness.”*

- PSALM 150:2 NIV

Take a moment to praise the Almighty God  
for his greatness and majesty.

Ask

*“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord.”*

- PSALM 150:6 NIV

Continue to praise Him for the mighty acts  
He has accomplished in your life.

# Notes

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Let's conclude this study by praising  
God with the words of Jude:

*“To Him who is able  
To keep you from stumbling and  
To present you before His glorious Presence  
Without fault and with great Joy-  
To the only God our Savior  
Be glory, majesty, power, and authority,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Before all ages, now and forevermore!  
Amen”*

JUDE 24-25

