

## James: Women's Bible Study Fall 2014

### James: Lesson One

#### Introduction to James

\*A Jan Robb challenge! Jan always encouraged us to memorize a verse along with its address (chapter and verse). Choose a verse to memorize!

Before you begin each day:

- a. Pray asking God to speak to you through His Resident Teacher.
- b. Use your Bible only unless otherwise noted.
- c. Write your answers and verses you have used.

Challenge/Personal questions are if you have time and desire, and to be shared only if you wish.

#### Introductory Notes:

There is some interesting historical background to keep in mind as we study through the epistle of James: James is possibly the earliest New Testament writing, preceding all the other epistles. It is a letter written by a Jew to a Jewish audience and is notably different in its style from the Pauline epistles which we have already studied. The epistles of Paul are written to specific churches and individuals.

The book of James is one of the general epistles written to a more general audience. Each writer of a general epistle, James, Peter, John and Jude deals with doctrine but includes an emphasis on a particular truth. James is the apostle of works, Peter writes messages of hope, John emphasizes love and Jude speaks of the need for true faith.

John Calvin writes of some early opposition to the inclusion of James in the New Testament because of a seeming emphasis on justification by works over grace. Martin Luther called James an "epistle of straw", lacking doctrinal substance. Luther's concern with James is obvious when you compare Galatians 3:11, "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the 'righteous shall live by faith'", with James 2: 17 which states "So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

In Titus 3:1, Titus was instructed by Paul to "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work". So building on our studies of Titus, we will begin our study of the book of James.

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Read James 2:14-26

Day One: Read through the book of James as an overview. In your own words, write down what you consider to be the theme of this book. If there is a verse that in particular strikes you, write it down along with its significance to you to share with the group.

Day Two: Read James 1:1-12, concentrating on verse 1.

1. Who is the author of this book? If you have the time, do a little research and discover the four men named "James" who are mentioned in the New Testament.
2. How does he describe himself?
3. To whom is this book addressed? Are they Christians? See James 2:1.
4. What is the "Dispersion"? In what conditions are these Jews living?

Day Three: Read James 1: 2-4.

A recurrent theme in James is progression or cause and effect: how an idea or event leads to an action which leads to another action. You might see this as a chain reaction of thoughts and behaviors. Jan Robb expressed this as the React/Respond equation: We react with our emotions. We discern with our intellect. We respond with our will.

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1. In verse 2, what action are we instructed to take? What part of you takes this action?
2. When are we instructed to take this action?
3. What are trials and testing? Are they the same or different? Do a word search to compare the two words.
4. What is the product of testing in verse 3? Different translations will have different words. Make note of the word in your version and look up a definition for it.

## Day Four: Reread James 1:2-4.

1. What does steadfastness or perseverance, verse 3, do for and in you?
2. What does it mean to be perfect? Compare the following verses: Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 12:9.
3. Who makes us perfect? Compare Hebrews 12:2 and Hebrew 10:1.

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### Day 5: Challenge/Personal

What trials are you facing now? Do you find it possible to "count it all joy"? Are there temptations in your life that you feel powerless to resist? Share if you are comfortable in doing so. Pray for strength for yourself and others for the grace to grow in times of trial and testing.

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### James: Lesson 2

#### Testing of Your Faith

##### Day One: Read James 1:1-12

1. What is Godly wisdom? Read the following passages: Hebrews 5:14, Romans 11:33, 1 Corinthians 3:18-19. What do you find?
2. What is the source of Godly wisdom and how do you get it? Read Proverbs 1:7 and James 1:5.
3. In verse 7, what is the barrier to receiving wisdom from God?

##### Day Two: Doubt

1. Godly wisdom in trials is knowledge and understanding of God's character and nature and His purpose in including trials in our lives. Doubt undermines our faith yet we have all doubted. Read Mark 9:17-24. Describe this event.
2. Was the father a double minded man as described in James 1:8? Why or why not?
3. Jan Robb defined faith as: Firm conviction, personal surrender and life evidence. How would you measure the father in Mark according to this definition?

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### Day Three: James 1:9-11

#### Riches and poverty: An overview

1. What does Proverbs 30:7-9 have to say about wealth and poverty?
2. Luke 21:2. Poverty and giving?
3. Matthew 19:16-22. Matthew 13:22. Riches and commitment?
4. Matthew 19:23-30. Riches and self-sufficiency?

### Day Four:

1. Why is the lowly (poor) brother to boast? What is exalted about him?
2. What is the humiliation of the rich? Is it the Christian rich man or the wealth of the ungodly?
3. Read Luke 12:13-20. What does Christ have to say about the permanence of possessions and wealth?

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Day Five: Challenge/personal. Our security and hope does not depend on our bank accounts. Read Hebrews 11 and make note of the faithful witnesses described. Prepare a verse or thoughts on this passage to share with the group.

\*Have you chosen a verse to memorize? Consider using it today when we pray back God's words as we close our study!