

PART 3

CONNECT GUIDE

Church	9 AM Prepare Project Soccer Practice Twins B-ball Practice Bible Study	12 PM Project Due Soccer Practice	3 PM Church	6 PM Soccer Practice Twins B-ball Practice	6 PM GOSPEL Dinner with the Gaskins	9 AM GOSPEL
11	12	13	14	15	16	
Going to the Beach GOSPEL	GOSPEL	GOSPEL	GOSPEL Soccer Practice Twins B-ball Practice	GOSPEL Soccer Practice Pool Party	GOSPEL Kim's B-Day Party	
Church	9 AM		6 PM	6 PM	6 PM	
 EVERYDAY GOSPEL						
25	26	27	28	29	30	
GOSPEL Church Smokies Game	GOSPEL Soccer Practice Twins B-ball Practice Bible Study	GOSPEL Soccer Practice	GOSPEL Soccer Practice Twins B-ball Practice	Girl's Day GOSPEL Soccer Practice Twins B-ball Practice	GOSPEL Pool Party	GOSPEL
9 AM	9 AM	6 PM	6 PM	6 PM	6 PM	
Aug 1	2	3	4	5	6	

WALLACE MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Composed By: Chase Campbell
Designed By: Jarred Morgan

AS WE BEGIN

A READING PLAN

WEEK 9

- Day 1: James 1
- Day 2: James 2
- Day 3: James 3
- Day 4: James 4
- Day 5: James 5

WEEK 11

- Day 1: James 1
- Day 2: Genesis 50
- Day 3: Nahum 1
- Day 4: Psalm 34
- Day 5: Isaiah 40

WEEK 10

- Day 1: James 5
- Day 2: Amos 6
- Day 3: Deuteronomy 8
- Day 4: Proverbs 11
- Day 5: Proverbs 15:25-27

WEEK 12

- Day 1: James 1
- Day 2: James 2
- Day 3: James 3
- Day 4: James 4
- Day 5: James 5

WEEK NINE

DAY 1: JAMES 1

UUPG Prayer Focus: Jiamao Li in China / Lintang in Indonesia

Have you ever received an email or a text message, thought you understood, but then had to completely reinterpret when you actually spoke to the person? This is actually a common occurrence. That's because we often get the content of the text, but we miss the tone. It is, after all, difficult to communicate tone through writing. In person we can change our inflection, use body language, or adjust our volume to accent the tone of what we're saying so it's easy to hear and see. When we read, it requires us to be much more analytical. That is what we're going to do this week in our study of James.

James uses short choppy thoughts, lots of commands, and intense language. When we put those together, along with understanding the persecution of the early church we can quickly realize that the tone of James is all about urgency. It only takes a second to see this in his words. The greeting is short. There is no extended story about James's affection for the church, or how the letter was delivered. No, the first sentence is about enduring trials to gain maturity. Notice that he doesn't say "if" you experience trials. He says "when" you experience trials. James' tone is not one of hypothetical possibilities. He is speaking to a church that must prepare and act immediately like their life depends on it. Because for them, it does.

We can absolutely learn thousands of lessons from the content of James, but let's not miss the tone. Our eternity, and the eternity of a lost and dying world depends on what we tell them about Jesus and how our actions give that message credibility. James speaks with a tone of urgent action, and perhaps the best thing we can do is adopt the same mentality.

Today's focus verse: James 1:2-4

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 2: JAMES 2

UUPG Prayer Focus: Chenoua in Algeria / Mubi in Chad

The tone of James 2 is just as intense as the first chapter. Much of the New Testament is written by Paul and John who prefer to expound on the theology before explaining how it applies, but James gives you his theology in the context of a consistent urgent commandment. The beginning of chapter 2 is a perfect example of this. He could have preceded this with a lengthy discussion on how we are all equally sinful, and yet equally loved by God. Instead he starts straight into how we should not show favoritism in our church services. James' belief is real

and tangible and he has no time for making compromises with the world so he gives you that belief in the form of a command.

It's also the same for the second half of the chapter. "Faith without works is dead," probably didn't soothe the congregation. It probably wasn't popular with those trying to pacify those who stood against the church. In a way, James is saying "If your faith isn't leading to meaningful and noticeable changes in your life then you're wasting time with something that's not Christianity." Once again we can learn a great lesson here. Too often we get comfortable with the compromise, slow change, and a faith that is almost theoretical. Let's take the same urgency with our growth that James expects from the church in Jerusalem. Let's be focused on how the Holy Spirit is changing us. Let's embrace conviction. Let's make sure our faith is leading to immediate action.

Today's focus verse: James 2:14

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 3: JAMES 3

UUPG Prayer Focus: Senga in Zambia / Deaf Ivoirians in Cote d'Ivoire

Today we come to one of the main reasons for analyzing the tone of James. James has covered trials, wealth, favoritism, maturity, faith, and several other ideas. He covers each of them in rapid fire, with the tone of urgent action that we've pointed out. One would think that this method would continue, but all of a sudden in chapter 3 we get an extended discussion on controlling the tongue. With such an intense pace and so many topics, why would James slow down and devote an entire chapter to a single idea?

Because it's urgent. James hasn't switched his method, he has simply come to what he feels is the most urgent of all the matters he needs to instruct the church about. That means that gossip, back biting, lying, manipulating, and quite frankly trash talk was an enormous problem in the early church. The fact that James takes so long to address it means that it was obscuring the Gospel and driving people away. The way the early church spoke to, and about each other was obscuring their faith to the point of urgency.

Let's not fool ourselves. The way we speak is doing the same thing today. Too often churches are full of gossip. Too often people are "just venting" about other people while saying

horrible demeaning things about fellow believers. Even worse, our political climate and social media culture have normalized harassing and belittling people who have different opinions about economics, infrastructure, or some obscure law. So what can we learn from James? Let's stop acting like what we say isn't a big deal. Let's stop claiming "they're just words." Let's stop excusing celebrities and politicians who belittle and curse others. Let's stop pretending that "freedom of speech" somehow outweighs our spiritual responsibility as Christians. Let's take this as seriously as James did 2000 years ago.

Today's focus verse: James 3:10

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 4: JAMES 4

UUPG Prayer Focus: Kasar in India / Bebele in Cameroon

The tone of James chapter 4 is just as intense as the previous chapters. This chapter however shows us more of James' personality. That's because the choices he makes in communication reveal his intense and passionate frustration with the church's conduct. This entire chapter could almost be characterized by the phrase "Do you seriously still not

get this?" The correction on desire and prayer is not a gentle reminder, it's an accusation of subversion. Phrases like "you adulterous people," "Do you not know?" and "Who are you to judge?" reveal that James is clearly placing the urgency of biblical authority over the comfort and the feelings of his individual members.

This IS Scripture though, and as believers we take the words, their intent, and their delivery as endorsed and inspired by God. The question then is why are we not willing to hear the same urgency from our own leaders? If James was a 21st century pastor in the American South he would most likely have been fired for delivering a message this way. As we understand James' tone we must also question our own commitment to spiritual growth and Scriptural authority. We must ask ourselves if we are coming to the Bible and the church to be validated and entertained, or are we willing to submit to the authority of Scripture and make urgent changes in our lives.

Today's focus verse: James 4:4

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 5: JAMES 5

UUPG Prayer Focus: Fulanke in Mali / Tamboli in India

In this final chapter we see James once again adopt his rapid fire, concise, approach to a number of different topics. The second half of this chapter, however, seems to calm just a bit in its intensity. This is where we see James' love and care for the people in his church become apparent. The audience is no longer being addressed in various versions of "you people," but instead are now being referred to as "brothers and sisters." We see that he cares for their patience, their suffering, and their growth. It's actually here in the final passages that we see the reason for James' urgency and intensity come out.

His final words are all about turning people from judgment, avoiding condemnation, and restoring the sinner. James isn't just an ornery or angry person. He simply cares enough, as a leader in the church, to put the truth above the offense that it may give. His tone of frustration isn't because he hates his congregation, it's because he loves them and immediately wants better for them. James sees clearly and realizes that our time is too short to do anything but beg and plead that people take their belief seriously. So as we reflect on the tone of James, let's make sure we do our best to adopt his seriousness and urgency as we seek to grow everyday.

Today's focus verse: James 4:11

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DISCUSSION GUIDE: AUGUST 9, 2026

WEEK NINE: JAMES 5:1-6

This week we focused on the tone we find in the book of James. We learned that this letter is urgent and action oriented. The specific words that James chooses are designed to be motivational and intense. James pushes so hard on life changing belief because he clearly cares for the members of his church. Today your campus pastor will take a further look at what James has to say about how we allocate our resources to honor God and serve His kingdom.

ACTION STEP

How will I live out the action step this week?

SERMON NOTES

[illegible]

CONNECT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK 9

- Have you ever “put your eggs in the wrong basket?” Made a bad investment? Completely misjudged what your priorities should have been? When did you figure it out? Were you upset because you put your resources in the wrong place? Have you learned to be more careful now?
- In verse 2 and 3 James condemns those who are wealthy for using their resources to buy worldly luxuries instead of investing in God’s kingdom. How does materialism like this affect us in our culture? How can we guard against the temptation of materialism?
- What is the difference between being responsible with your money and “fattening your heart in the day of slaughter?” How can we make sure we are being wise with our resources without putting our hope or trust in them?
- James offers a specific condemnation of those who mistreat and defraud their employees in verse 4. As Christians how should we advocate for things like fair treatment in the workplace and business ethics? When our culture uses phrases like “it’s just business.” How should we respond?
- Why is it tempting to always save more for ourselves than to give generously to missions and churchplanting?

WEEK 10

DAY 1: JAMES 5

UUPG Prayer Focus: Mareko in Ethiopia / Deaf Portuguese in Portugal

Several weeks ago we talked about wealth, and its use, as one of James' central themes in this book. This can be fairly uncomfortable because as 21st century Americans our cultural thoughts on wealth can differ drastically from a 1st century eastern mediterranean view. We see that James has little more than accusations and condemnation for those who are considered "rich." He uses phrases like "The rich man should boast in his humiliation." He describes them by saying "Don't the rich oppress you, drag you into court, and blaspheme the good name that was invoked over you?" He even seems to have a particular disdain for traveling merchants as he tells them to submit their plans to God at the end of chapter 4.

The first section of chapter 5 seems to be the harshest warning there is though. James warns the wealthy to weep and wail over the miseries that are headed towards them. Is this because having money is inherently wrong? No, but it is an almost insurmountable temptation. The people he is speaking to have clearly put their trust and security in their wealth and the luxuries it affords them. Moreover, James is making it clear that any mistreatment of those who work for the wealthy is seen as an injustice toward God Himself. There is no room for "it's just business," in the New Testament, and James is

warning the rich that no profit margin is ever worth dishonesty or mistreatment.

We would be wise to take James' warning to heart. Most of us in this church would be considered "rich" by first century standards. Many of us own businesses. Most of us own plenty of clothing and are well fed. Should we abandon this all and become monks in the wilderness? No, but we absolutely should recognize the particular temptations of our cultural context and fight back against greed with generosity.

Today's focus verse: Matthew 5:1

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 2: AMOS 6

UUPG Prayer Focus: Deaf Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan / Kasar in India

For several weeks at the beginning of our study we compared James to other New Testament books so we could see the consistency of thought and theme throughout the New

Testament. There is, however, still an idea that is prevalent among many that the New Testament is somehow a complete departure from the Old Testament. Didn't God bless Job, David, and Solomon with great riches? Isn't James warning against the rich somehow at odds with God's action toward ancient Israel?

Our reading in Amos today shows that God's message through the prophets also warned Israel of putting their trust in God's blessings instead of God Himself. In many ways the crime that Israel committed was embracing excess while the poor starved in the streets. God is clear that when He offers great blessing it should inspire imitation and generosity, not greed and hoarding. Amos' accusation that God's enemies "lay on beds of Ivory," while "dining on the flock," is a clear statement that God does not intend to tolerate lavishness and arrogance as a result of His favor.

The warning is consistent from the Old Testament to the New Testament. God's blessings are meant to be used as tools to spread his glory and support his people. They are not intended to be hoarded and only enjoyed by the few. So let's embrace generosity and avoid the imminent catastrophe of greed.

Today's focus verse: 1 Timothy 6:10

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 3: DEUTERONOMY 8

UUPG Prayer Focus: Cishinga in Zambia / Bari in India

So James and Amos agree... but that hardly makes an argument for consistency across the entire Bible... right? Well, that's why we'll also see a similar theme in Deuteronomy. (Which happened several hundred years before Amos, and over a thousand years before James.) Deuteronomy is a book that occurs at the end of Israel's tumultuous time in the wilderness. No one is dealing with the temptation of wealth as they gather enough manna for a single day then pack up their tent to continue their nomadic journey. God makes it clear that He has let them experience hunger, struggle, and need so that they can be humble and realize their dependence on Him.

The warning, however, isn't to avoid acquiring wealth or being fed. The warning is to remember God as the source of all blessings. God reminds Israel that he fed them from the sky. He gave them water from the rock. He gave them the plunder from Egypt. He was the one who protected them from all the dangers along the way. Deuteronomy 8 is a good reminder to all of us that we can't boast. We can't claim rights, or ownership, or earnings. Everything we have, and everything we've survived up to this point is a gift from the Lord. He only asks that we remember that and act accordingly

Today's focus verse: Deuteronomy 8:11-14

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 4: PROVERBS 11

UUPG Prayer Focus: Arabs in Austria / Jola-Karon in The Gambia

Most people attribute the bulk of Proverbs to Solomon. When we talk about Solomon, we are talking about a man who was one of the wealthiest people in the entire world during his reign. Not because of conquest, or scheming, but because it was gifted to him. Yet we see that gift, along with many others, was ultimately twisted. Solomon became too secure in his own mind, his own abilities, and his own wealth. The wisest man who ever lived did the most foolish thing a man could do and abandoned God for idolatry.

Perhaps that's what gives this warning in Proverbs such gravity and a touch of irony. Anyone who puts their trust in riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish. We've said all along that money is simply a tool we should be leveraging to cultivate our own generosity and show God's love to others. It

seems the only way to avoid the temptation to trust in wealth is to generously give it away. So today, let's take the advice of someone who missed it themselves. Let's not put our trust in economies, savings, earnings, or comforts, but let's remember the God who gave it to us and make His name great

Today's focus verse: James 11:28

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 5: PROVERBS 15:25-27

UUPG Prayer Focus: Yazidi Kurds in Germany / Dadupanthi in India

This week we've seen that James' New Testament ethics on faith and wealth are consistent with the entire Bible. The message remains the same throughout the years, because God and his perfect character are unchanging. These ethics don't always agree with the cultural norms of our 21st century and perhaps they made us uncomfortable a few times. That's okay. Whenever we get confused and uncomfortable we can ask the Holy Spirit to convict us about the places we continue to resist change in our hearts and He will gladly help out.

So as we end this week, I'd ask that we take just a few minutes to meditate on another proverb that gives us the exact warning of James 5. Let's keep on going to work. Let's keep flourishing and making wise financial decisions. Let us never compromise our integrity and harm someone else in the name of profit. Let's never put our trust in wealth but use it as a tool to bless others, glorify God, and be part of His mission.

Today's focus verse: Proverbs 15:27

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DISCUSSION GUIDE: AUGUST 16, 2026

WEEK TEN: JAMES 5:7-11

This week in our devotions, we learned how James' numerous commentaries on wealth and morality are consistent with the law and the prophets of the Old Testament. We learned how submitting our material resources shows trust in God and allows us to cultivate generosity. Today, your campus pastor will talk to you about showing endurance as we patiently wait on God.

ACTION STEP _____

How will I live out the action step this week?

SERMON NOTES

[illegible]

CONNECT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK 10

- Have you ever waited on something so long that you gave up hope? Maybe it was food at a restaurant, maybe it was a date who didn't show, maybe it was that second national championship? What eventually made you lose patience and give up? What would have given you hope and kept you waiting?
- How does being patient show that we trust God? What are some other passages of Scripture that tell us to be patient? Make a list with your group.
- In verse 9, James tells us that part of being patient and showing endurance is not complaining about our fellow church members. What are some specific ways we can cultivate trust and patience between church members to avoid unnecessary conflict?
- James tells us that Job and the prophets are great examples of patiently enduring hardship for God. What are some specific ways we can follow their examples when things get tough in our lives? How can we help our fellow church members endure when they have hard times?
- Where are you going to try and show some extra patience this week?

WEEK ELEVEN

DAY 1: JAMES 1

UUPG Prayer Focus: Ewe in Benin / Bambara in Senegal

From Genesis 3 onward, we have a consistent theme throughout the Bible. Our sin mingling with everyone else's sin in a fallen world creates difficult circumstances. More simply put: The Bible tells us that if people are involved there's gonna be some difficulty. Most of human history is actually an effort to avoid difficulty and find ease or comfort. James on the other hand tells us that we should count these difficulties and trials as an exciting opportunity for growth. James tells us in chapter 1 verses 2 and 3 "Consider it great joy, my brothers and sisters, when you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

This isn't the type of thing anyone wants to hear in the middle of a trial they are facing. It's often too late to change our attitude or perspective when we find ourselves deep in unpleasant circumstances or even tragedy. That's why we have to take this advice now. We have to learn to change our perspective on the easy things like traffic, telemarketers, or bad customer service, before we can ever imagine treating illness, job loss, or conflict as a growth opportunity. So today, as we read, let's begin to think of every small trial as a way to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Today's focus verse: James 1:2-3

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 2: GENESIS 50

UUPG Prayer Focus: Chamba Bedouin in Algeria / Greeks in Russian Federation

James tells us to count trials as joy because they give us an opportunity for growth, but what did the Old Testament tell us about facing trials? After all, it's not like difficulty, tragedy, or pain are modern inventions. Yet we see an example of what James is talking about in the very first book of the Bible. The last story in Genesis is that of Joseph. Joseph had a difficult life with a lot of ups and downs along the way. He was beaten nearly to death, and sold into slavery by his brothers. He lived as a slave in Egypt. He was falsely accused of sexual misconduct and spent years in prison. Eventually, he was released from prison and ended up becoming one of the highest ranking officials in the entire kingdom.

If any of us went through what Joseph did we would probably be bitter. We would be angry at the brothers and even resentful

towards God. Yet Joseph still chose to help his brothers and save his entire family when they came to Egypt seeking aid. He told them that while they may have intended evil with their actions, God intended the same exact circumstances for good. Joseph understood that God can redeem anything. It's a power far beyond anything you and I could ever understand. Joseph's trials produced a type of endurance, maturity, and wisdom that most of us will never understand in this lifetime. James is simply telling us to take the same attitude on the small things.

Today's focus verse: Genesis 50:20

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 3: NAHUM 1

UUPG Prayer Focus: Jimdar in India / Deaf Tajikistan in Tajikistan

So we know that James wants us to embrace trials as an opportunity for growth. We also saw that Joseph provided an example of trusting God and seeing a bigger picture that allowed him to have hope even in the middle of terrible

circumstances. Yet, when hard times happen it's often the first reaction of human nature to ask "Where is God in all of this? Has He abandoned us?" The answer is an obvious no, God has told us over and over again that He will never abandon us. Even in the middle of judgment, like that which was being pronounced on Nineveh in the book of Nahum, God will still give love and mercy to those who trust in Him.

Nahum chapter 1 doesn't paint a pretty picture. Over 100 years after Jonah begrudgingly brought an offer of repentance to Nineveh, they've once again embraced their sinful ways of violence, oppression, and idolatry. Yet right there in the middle of a foreboding terror, we see Nahum remind us that God will still be a refuge for those who run to Him. Yes, Nineveh went back to its wicked ways, but there were probably still faithful individuals and families just like those God had to care for when He brought the same destruction and judgment to Israel. So what do we do when God feels far away and times get tough? Cry out for mercy. Empty your heart in prayer. Run to Him with faith and trust, and He has proven that He will always remain faithful.

Today's focus verse: Nahum 1:7

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 4: PSALM 34

UUPG Prayer Focus: Rajpurohit in India / Eastern Baloch in India

Joy in trials, growth in difficulty, trust in what feels like chaos? This whole lesson about struggle and maturity feels very counterintuitive. That's because our sinful human nature will always tell us to trust ourselves, seek comfort, demand validation, and be bitter about what happened. God isn't asking something simple of us with this, He's asking us to let the Holy Spirit change the natural bent of our hearts. "Ok... but what do we actually do to make it through these trials?" If we're going to have to deny our nature and in many cases our survival instincts then we need to know exactly what to do when the hard times hit.

Davis was not a stranger to trials and difficulty. He was a shepherd. He was a warrior. He was a hunted refugee. He was a king who made bad choices and suffered the consequences. What was his advice? Well in Psalm 43 he tells us that when times get tough we should do 2 things. We should praise God, and repent. Talk about going the opposite way of our instincts! When the world feels painful and terrible we can right our perspective by recognizing the greatness of God, and our own flaws. It probably won't feel right when you try it the first time. That's why it has to be a discipline. We have to acknowledge the perfect plan of God when we face small

difficulties if we ever want to have the type of trust we see in David and Joseph when they faced catastrophe.

So next time the circumstances in your life get difficult, take just a moment and praise God for who He is, recognize your own flaws, confess them, and trust God to orchestrate all things together in time.

Today's focus verse: Psalm 34:1

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 5: ISAIAH 40

UUPG Prayer Focus: Deaf Emiratis in United Arab Emirates / Suri in Ethiopia

The last lesson we need to consider as we try and take joy in our trials is that we don't always see time the same way God does. We need relief right now. We are filled with anxiety because we don't know what's next. We only know how to be who we are in this moment at this exact time. God, on the other hand, sees all eternity. He knows every intricate detail of every action that will ever take place and how it all fits

together. He knew this even when Israel was experiencing judgment at the hands of the Assyrians. He had Isaiah deliver numerous prophetic statements of judgment and coming consequences, but in chapter 40 He also reminded His people that He cared for them and had a plan. He told them to wait. When all their instincts screamed “run” God told them to wait on Him.

Because we are so finite, and so temporary, all we can see is right now and it makes everything seem so much bigger, so much scarier, so much more urgent. The Bible tells us that we will suffer in this life because of sin, and that we will also encounter even more difficulty if we follow Jesus. Yet that faith and trust in Jesus is the only thing that guarantees our safety. God told His people to wait on Him. He told them to trust in something they wouldn’t even see in their lifetime. He was absolutely faithful though, because He sent Jesus. It’s only when we have enough trust in Jesus to save us in the next life that we can embrace proper perspective in this life.

Yes, we will have pain and suffer in this life, but Jesus will wipe all of that away and carry us to eternal safety with Him as long as we keep our faith in Him. It’s that eternal safety, that perfect end point that will eventually allow us to greet trials with joy. Jesus is the only thing that will ever make it okay. So let’s put our trust in Him.

Today’s focus verse: Isaiah 40:31

This is how I’m going to live this verse out today:

This is who I’m going to share this lesson with:

DISCUSSION GUIDE: AUGUST 23, 2026

WEEK ELEVEN: JAMES 5:12

This week in our devotions we looked at James' statement on embracing trials as an opportunity for growth and maturity. We learned how the Old Testament authors wrote stories and poetry about God's faithfulness in their lives so that we would not forget all that He has already done for us. Today your campus pastor will go into great depth on James 5:12 and we can learn what it means to be direct and trustworthy with our speech.

ACTION STEP _____

How will I live out the action step this week?

SERMON NOTES

[illegible]

CONNECT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK 11

- Have you ever been in a conversation where someone refused to give you a straight answer? Maybe it was a salesman, a customer service rep, or a friend who didn't want to admit something. Why is it so frustrating when someone evades a question they're being asked?
- Read Matthew 5:33-37. James is quoting Jesus here in this passage. What oath did their ancestors break? Was it just one? What consequences did this have?
- What is the difference between telling the whole truth and "technically not lying?" How does the intent of what we're saying affect truthfulness beyond just stating correct facts?
- How can simple honesty help us create trust with those outside the church? How can that trust then help us share the Gospel?

WEEK TWELVE

DAY 1: JAMES 1

UUPG Prayer Focus: Tama in Sudan / Saraogi in India

As we look into the first chapter of James there is an abundance of knowledge, and truth that we can find in the chapter. Even though we can't go over the full chapter today we are immediately handed a counter cultural truth that flips our natural reaction to hardside and completely upside down. In verse two we are told to consider it all joy when we face trials and tribulations. Let's be completely honest: that's almost offensive when in the thick of the storm. Our natural reaction to when life gets heavy is not joy, it's worry, or at least for me its survival. James in our focus point today isn't asking us to ignore the pain or pretend it isn't real. He is calling us to understand that the struggles we go through are not forgotten by God, but in fact those are the exact materials God uses to grow us closer to Him.

When we shift our perspective from why is this happening to me? To What is God producing in me, everything changes. The trial or tribulation may not immediately go away or even get better. However, James 1:12 tells us that whoever perseveres under trial will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. Don't let the trial or tribulation in your life win, but instead remember that pain is temporary but victory is eternal. It is the promise that the

pain, the temptations, and all the trials we experience while on earth will be consumed by the glory of eternity. It is the final "welcome home" after having completed a difficult journey.

Today's focus verse: James 1:12

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 2: JAMES 2

UUPG Prayer Focus: Egyptian Arabs in Oman / Arabs in Denmark

James Chapter 2 again shows us and truly teaches us a wide variety of things. We see the chapter split into the first passages being about partiality, and the second passages about faith and deeds together. Today we will be honing in on the first part of the passage about showing partiality. Partiality is something we sometimes don't even recognize that we are doing, however it cuts to the core of how we treat others who are made in God's image. It is so easy for us to be attracted to people who can give us comfort, recognition, and affirmation, ignoring the ones that do not have anything to offer us in return. However, James reminds us to reveal these subtle biases that are often overlooked. If we decide

to value people equally, regardless of their social standing or cultural background we begin to view them closer to as the Lord would.

James Chapter 2:13 tells us that "For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment." Mercy dies when partiality thrives. Implementing this text involves consciously being aware of those whom we could be ignoring or excluding from our lives within our everyday surroundings—be that at work, at school, or within our community circles. Showing care, consideration, and respect to everyone irrespective of their position and background will implement mercy as an active process.

Today's focus verse: Luke James 2:13

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 3: JAMES 3

UUPG Prayer Focus: Nai in India / Levantine Bedawi Arabs in Syria

Chapter 3 of James from verse 3-12 is all about taming the tongue. All of James gives us many challenging things to apply, however these verses I would argue are the hardest to do daily. We have all heard the phrase sticks and stones can break my bones but words can never hurt me. That is just simply not true, and whenever we open our mouths it is a gateway to what is in our hearts. It either can be a way to point to Christ or a quick way to reveal what's truly in our hearts. James is trying to get us to see that the tongue can be the greatest weapon or most devastating weapon we have as humans.

Because your words and what you say to someone matters verse 5 of chapter 3 says "So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!" James is telling us that one small slip up in a moment of anger can greatly hinder us from sharing the gospel, or possibly even ruin our witness as believers. However, holding our tongue can do the exact opposite. It not only tells others that the negative situations in our lives don't control us, but more importantly it shows what's in our heart.

Today's focus verse: James 3:5; 10

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 4: JAMES 4

UUPG Prayer Focus: Jarkhandi Hajiam in India / Yombe in Angola

In chapter 4 of James we see a clear roadmap of how to submit yourself fully to God, and how we get the Lord to draw near to us. In a world full of confusion, and doubt on how to hear the Lord's voice James shows us exactly how to do that. In James 4:7-8 it says "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." What a beautifully simple way to hear from the God of the universe. Resist the devil, purify your hearts, and draw near to God. That is how we hear from him, simple obedience and full surrender to the Lord daily. Before we can stand strong against temptation or negative habits, we must first yield our hearts to Him. When we actively resist compromise and choose God's way instead of our own, temptation loses its hold, and the weight of self-reliance begins to lift.

The most incredible part of this passage that brings comfort to me is, this closeness to the Lord is never out of reach. He is waiting for us to fully surrender all of our life to Him. Drawing near may seem daunting, however all it is honest, and humble submission daily. As we do that we realize that the Lord isn't waiting to condemn us for our actions, He is a concerned father trying to help us not make mistakes, but still meets us where we are. When you take one step toward God, He responds by filling your life with His presence, guidance, and unwavering peace.

Today's focus verse: James 4:7-8

This is how I'm going to live this verse out today:

This is who I'm going to share this lesson with:

DAY 5: JAMES 5

UUPG Prayer Focus: Russians in Cyprus / Greeks in Albania

In a world full of instant results and immediate responses to everything, waiting patiently even suffering seems foreign to us. Through the powerful illustration of the farmer in James 5:7-8, James gives us a clear idea of how waiting faithfully

should be practiced in our daily lives. The farmer does not sit down idle or get into a frenzy after planting the seed; he works, watches and waits because he knows that the process of growth takes time and is beyond his power. Similarly, when we experience droughts or trials in our lives or when our prayers go unanswered, we are supposed to show patience rather than getting frustrated. God always works under the surface for a purpose of His own.

This passage uses a key instruction that tells us to “establish your hearts.” This means establishing the state of our hearts in the promises of God such that nothing that happens can cause us to be shaken. Patience does not mean simply waiting, but waiting with our hearts in a settled state and full of hope. Once our perspective is adjusted by God’s overall faithfulness, we will not demand immediate gratification but will be satisfied that the reward will be worth waiting for.

Today’s focus verse: James 5:8

This is how I’m going to live this verse out today:

This is who I’m going to share this lesson with:

DISCUSSION GUIDE: AUGUST 30, 2026

WEEK TWELVE: JAMES 5:13–20

As we wrap up this final week in the book of James I'd like us to quickly review some of the major items we focused on. James is always focused on urgent life change and putting action to our faith. James says that trials and difficulties should be welcomed as spiritual growth opportunities. James wants us to reject a worldly vision of putting out security and hope into wealth. Today your campus pastor will wrap up the book and give you final instructions from James

ACTION STEP _____

How will I live out the action step this week?

SERMON NOTES

[illegible]

CONNECT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK 12

- This book has been all about putting our faith into action. What specific changes have you made in your life because of what you learned from this series? What changes would you like to make going forward?
- Read verse 15. Does this mean that every person who is sick will be healed if they pray?
- Verse 16 says that we should “confess our sins to one another.” Do you have someone you confess to on a regular basis? What accountability systems do you have in your life?
- In the final verses of this book James encourages us to turn people back to the faith when they lose their way. How can we do this in a loving and effective way?
- What are any other lessons or perspectives you learned from this book that you would like to share with the class?

