



Our current sermon series is working through the book of James to discover the wisdom it contains on how to live out our faith in Jesus. Below, you will find instructions for both individual study, and instructions for study within a discipleship group, with questions that will be applicable in either setting. We pray that the next few weeks will enrich your faith, and help you live out a vibrant faith that works.

Memorize God's Word:

Individual: Take a few days and do your best to memorize the scripture passage for the week.

Group: Choose one person from the group to commit the week's scripture passage to memory in order to present it to the group the following week.

Read the story:

Individual: After you've committed the passage to memory, read two different translations of the scripture for the week.

Group: At your next group meeting, have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations.

Tell the story:

Individual: Recite the story aloud from memory, or tell it to a friend or family member.

Group: Introduce the person who has learned the story for this week. Be ready to assist them if they get stuck at any point.

Rebuild the story:

Individual: Re-read the story to fact check yourself.

Group: Use questions to help the group highlight the main points of the story and correct any omissions or misrepresentations of the story. The point is not to point out the story teller's mistakes, but rather to point people to the Word to ensure everyone understands it accurately.

Dig into the Word:

Individual: Work through the questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member, if you choose.

Group: Work through the questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person's life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

Week 1: Read James 1:1-12

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this story?

What is James teaching the early church?

What are you learning personally?

What are the main themes of what James is teaching here?

Life Application:

What can we learn from Jesus' own brother calling himself a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ?

In our current culture that places high value on personal freedom, what would it look like in practice to become a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ? What would you need to set aside?

What can you learn from this week's passage about what is temporary vs. what is eternal?

What can you put into practice from what you learned this week?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for working in the lives of all believers to produce goodness in us, even in our trials. Help us to look to you for wisdom and guidance as we navigate the inevitable difficult circumstances in life. Help us find the joy of being in you, no matter what is going on around us, and help us focus on the eternal over the temporary. Amen.

Week 2: Read James 1:19-27

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this story?

What is James teaching the early church?

What are you learning personally?

What are the main themes of what James is teaching here?

Life Application:

James' words fly in the face of our fast-paced modern society. What things does he detail that need to be slow in our lives? Which of these is the biggest struggle for you?

After we read God's word, in contrast, what should we be quick to do?

In the NIV translation, James describes the word of God as the "perfect law of liberty." How is this phrase an accurate description, and how might it be hard to accept?

What specific items does James list as being characteristic of true and false religion? Which is harder to put into practice for you: the restraint or taking action? Why?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for your goodness, your patience, and your unending love. Help me to pattern my thoughts and behavior after your heart by being slow when I should be slow, but always quick to do good, and to obey your word. Amen.

Week 3: Read James 2:14-25

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this story?

What is James teaching the early church?

What are you learning personally?

What are the main themes of what James is teaching here?

Life Application:

What is the relationship between faith and works?

According to these verses, on which end of the spectrum would you say your faith currently falls?

How did Abraham's works, such as offering Isaac on the altar, demonstrate his faith?

Can you think of an example in your life of an outward demonstration of genuine faith?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for being trustworthy, good, and true. Thank you that my faith can rest secure in who you are. If my faith needs life breathed into it, Lord, breathe your Spirit into me and help me to grow. Help me to base my outward behavior on an inward faith that is alive, vibrant, and steady, and let me be a light to those around me because of what I do, which stems from who I am. Let who I am be found in you. Amen.

Week 4: Read James 3:5-12

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this story?

What is James teaching the early church?

What are you learning personally?

What are the main themes of what James is teaching here?

Life Application:

Why is taming the tongue the biggest indicator of self-control?

How often do you find yourself regretting things you've said, wishing you could take something back?

When you objectively evaluate the things that come from your mouth, what picture of you do your words paint?

What needs to shift in the words you speak, to help others see a clearer picture of Christ and His love when you speak?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the gift of words. Forgive me when I use my words for evil, instead of for good, for building others up, and for sharing your love. Lord, be the controller of my tongue and direct me when I speak. I pray that you would use me to communicate love, grace, and truth to those around me. Amen.

Week 5: Read James 3:13-18

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this story?

What is James teaching the early church?

What are you learning personally?

What are the main themes of what James is teaching here?

Life Application:

According to this passage, how is wisdom evident in someone?

What does earthly wisdom look like? Where do you hear this type of wisdom in your world?

What does true Godly wisdom look like? Who exemplifies this kind of wisdom in your life?

Which type of wisdom most guides your life right now? Why?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the gift of your wisdom. Open my eyes to see clearly, and give me discernment to recognize both earthly wisdom and wisdom that comes from you. Fill me with your perfect wisdom, help me act out of that, and create a deep desire within me for more of you. Amen.

Week 6: Read James 4:13-17

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this story?

What is James teaching the early church?

What are you learning personally?

What are the main themes of what James is teaching here?

Life Application:

How do these verses speak to how we are to make plans and set goals?

What is the core sin behind making plans without any thought of God?

How often do you consult God regarding things you want to do, plans you want to make, or goals you want to set?

For the next week, challenge yourself or your small group to be intentionally mindful of God as you move throughout your day: as you do things like make appointments, plan meals, run errands, care for your family or friends, and set your schedule for work. Keep an open channel of communication with God, making yourself available if He wants to speak into what you're planning, and thanking Him for all that He has granted you thus far that day. Do this each day for a week, and take note of what happens in your communication with God, your awareness of God, and your level of gratitude toward God.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the gift of time, the gift of all you've enabled me to do, and the gift of you walking through everyday life with me. Increase my awareness of you, and help me to live out of gratitude for all you do for me each and every day. Amen.

A Call to Prayer:

James ends the book by calling believers to go to the Elders of the church for prayer. If you need prayer in your life, make it a point to go and receive prayer the next time you are at a church service.

May you be blessed as you learn to live out a faith that works.