



**GIVE. ME.  
FAITH.**

**Study Guide**

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**Book of James**

# Table of Contents



Introduction	4
Background	6
Outline of James	12
Sermon Schedule	13
Small Groups	14
Other Resources	16
Devotional	
Questions	18

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<http://www.tucsonrevolution.com/give-me-faith/>  
and click on the link.



## INTRODUCTION

Dear Revolutionary,

By putting this study guide in your hands, our aim is not to promote meaningless religious activity. You've probably heard language like this before around Revolution. It's the same purpose behind all our groups, teams, and ministry ideas around here. Our hope is that when we invite people to learn about who God is, we're giving them the best opportunity we can to learn, grow and change in the midst of what God is doing in our city and through our church. And the flip side is that we're teaching people to take ownership for their personal spiritual growth. Growing spiritually isn't just about coming on Saturday night. As you'll read in this introduction, we have some ideas about how spiritual growth can happen for you and how this book can help. So as you read the articles and work through the questions in this study guide, please know that we've designed the material with this purpose in mind.

The study guide is also designed so that it can be used individually, as a couple or as a family. At its very basic level, the material in this guide will lead you into individual study of the Bible and reflection on what God is saying. But at the next level, the articles can and will be used in small group discussion. Our small groups are a perfect forum for discussing the issues the Bible raises, and they will be working through this material each week. If you are interested in getting involved in the discussions surrounding this material and taking the next step at Revolution by getting plugged into community, contact Christe LePeau [christe.lepeau@tucsonrevolution.com](mailto:christe.lepeau@tucsonrevolution.com).

This guide is a study of the book of James or "James: Give. Me. Faith." as we've called it. Faith is a question that we wrestle with. Is it a list of beliefs? Is it how we live? Is it both? For many of us, life right now seems like it is out of control and it is taking all the faith we can muster to make it through the day. As we walk through the book of James this spring as a church, we will begin to see a God who provides for us, who loves us, and who empowers us to have the faith we need to make it through each day. My prayer is that through this series you will ask God to give you faith. I believe he will answer that prayer and move in powerful ways in your life and in our church.

Whether you have been a Christian for years or you are just checking out Christianity for the first time, the purpose of the study guide is to point you back to Scripture. The hope of this book is to draw you (and your family) into God's Word between Saturdays, believing that God's Word will drive you to ask questions about what you believe and what that means to you. As you "own" your spiritual growth, the need to have these questions answered will pull you into community, and the community will help you be transformed.

Take nothing for granted. Ask yourself hard questions. Let this guide ask you hard questions. And ask God to meet you as you seek to know him.

Be Revolutionary,



Josh Reich



## BACKGROUND

### Introduction

The book of James is a very simple letter. The whole point of James is one theme: **Faith should come alive and be lived out.** Faith is not just a belief system; it is not a bunch of words or a list of doctrines that we hold to. Faith is who we are, it is what we do. Now, James is says very clearly (and we will walk through this when we get to chapter 2), that what we do does not save us. We cannot earn our way to God, we cannot do more to get more of God's love, and we have all that we need. The point of James is that while works do not save us, what we do shows where our faith is and what we believe in.

In James 2:14 – 19<sup>1</sup> it says “What good is it my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder.”

Before we get too far and this becomes a written sermon, let's get some background on the book of James, who wrote it, when it was written, and to whom it was written. Remember, the context of Scripture is important to understanding what

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<sup>1</sup>All scripture references are from the book of James, unless otherwise noted.

Scripture is saying. It is not written in a vacuum. It was written in a specific time and place, by a person, to a specific group of people to make a point.

### Author and Title

The title of this book derives from the name of its author, James the Just (as he was called), the brother of Jesus<sup>2</sup> (Matthew 13:55) and leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15). There is a general consensus regarding his authorship, though some have challenged this on the grounds that: (1) the Greek is too polished and the rhetoric too Hellenistic for someone who never left Palestine; (2) the author never calls himself Jesus' brother; and (3) the author seems to be interacting with Pauline issues on faith and works, justification<sup>3</sup>, and liberty and so had to write much later than James could have written, since he was executed in A.D. 62.

There is no good reason, however, to deny that James the Just is the author. As scholars now recognize, there was substantial contact between Jesus and Gentiles, especially in Galilee where James grew up.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, James is not reacting to Pauline issues but rather addressing similar themes in his own church; it is possible he is addressing a misunderstanding in Paul's teaching, but that could have been quite early since Paul

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<sup>2</sup>This has always been interesting to me. Imagine growing up in the same house as Jesus. Imagine having Jesus as your adoptive brother. This makes James 1:26 – 27 particularly interesting.

<sup>3</sup>I recently preached a sermon on Justification in our series on the book of Philippians that you can listen to here: <http://www.tucsonrevolution.com/sermon/the-blessed-life-is-jesus-really-god-philippians-25-11/>.

<sup>4</sup>We believe that James wrote the book of James because he identifies himself as writing it.

wrote Galatians in A.D. 48. It is also possible that James is writing so early that he has no knowledge of any of Paul's letters.<sup>5</sup>

## Purpose, Occasion, and Background

The audience of James's letter is almost certainly Jewish Christians, as evidenced by the designations "the twelve tribes in the Dispersion" (1:1) and "assembly" (2:2), the Jewish reasoning throughout, and James's frequent reflection on the Torah (Mosaic Law).<sup>6</sup>

More on the occasion cannot be said, but the social situation can be gleaned from the letter. As a result of the troubles, conflict has entered the churches, and they have splintered into fighting factions. Moreover, some have fallen into a worldly lifestyles (1:27; 4:4) and have failed to put their faith into practice (1:19 – 26), with the result that they have become "double-minded," wavering between God and the world (1:8; 4:8).<sup>7</sup>

## Themes

The primary theme of the book of James is living out one's faith, being a doer and not just a hearer of the word. This theme is developed in view of the social conflict between rich and poor and the spiritual conflict between factions in the church. James rebukes his readers for their worldliness and challenges them to seek divine wisdom in working out these problems and getting right with God.

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<sup>5</sup>*The ESV Study Bible*, p. 2387

<sup>6</sup>The Torah is called by Christians the Pentateuch, which refers to the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

<sup>7</sup>*The ESV Study Bible*, p. 2387

## Outline of Key Themes

1. God is seen as a gracious giver, the unchanging Creator, merciful and compassionate, a Judge, the one and only God, a jealous God, a gracious God, and a healing God (1:5, 17 – 18; 2:5, 13, 19; 4:5 – 6; 5:1 – 3, 9, 15).
2. Wisdom comes "from above" and enables believers to withstand trials and to bring peace rather than discord (1:5; 3:13, 17).
3. God allows tests and trials (1:2 – 4), yet temptation comes not from God but from self and Satan. The required response is patient endurance (1:3, 13 – 14; 4:7; 5:7 – 8).
4. The primary trial is poverty and oppression from the rich. The poor are the special focus of God's care and must be cared for by his people and not shown prejudice or ignored. The wealthy are condemned for presumptuous pride and for stealing from the poor (1:9, 27; 2:1 – 5, 15 – 16; 4:13 – 17; 5:1 – 6).
5. Apocalyptic themes are prevalent in terms of both future judgment and reward (1:12; 2:5, 12 – 13; 3:1; 4:12; 5:1 – 7, 9, 20).
6. The power of the tongue to destroy or to bring peace dominates the middle section (3:1 – 4:12).
7. The ethical mandate to go beyond hearing the word to living it out in daily conduct is made explicit early on and is implicit throughout the letter (1:19 – 27; 2:14 – 26).
8. Prayer is the proper response to trials, but it must not be self-seeking. It is to be central in life not only when afflicted or sick but also when cheerful. God has great power to heal, both physically and spiritually (1:5 – 7; 4:2 – 3; 5:13 – 18).

9. Faith, in its relationship to both works and justification, does not contradict but supplements Paul's teaching. James and Paul are united in teaching that justification comes only by the grace of God through faith but will of necessity result in works. If there are no resultant works, there was no justification in the first place (2:14 – 26).<sup>8</sup>

## Literary Features

Even though James begins with an epistolary<sup>9</sup> salutation, the rest of the book does not have the format of an epistle<sup>10</sup> but rather is a collection of wisdom sayings, much like the genre of wisdom literature as seen in the Old Testament.<sup>11</sup> The generic format of that wisdom literature is the collection of proverbs. Additionally, the book of James belongs to an ancient Greek form of satire known as the diatribe, the traits of which include: imaginary dialogues (including question and answer constructions); apostrophe (direct address to absent people or things as though they are present and can hear); metaphors taken from nature and everyday life; allusions to famous people from the past (stock instances; or well-known representations of the qualities that are under discussion); harsh address to readers; and heightened contrasts.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>*The ESV Study Bible*, p. 2388

<sup>9</sup>An epistle is written to a specific person or group, in the form of a letter.

<sup>10</sup>Other epistles in the New Testament are Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews.

<sup>11</sup>Wisdom literature in the Old Testament refers to Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and sometimes the Song of Solomon.

<sup>12</sup>*The ESV Study Bible*, p. 2389

## The Setting of James

The epistle of James was likely written to predominantly Jewish Christian house churches outside of Palestine, based on its mention of the “twelve tribes in the Dispersion” (1:1), its distinctly Jewish content, and its focus on persecution and poverty. This would mean it was sent throughout most of the ancient Mediterranean world. The author has traditionally been believed to be James the Just, the half-brother of Jesus and an early leader of the church in Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>For more, see “Author and Title” section, page 7.



## OVERVIEW

### Outline

- I. Greeting (1:1)
- II. The Testing of Faith (1:2 – 18)
  - A. Joy in trials (1:2 – 4)
  - B. Wisdom from God for trials (1:5 – 8)
  - C. The place of rich and poor before God (1:9 – 11)
  - D. Reward for those who endure (1:12)
  - E. The process of temptation (1:13 – 18)
- III. Hearing and Doing the Word (1:19 – 27)
  - A. Hearers of the word (1:19 – 21)
  - B. Doers of the word (1:22 – 25)
  - C. True, practical religion (1:26 – 27)
- IV. The Sin of Partiality (2:1 – 13)
  - A. Preferring the wealthy over the poor in the assembly (2:1 – 7)
  - B. The royal law of love (2:8 – 11)
  - C. Acting in light of judgment (2:12 – 13)
- V. Faith without Works is Dead (2:14 – 26)
  - A. Faith without works (2:14 – 17)
  - B. Response of a critic (2:18 – 20)
  - C. Examples of Abraham and Rahab (2:21 – 26)
- VI. The Sin of Dissension in the Community (3:1 – 4:12)
  - A. Taming the tongue (3:1 – 12)
  - B. The solution: wisdom from above (3:13 – 18)
  - C. Warning against worldliness (4:1 – 12)
- VII. The Sins of the Wealthy (4:13 – 5:12)
  - A. Boasting about tomorrow (4:13 – 17)
  - B. Warning to the rich (5:1 – 6)
  - C. Patience in suffering (5:7 – 12)
- VIII. The Prayer of Faith (5:13 – 18)
- IX. Concluding Admonition (5:19 – 20)<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup>The ESV Study Bible, p. 2389

### Sermon Schedule<sup>15</sup>

- January 8:** The Storms of Life (1:1 – 4)  
**January 15:** Doubt (1:5 – 8)  
**January 22:** Pursuits (1:9 – 11)  
**January 29:** Fighting Temptation (1:12 – 18)  
**February 5:** Going Through the Motions (1:19 – 25)  
**February 12:** Loving the Overlooked (1:26 – 27)  
**February 19:** Playing Favorites (2:1 – 13)  
**February 26:** In Search of Authentic Faith (2:14 – 26)  
**March 5:** How to Hold Your Tongue (3:1 – 12)  
**March 12:** Where Wisdom Comes From (3:13 – 18)  
**March 19:** To Change the World (4:1 – 10)  
**March 26:** The Myth of Tomorrow (4:11 – 17)  
**April 2:** How to be Rich (5:1 – 6)  
**April 9:** The Point of Suffering (5:7 – 11)  
**April 16:** Does Prayer Really Work? (5:12 – 20)

<sup>15</sup>If you miss a week at Revolution, you can listen to the sermon online (<http://www.tucsonrevolution.com/sermons/>) or you can subscribe to our podcast on iTunes (<http://itunes.apple.com/podcast/revolution-church/id216393344>)



## SMALL GROUPS

### **What is a small group?**

Small groups are small gatherings of people (Christian and not-yet Christians) that meet regularly for friendship, accountability, study and prayer, laughter and occasional tears. Small groups are an essential part of the mission of Revolution Church. They're a place where we learn more about Jesus and life together. They're a place where we wrestle with the trust of the Bible and encourage one another toward the life that God intends for us.

Each small group is unique. Our small groups meet on a semester schedule, meaning they meet for 12 weeks and then take a break for 4 weeks. Each small group meets at a different time; most of our small groups meet in a home, over a meal. Each small group involves food, conversation, prayer, discussing the sermon from Saturday night and figuring out how to apply the Bible to our lives.

### **Why should I join a small group?**

We are created in the image of God and we are told in Genesis 1 that God is a God of community and relationships. The Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is a perfect example of what community and relationship looks like. We are to model ourselves after God as followers of His.

We are also created with a deep longing for community, a deep longing for relationships. Small groups are a great way to fill this need in our lives. Also, it is impossible to fully engage in Revolution Church without being in a small group. Small groups are where relationships are formed, accountability takes place, and caring happens. Each of our small group leaders see themselves as the pastor to their small group, as each small group member walks with each other through the highs and lows of life.

### **How do I get connected to a small group?**

The easiest way is on Saturday. Check the box on your connection card or sign up at the next steps table. You can also sign up on our website: <http://www.tucsonrevolution.com/get-connected/small-groups/>.

## OTHER RESOURCES<sup>16</sup>

- Erwin McManus, *Soul Cravings*
- Richard Stearns, *The Hole in our Gospel*
- David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*<sup>17</sup>
- John Owen, Justin Taylor & John Piper, *Overcoming Sin & Temptation*
- Steven Furtick, *Sun Stand Still: What Happens When you Dare to Ask God for the Impossible*<sup>18</sup>
- John Piper, *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God*<sup>19</sup>
- John Piper, *The Hidden Smile of God*<sup>20</sup>
- *The ESV Study Bible*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>These are books that focus more on the main themes of James. Each week in the sermon notes, there will be specific book recommendations to go with specific sermons and topics.

<sup>17</sup>This is a great look at how faith in God does not work with the American Dream, but how the American Dream actually can get in the way of what God wants to do in our lives and how He wants to use us.

<sup>18</sup>If you read one book on prayer, it should be this book.

<sup>19</sup>Suffering is a major theme in James, as well as the rest of the New Testament. This book gives a great theology of suffering, some reasons for it and how we should respond as followers of Jesus.

<sup>20</sup>In this book, John Piper looks at the lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd. He shows how they suffered in their lives, how they responded and gives us real life examples of how we can survive and thrive in the midst of suffering, and how to suffer well for the gospel.

<sup>21</sup>If you do not have a good study Bible, I highly recommend you pick one up. The translation we use at Revolution is the ESV and they have the best study Bible on the market. For more information, check out <http://www.esvstudybible.org/>.



## DEVOTIONALS

As followers of Jesus, we need to spend time with Him. There is a variety of ways to do this: being part of a weekly worship service, participating in a small group, reading the Bible each day and spending time in prayer. As followers of Jesus, we are to do all of these. Many today because of time constraints or poor time management only do a few of these activities. This leads to frustration and questions in our spiritual journey, and ultimately it raises the possibility of us “giving up on Jesus.”

To combat that, we encourage you to create time in your schedule for these things.

While we go through James on Saturday nights and in our small groups, I want to encourage you to do what we call “10 + 10”. Commit to spending 10 minutes each day reading James, answering the questions in a journal and to spending 10 minutes praying.<sup>22</sup> You can do these questions alone, as a couple or even with your kids.

Here is what you will need:

- The questions that follow this page. Each Saturday night, we will be preaching line by line through James. The following week we want you to spend time in the passage preached on. There are questions for each day of the week.

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<sup>22</sup>The questions in this guide were made up by Josh or taken from other study guides on James provided by Max Lucado and John MacArthur.

- Buy a journal. Use this to answer the questions and write down your answers. Also, create a prayer list of people and situations you are praying for. To the left of the request write down the date you started praying for that and to the right of the request, write down the date when you see God move and answer that request. This will be a great resource to see how God is working your life and world, but also in those times of discouragement for you to look back on and see how faithful God is.
- Schedule the time. Many of us live on strict schedules. Our lives are scheduled from the time we wake up to the time we go to sleep. The reason we don't meet with God regularly is because we don't schedule the time. When are you most alert? When are you the least likely to be disturbed? Schedule it then and protect it.

Many people ask me how to grow closer to God or to see Him move in their lives. Simple answer? 10 + 10. We can't know God unless we spend time with Him.



# The Storms of Life

## January 8

**Text:** James 1:1 – 4

### Context

James's major emphasis in this section of his epistle is: If a person's faith is genuine, it will prove itself during times of trouble, whatever the nature or source of the trouble may be. The clear message of Scripture is that trials are a tool in the loving hands of God. They test the strength of our faith. They humble us. They wean us from our dependence on earthly things. They call us to eternal and heavenly hope. They reveal what we really love. They teach us to value God's blessings. They develop enduring strength for greater usefulness. They help us better encourage others who are in times of trial.

Since trials are productive, it is essential for us to respond rightly to them. James helps us (in 1:1 – 12) greatly in this by giving five means for persevering through trials. He then tells us of the reward for perseverance.<sup>1</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. – James 1:2 – 3

### Prayer Items this week<sup>2</sup>

1. That God would stretch you and our church in this series as we think about how to live our faith out in our daily lives.
2. That God would help you to see how testing and trials can grow your faith.

### Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you

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<sup>1</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 3

<sup>2</sup>Each week there will be things to specifically pray about that come out of the passage. These are things to pray for each day of the week.

- about the book of James?
2. What excites you about this series?

### Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:1 – 4. Why does James tell us to “count it all joy” when we experience trials? Doesn't that seem counterintuitive?
2. When you think of someone who is joyful, who comes to mind?

### Tuesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:1 – 4. James says the point of trials is the testing of our faith so that it produces steadfastness. What is steadfastness? Why is that important? Why would that be a good thing for trials to produce in our lives?

### Wednesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:1 – 4. How do you respond to trials and setbacks in your life? Why?
2. Describe a situation in which a Christian you know has handled a difficult trial. What do you think made the difference?
3. How has God brought good into your life through trials?

### Thursday, January 13<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:4. James seems to be saying that through our steadfast response to testing, our faith is completed. What does that mean?
2. Do you agree with this statement: “Trials are necessary for me to become all that God wants me to become.” How does that change your thinking when it comes to trials?
3. How can you grow closer to God through the trials you are facing right now?

### Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, January 15<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:5 – 8 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.



**Text:** James 1:5 - 8

### **Context**

James's major emphasis in this section of his epistle is this: If a person's faith is genuine, it will prove itself during times of trouble, whatever the nature or source of the trouble may be. The clear message of Scripture is that trials are a tool in the loving hands of God. They test the strength of our faith. They humble us. They wean us from our dependence on earthly things. They call us to eternal and heavenly hope. They reveal what we really love. They teach us to value God's blessings. They develop enduring strength for greater usefulness. They help us better encourage others who are in times of trial.

Since trials are productive, it is essential for us to respond rightly to them. James helps us (in 1:1 – 12) greatly in this by giving five means for persevering through trials. He then tells us of the reward for perseverance.<sup>3</sup>

### **This Week's Memory Verse**

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. – James 1:5

### **Prayer Items this week**

1. That we would ask God for wisdom in the decisions we are facing.

### **Sunday, January 16<sup>th</sup>**

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 1:5 – 8?

### **Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup>**

1. Read James 1:5 – 8. How does one gain wisdom to deal with problems? Why does God want us to ask for his help without doubting?
2. Is it ever okay to doubt?

### **Tuesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>**

1. Read James 1:5 – 8. Who should not expect to receive anything from God? Why?
2. Describe a time when God's wisdom helped you through a problem.

### **Wednesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>**

1. Read James 1:5 – 8. What part does wisdom play in getting through trials?
2. What does "double minded" mean?

### **Thursday, January 20<sup>th</sup>**

1. Read James 1:5 – 8. Often this verse is translated to say, "Ask God whatever you want and you will get it." But it doesn't say that. Why would James tell us to ask for wisdom?

### **Friday, January 21<sup>st</sup>**

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### **Saturday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>**

1. Read James 1:9 – 11 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

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<sup>3</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 3



**Text:** James 1:9 – 11

### **Context**

James's major emphasis in this section of his epistle is this: If a person's faith is genuine, it will prove itself during times of trouble, whatever the nature or source of the trouble may be. The clear message of Scripture is that trials are a tool in the loving hands of God. They test the strength of our faith. They humble us. They wean us from our dependence on earthly things. They call us to eternal and heavenly hope. They reveal what we really love. They teach us to value God's blessings. They develop enduring strength for greater usefulness. They help us better encourage others who are in times of trial.

Since trials are productive, it is essential for us to respond rightly to them. James helps us (in 1:1 – 12) greatly in this by giving five means for persevering through trials. He then tells us of the reward for perseverance.<sup>4</sup>

### **This Week's Memory Verse**

Yet, you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life?  
For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.  
– James 4:14

### **Prayer Items this week**

1. Ask God to line up your desires with His.
2. That you would pursue goals that are of eternal consequence and will not fade (James 1:11).

### **Sunday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>**

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 1:9 – 11?

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<sup>4</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 3

### **Monday, January 24<sup>th</sup>**

1. Read James 1:9 – 11. What does James say we should pursue?
2. What does it mean to boast in your humiliation as a rich man?<sup>5</sup>

### **Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>**

1. Read James 1:9 – 11. How do trials act as an equalizer to the rich and poor?
2. In what ways do trials prove our faith genuine?

### **Wednesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>**

1. Read James 1:11. What are you pursuing right now? What are your goals for the next month? 1 year? 5 years?
2. Are those goals things that will last or will they fade away?
3. If they will fade away, are they worth pursuing?

### **Thursday, January 27<sup>th</sup>**

1. Read James 1:1 – 11. How do trials, faith, wisdom, doubt and our goals fit altogether?

### **Friday, January 28<sup>th</sup>**

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### **Saturday, January 29<sup>th</sup>**

1. Read James 1:12 – 18 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

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<sup>5</sup>As someone living in America, you are in the top 2% of the wealthiest people on the planet, so you qualify as the rich person in the book of James.



# Fighting Temptation

## January 29

**Text:** James 1:12 – 18

### Context

It's human nature to deflect responsibility. We see this from the very beginning of creation. When God confronted Adam with his sin in the Garden of Eden, Adam's reply was, "The woman who You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." When the Lord asked Eve, "What is this you have done?" she replied, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Genesis 3:12 – 13). Eve blamed Satan. Adam blamed the woman, but really blamed God. And on it goes today.

So is God ultimately responsible for our temptations and sin? James provides strong proofs that God is not responsible for our temptations or for our weakness in succumbing to sin. James explains the nature of evil, the nature of man, the nature of lust, and the nature of God. As you read this passage, be thankful that through Jesus Christ, God has provided a way for us to be delivered from our sin natures!<sup>6</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. – James 1:12

### Prayer Items this week

1. To know the difference between a test and a temptation and to be able to fight them both.

### Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 1:12 – 18?

### Monday, January 31<sup>st</sup>

1. Read James 1:12 – 18. One of the reasons for sin is the propensity to pass

<sup>6</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 11

blame. What are some creative "excuses" you have heard people give for doing something is clearly wrong?

2. When was the last time you had a good "excuse" for sinning?
3. We often try to hide or cover up the things we do wrong. What makes it so hard to own up to our own guilt?

### Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>

1. Read James 1:12 – 18. Many times people will say they want to be free from an addiction or sin, but don't do anything to be free of it. Is that laziness? Do people want to stay in their sin?
2. What can you learn from God's nature in this passage, specifically verses 13 and 17? How does that impact your view of sin and freedom and grace?

### Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>

1. Read James 1:12 – 18. Describe the process from temptation to sin.
2. James warns us to not be deceived. In what ways can we be deceived when it comes to temptation?
3. Do you agree with this statement: *Behind every sin is a lie you believe?* If so, what sin are you struggling with right now? What is the lie you are believing to continue in this sin?<sup>7</sup>

### Thursday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>

1. Read James 1:17. What does it mean that in God there is "no variation or shadow of turning?" Is that a comfort for you when you think of your sin and temptations?
2. Read James 1:12 – 18. Based on this passage, how should you resist temptations you struggle with?

### Friday, February 4<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup>

Read James 1:19 – 25 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

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<sup>7</sup>This is taken from the book *You Can Change* by Tim Chester, which I can't recommend highly enough.



# Going Through the Motions

## February 5

**Text:** James 1:19 – 25

### Context

In the passage before us, James presents another test of true believers. The first two tests centered on our response to trials and to temptations. The third test is our response to the truth revealed in the Word of God.

One of the most reliable evidences of genuine salvation is a hunger for the Word of God (Psalm 42:1). Just as a newborn baby does not have to be taught to hunger for its mother's milk, the newborn child of God does not have to be taught to hunger for God's Word, his spiritual food and drink. In the true disciple of God's Word, there is an affection for its truth and a desire in his heart to obey it. James focuses on a proper reception of Scripture as God's Word, and then a proper reaction to it, reflected in an obedient life. As you study this passage, ask God to increase, or renew, your hunger for His Word and give you strength to do what it says.<sup>8</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

– James 1:22 – 24

### Prayer Items this week

1. To show you where you just listening to His Word and not doing anything with it.
2. That God would change you into someone that lives out His Word and not just someone who hears it.
3. That God would give you opportunities this week to live out His Word.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 19

<sup>9</sup>List some specific things that God is putting on your heart to live out. Is there a step of faith He is calling you to take? Someone to talk to?

### Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 1:19 – 25?

### Monday, February 7<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:19 – 25. How does this passage describe living a good or godly life? Where does anger fit in?
2. List some of the ways people deceive themselves.
3. How does this passage describe people who do not obey God's Word?

### Tuesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:19 – 25. How can you have "ears to hear" God's Word and then do it?
2. What pressure does our culture put on us to disobey or disregard God's Word?
3. List some practical ways to protect yourself from the world's influence (the pressures in the question 2).
4. In what ways has your life changed since your conversion?

### Wednesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:19 – 25. Are you a doer or a watcher when it comes to your spiritual growth and walk with God? Why did you give the answer you did?
2. In the arena of faith, how are the actions of "hearing" and "doing" different? How are they related?

### Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:19 – 25. What must we do to properly receive God's Word (vs. 21)? How do we do this?
2. Do your actions show that you have received the gospel and been transformed by it?
3. Why is humility necessary in hearing and obeying God's Word (vs. 21)?

### Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, February 12<sup>th</sup>

Read James 1:26 – 27 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.



# Loving the Overlooked

## February 12

**Text:** James 1:26 – 27

### Context

In the passage before us, James presents another test of true believers. The first two tests centered on our response to trials and to temptations. The third test is our response to the truth revealed in the Word of God.

One of the most reliable evidences of genuine salvation is a hunger for the Word of God (Psalm 42:1). Just as a newborn baby does not have to be taught to hunger for its mother's milk, the newborn child of God does not have to be taught to hunger for God's Word, his spiritual food and drink. In the true disciple of God's Word, there is an affection for its truth and a desire in his heart to obey it. James focuses on a proper reception of Scripture as God's Word, and then a proper reaction to it, reflected in an obedient life. As you study this passage, ask God to increase, or renew, your hunger for His Word and give you strength to do what it says.<sup>10</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

In love, he (God) predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.  
– Ephesians 1:5 – 6

### Prayer Items this week

1. That God would reveal to you what it means that you are adopted by him and that you would understand this beautiful doctrine as it fits in with the gospel.
2. That God would show you how you need to live out James 1:26 – 27 in your life.

### Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 1:26 – 27?

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<sup>10</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 19

### Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>

1. Read Ephesians 1:3 – 14. What does it mean that as a follower of Jesus, we are the adopted children of God?
2. How does it change your view of God to know that in the doctrine of adoption, God chose us?<sup>11</sup>
3. Does it change your view of God and your relationship with Him to know that as a child of God, He has chosen and adopted you?

### Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 1:26 – 27. Does this verse sound like an optional idea that James is laying out, or is he telling us that as a follower of Jesus we are called to love the overlooked?
2. How is this view of loving the overlooked affected based on what we discussed yesterday from Ephesians 1 of God's adoption of us?
3. James' father Joseph was the adoptive father of Jesus. How do you think this relationship affected James' faith and how he looked at the overlooked of society and he call to the church to love the overlooked?

### Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>

1. Read John 14:21 – 24. How does Jesus relate love and obedience?
2. What does this teaching of Jesus add to your understanding of the relationship between true saving faith and obedience to the Word? What does obedience demonstrate?

### Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup>

1. Read Galatians 5:16 – 26. What resource does God give His children to ensure that they are able to live obediently?
2. We are called to love the overlooked. What does that look like in your life?

### Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, February 19<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 2:1 – 13 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

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<sup>11</sup>In Romans 3:10 – 11, the apostle Paul says that no one would seek God and lays out the beautiful picture in Romans of a God who pursues us to Himself.

A banner with a background of a sunset or sunrise over water, with the text "Playing Favorites" in a large, bold, green font and "February 19" in a smaller, bold, green font below it.

# Playing Favorites

## February 19

**Text:** James 2:1 – 13

### Context

An attribute of God that is not often considered is His impartiality, yet this is a recurring theme throughout Scripture. God is absolutely impartial in His dealings with people. And in that way, as with other attributes, He is unlike us. Human beings (and that includes followers of Jesus) are not naturally inclined to be impartial. We tend to put people in pigeonholes and predetermined categories, ranking them by their looks, clothes, race or ethnicity, social status, personality, intelligence, wealth and power, by the kind of car they drive, and by their house and neighborhood where they live. But those things are non-issues with God and are of no significance to Him. God looks at the heart and loves all people equally. He wants us to do the same.

James's practical epistle deals more with day-to-day issues than with theology and doctrine. In this passage, he stresses that showing partiality, or not showing it, is another kind of test of true and living faith. He focuses mostly on partiality in regard to social and economic status.<sup>12</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. – James 2:1

### Prayer Items this week

1. That God would reveal if you show partiality and to whom or in what situations and He would then break your heart to see people the way He sees them.

### Sunday, February 20<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 2:1 – 13?

### Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup>

1. Read James 2:1 – 13. According to James, why is showing partiality

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<sup>12</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 27

incompatible with faith?

2. What reaction did the poor often get when they visited a church? What did James remind his readers about the poor?<sup>13</sup>
3. What reaction do you give when you see someone who is poor, homeless, different race or a different social status? Be honest. Does this reaction reflect the heart of God?

### Tuesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>

1. Read James 2:1 – 13. How does James use the law to explain the problem of partiality (vs. 8 – 10)?
2. What did James mean by using the seemingly paradoxical phrase of "law of liberty"?

### Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>

1. Read James 2:1 – 13. How does God treat the rich and the poor? Is that the same way you treat the rich and poor?
2. What is at the root of favoritism?
3. How does showing favoritism indicate a feeling of superiority?

### Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>

1. What are some ways of "labeling" others that you need to refrain from using immediately?
2. In what ways do you struggle with showing preferential treatment to some and prejudice against others? What are some specific ways you can begin loving people as God does this week?

### Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, February 26<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 2:14 – 26 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

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<sup>13</sup>Verses to consider Psalm 41:1, 72:4, 113:7; Proverbs 17:5, 21:13, 28:27; Isaiah 3:14 – 14, 10:1 – 2, 25:4; Galatians 2:10

# In Search of Authentic Faith

## February 26

**Text:** James 2:14 – 26

### Context

James continues his series of tests by which his readers can evaluate whether their faith is living or dead. He clearly says that a faith that is not acted out is really no faith at all. He's not saying that a person is saved by works (He has already clearly asserted in 1:17 – 18 that salvation is a gracious gift from God). He is saying that there is a kind of faith that is dead and does not save (vs. 14, 17, 20, 24, 26). James contrasts living faith with dead faith, saving faith with non-saving faith, productive faith with unproductive faith. The truth that James emphasizes in this text is that *what we do reveals who we are*. The genuineness of our transformation in the gospel is seen more by what we do than by what we claim.<sup>14</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. – James 2:18

### Prayer Items this week

1. That God would reveal to you this week if you are living out your beliefs in Him or if it is just talk.
2. That would give you opportunities to live out what you believe this week.

### Sunday, February 27<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 2:14 – 26?

### Monday, February 28<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 2:14 – 20. How do you define faith?
2. How would you explain to a child why we do "good works"?
3. What is the difference between faith and good works?

<sup>14</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 35, 43

### Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>

1. Read James 2:14 – 20. What two examples does James cite to show the futility of faith without works (vs. 15 – 16, 19)? How are these good examples of dead faith?
2. Do you think James proves his point? Why do you think so?
3. Is James suggesting that helping the poor and hungry is a prerequisite to salvation? How do you know?
4. What did James mean when he said that the "demons believe"? How does this emphasize the difference between dead faith and genuine saving faith?

### Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>

1. Read James 2:21 – 26. What is the greatest step of faith you have ever seen someone take? What is the greatest step of faith you've ever taken?
2. Do you think some Christians have a greater capacity for faith than others? If so, why?
3. What three illustrations does James give to continue illustrating his point that faith without works is dead?

### Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>

1. Read James 2:21 – 26. Paul taught that we are justified by faith alone. James says that Abraham and Rahab were justified by their works. When you look at the whole of what James has been saying about faith and works, you can see how the paradox is resolved. How would you explain this seeming contradiction to someone else?<sup>15</sup>
2. Why is it significant that Abraham was called "the friend of God"?<sup>16</sup> What does this mean?
3. How would you answer the person who argued from James 2:21 that our works (or behavior) do play an important role in our salvation?

### Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>

Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>

Read James 3:1 – 12 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

<sup>15</sup>Verses to consider: John 8:56, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8 – 9; Hebrews 5:9, 11:8 – 10, 13 – 16, 31

<sup>16</sup>For more insights into Abraham's faith, read Romans 4:1 – 25



# How to Hold Your Tongue

## March 5

**Text:** James 3:1 – 12

### Context

Your tongue is you in a unique way. It is a tattletale that tells on the heart and discloses the real person. Not only that, but misuse of the tongue is perhaps the easiest way to sin. There are some sins that an individual may not be able to commit simply because he does not have the opportunity. But there are no limits to what one can say, no built-in restraints or boundaries. In Scripture, the tongue is described as wicked, deceitful, perverse, filthy, corrupt, flattering, slanderous, gossiping, blasphemous, foolish, boasting, complaining, cursing, contentious, sensual, and vile.

Not surprisingly, the tongue is of great concern to James, and is mentioned in every chapter of his letter.<sup>17</sup> In 3:1 – 12 he uses the tongue as still another test of living faith, because the genuineness of a person's faith will inevitably be demonstrated by his speech. James personifies the tongue and the mouth as representatives of the depravity and wretchedness of the inner person. The tongue only produces what it is told to produce by the heart, where sin originates (1:14 – 15).<sup>18</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.  
– Matthew 12:34b

### Prayer Items this week

1. That God would convict you of misuse of your tongue in the area of gossip, tearing others down, arguing, etc.

### Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 3:1 – 12?

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<sup>17</sup>See 1:19, 26; 2:12; 3:5, 6, 8; 4:11; 5:12

<sup>18</sup>*James*, John MacArthur, p. 51

### Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 3:1 – 12. According to James, where does the root of the problem of evil speech lie?
2. What types of evil are caused by the tongue?
3. Why are the metaphors James uses for the tongue particularly apt? What do they convey?

### Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 3:1 – 12. How does a person's tongue compare to a horse's bit and a ship's rudder?
2. In what ways is the tongue like a fire?
3. How can the tongue be used for good?

### Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 3:1 – 12. Why is the tongue so difficult to control?
2. What makes words so powerful?
3. How can controlling our tongues bring glory to God? How can our tongues hinder or detract from God's glory?

### Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 3:1 – 12. What are some examples of the poison of an untamed tongue?
2. How can we submit our tongues to the control of God's spirit?
3. To whom can you speak words of blessing and encouragement today?

### Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 3:13 – 18 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

# Where Wisdom Comes From

## March 12

**Text:** James 3:13 – 18

### Context

In this passage James makes a transition from discussing teachers and the tongue to dealing with wisdom's impact on everyone's life. He supports the truth revealed in the Old Testament wisdom literature (the book of Job to Song of Solomon) that wisdom is divided into two realms – man's and God's, earthly and heavenly. James offers wisdom as still another test of living faith. The kind of wisdom a person possesses will be revealed by the kind of life he lives. Those who possess the wisdom of man, the wisdom from below, will demonstrate by their lives that they have no saving relationship with Jesus Christ and no desire to worship, serve, or obey Him. On the other hand, those who possess genuine saving faith will manifest the wisdom of God, the wisdom from above.<sup>19</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy, and good fruits, impartial and sincere.  
– James 3:17

### Prayer Items this week

1. That God would give you his wisdom in the areas of your life where you need it right now.

### Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 3:13 – 18?
2. Who is the wisest person you know? Explain why you think that person is wise.

### Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 3:13 – 18. How does James define wisdom? How is wisdom defined in our culture? What's the difference?

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<sup>19</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 59

2. What is the secret to gaining wisdom?
3. How often does wisdom really count when we are selecting leaders in the church? In politics? At work?

### Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 3:13 – 18. How do we show we are wise?
2. What did James mean when he referred to the "meekness of wisdom" (vs. 13)?<sup>20</sup>
3. List all the fruits of earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom that James mentions. Compare and contrast them. How are they different? What are the results/consequences of each?

### Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 3:13 – 18. Why do jealousy and selfishness cause confusion and evil?
2. What happens when people work for peace?
3. How does a wise person resolve conflict?
4. What do you think it means to sow seeds of peace?

### Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 3:13 – 18. Why are people sometimes unwilling to work for peace?
2. How does this passage challenge you to deal with conflicts in your relationships?
3. Why is it important for Christians to sow seeds of peace?
4. List some practical ways you can bring peace to a conflict you are facing.

### Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 4:1 – 10 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

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<sup>20</sup>See also Matthew 5:5; Galatians 5:22 – 33



# To Change the World

## March 19

**Text:** James 4:1 – 10

### Context

We've seen James examine a number of everyday behaviors that can serve either to authenticate one's claim to faith or highlight the absence of true saving faith. Now he addresses one's attitude toward the world. The central truth in this passage is "Friendship with the world is enmity with God" (4:4). James argues persuasively that genuine spiritual life and faithful Christian living involve separation from the world and all its countless contaminations. A continuing, habitual friendship with the world is grounded in human wisdom and is evidence of unbelief. Such a lifestyle invariably leads to interpersonal conflict.<sup>21</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. – James 4:4

### Prayer Items this week

1. That God would reveal to you if you are loving the world too much or too little, and would show you how to be on mission with Him to bring the gospel to your world.

### Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 4:1 – 12?
2. How do you define worldliness?
3. Give some examples of activities that some Christians might consider worldly.

### Monday, March 21<sup>st</sup>

1. Read James 4:1 – 12. How do we live "in" the world but not "of" the world?

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<sup>21</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 67

2. Why does James address some of his readers as "adulterers and adulteresses"? What does this phrase mean?
3. What does it mean to be friends with the world? What does it mean to be at enmity with God (v. 4)?

### Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>

1. Read James 4:1 – 12. What should be the Christian's relationship with the world?
2. List some of the ways we can stand against the devil.
3. Summarize the remedy James gives to be restored to God (vs. 6 – 10)?

### Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>

1. Read James 4:1 – 12. Why do we resist relying on and submitting to God?
2. How can humbling ourselves before God affect our other relationships, especially with the world?

### Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 4:1 – 12. List areas of your life that are difficult for you to turn over to God's control.
2. What truth in this passage encourages you to trust God more fully?
3. What steps can you take to draw nearer to God?
4. How will that help you bring the gospel into the world around you?

### Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 4:11 – 17 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.



# The Myth of Tomorrow

## March 26

**Text:** James 4:11 – 17

### Context

For James, doing the will of God identifies another test of genuine saving faith. True Christians are characterized as “doing the will of God from the heart” (Ephesians 6:6). They joyfully, willingly pray, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done” (Matthew 6:10). On the other hand, a constant disregard for or lack of interest in God’s will is a certain mark of the presence of pride – the ugly sin also underlying conflict, worldliness, and slander (4:1 – 12). To disregard God’s will is tantamount to saying, “I am the sovereign ruler of my own life.” Such a prideful attitude is antithetical to saving faith. As James has already pointed out, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (4:6).<sup>22</sup>

### This Week’s Memory Verse

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” – yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and vanishes. – James 4:13 – 14

### Prayer Items this week

1. That you would begin to live with the reality that life will not last forever so that you will make the most of your one and only life.

### Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 4:13 – 17?

### Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 4:13 – 17. How do you define the phrase “the will of God”?
2. Describe some ways you’ve seen other Christians discern God’s will.
3. How do you go about determining God’s will for your life? Why?

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<sup>22</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 77

### Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 4:13 – 17. How does James characterize our lives (i.e., the length of our lives)? Why is this significant?
2. Why does James insist that we preface our plans by saying, “If the Lord wills...”? What does this mindset indicate?
3. How does a concern for the will of God demonstrate our belief in His sovereignty?
4. According to James, what lies behind the reasoning that excludes God and His will?

### Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 4:13 – 17. What attitude does God want us to have about the future? Why?
2. When does planning turn into boastful pride?
3. Why is God not satisfied that we simply know we should do good (i.e. without doing it)?

### Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup>

1. Read Luke 12:13 – 21. What does this parable teach you about priorities? About wealth? About certainties in life?
2. Read Proverbs 27:1. Why is it foolish to presume on the future?
3. What are some things that you know are clearly the will of God?
4. Think about your typical day. How much does God and His will figure into your plans? Is His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33) foremost in your thoughts?

### Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>

1. Read James 5:1 – 6 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight’s message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.



# How to Be Rich

## April 2

**Text:** James 5:1 – 6

### Context

As noted throughout this study, James's goal is to present various tests of genuine saving faith. Building on the teachings of Jesus, James presents a blistering denunciation of those who profess to worship God but in fact worship money. His rebuke of the wicked wealthy is in keeping with the tradition of the Old Testament prophets. James tells them to examine the true state of their hearts in light of how they feel about wealth.<sup>23</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.  
– Matthew 6:21

### Prayer Items this week

1. That God would reveal to you if money is a gift or is a God for you.
2. That God would reveal to you how to be more generous and to use your money to move the gospel forward.
3. For those who took the giving challenge, that God would prove himself faithful to them and they would be faithful in their commitment.

### Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 5:1 – 6?

### Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:1 – 6. What charges does James bring against the wealthy? Why was he so harsh in his rebuke?
2. Does James teach that it is a sin to be wealthy? How do you support your answer?
3. In what ways have you seen people oppress others for personal gain?

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<sup>23</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 85

### Tuesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:1 – 6. List some ungodly attitudes that cause oppression.
2. How does God respond to the oppressed?
3. What results from self-indulgence?

### Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:1 – 6. List some of the negative effects that increased wealth can have on people's lives.
2. How can you use your financial resources for God's glory?
3. Are you giving back to God? If not, what is keeping you from taking this step? What do you think God thinks of that reason?

### Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:1 – 6. How can money keep you from doing God's work?
2. In what ways do you need to change your attitudes about money?
3. How can sharing your wealth improve the state of the world?

### Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.<sup>24</sup>

### Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:7 – 11 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

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<sup>24</sup>For more passages on warnings to the rich and money, see Proverbs 11:28, 23:4; Matthew 19:23 – 24; Luke 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:9 – 10, 17 – 19.



# The Point of Suffering

## April 9

**Text:** James 5:7 – 11

### Context

In this section, James puts his focus on the topic of persecution, instructing the folks who are suffering at the hands of the rich and powerful to be patient and keep perspective. Verse 12 then touches on another custom during biblical times – that of swearing oaths. This practice had become an issue in the church, particularly since swearing oaths was an integral part of Jewish culture and Jewish believers comprised a large segment of the early church. James commands them not to swear oaths and encourages believers to be distinctive about speaking the truth.<sup>25</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.  
– Romans 8:28

### Prayer Items this week

1. That God would give you strength in the midst of pain and suffering. That you would have patience to endure, for his glory.

### Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 5:7 – 11?

### Monday, April 11<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:7 – 11. How does James counsel his readers to respond in times of trouble? Why?
2. What can we learn from Job's example of suffering?
3. What did James teach about Christ's return (vs. 8 – 9)?

### Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:7 – 11. Why is it always comforting and wise to remember

2. God's character in times of difficulty?
3. Why should followers of Jesus be motivated to endure with patience?
4. How does the illustration of a farmer show the importance of patience? Can you think of similar examples?

### Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:7 – 11. How does the example of the cross help us when we think of suffering in our lives?
2. What did the prophets gain from their suffering?
3. How was God's compassion and mercy extended to Job?

### Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:7 – 11. When has it been difficult for you to persevere in your Christian walk?
2. List some ways that Christian friends have encouraged you to persevere in tough times.
3. How can you encourage others to trust God and endure through suffering?
4. How does knowing that Jesus will return give you hope?

### Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>

1. Use Friday as a catch up day.

### Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:12 – 20 in preparation for tonight. Spend a moment asking God to speak through tonight's message and to move in a powerful way. Come to Revolution expecting God to move in a powerful way.

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<sup>25</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 86

# Does Prayer Really Work?

## April 16

**Text:** James 5:12 – 20

### Context

As we come to the final passage, it would be surprising, if, in this letter to struggling, persecuted believers, James neglected to mention prayer. A strong commitment to prayer is a prerequisite to enduring suffering and affliction. James's exhortation to prayer embraces the prayer life of the entire church. Individual believers are called to pray in verse 13, the elders in verses 14 – 15, and the congregation in verse 16. This section also reflects James's compassionate pastoral care for his suffering flock. His main focus is on the casualties of the spiritual battle – the persecuted, weak, defeated believers. As the context and content of this section make clear, the subject is not physical illness or healing. Instead, it's concern is healing spiritual weakness, spiritual weariness, spiritual exhaustion, and spiritual depression through prayer, while dealing with the suffering and sin that accompanies it.<sup>26</sup>

### This Week's Memory Verse

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. – James 5:16

### Prayer Items this week

1. That God would bring spiritual healing to your life and to those hurting in Revolution Church.
2. That God would give Revolutionaries the courage and opportunity to invite their friends and family to Revolution this Saturday for our Easter weekend service. That those invited would have an open heart to the gospel.

### Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup>

1. Take a moment to reflect on church last night. What jumped out at you about James 5:12 – 20?

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<sup>26</sup>James, John MacArthur, p. 93

### Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:12 – 20. When was the last time you confessed your sins to another person and had them pray with you or for you regarding that sin? Why do many believers find this difficult – often to the point of not doing it at all?
2. What Christian in your life can you do this with? What is stopping you from taking this step to freedom and wholeness in Christ?
3. What kind of suffering does James refer to in verse 13? Is the content speaking of physical sickness or spiritual weakness? How do you know?

### Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:12 – 20. How can prayer make a real difference in the life of a struggling saint?
2. What does it mean to “wander from the truth”?
3. To what group does James give the label “sinner” (vs. 20)?
4. What do you learn from Elijah's example of faithful praying?<sup>27</sup>

### Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>

1. Read James 5:12 – 20. What steps should believers take to receive God's healing?
2. What keeps people from turning to God in prayer?
3. When has it been difficult for you to accept God's answer to your prayer?

### Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>

1. Read James 5:12 – 20. How can you develop more discipline and patience in your prayer life?
2. What great things would you like to see God do in your life or the lives of others?<sup>28</sup>
3. What commitment are you willing to make to pray for those things?
4. Who can keep you accountable to follow through on your commitment?

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<sup>27</sup>For the story of Elijah, see 1 Kings, 17:1 – 7; 18:1 – 2, 41 – 46. You can also listen to the sermons Josh preached on Elijah at <http://www.tucsonrevolution.com/sermon/the-making-of-a-man-of-god-1-kings-17/> and <http://www.tucsonrevolution.com/sermon/my-god-can-kick-your-god-but-1-kings-18/>.

<sup>28</sup>For a great book on praying big prayers and seeing God do the impossible, see Steven Furtick's book *Sun Stand Still*

**Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>**

1. Reflect on this whole series. What changes have happened in your life as a result of going through the book of James?
2. What things did you learn in this series?

**Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

1. Pray for tonight's Easter weekend service. Pray for openness for those hearing the gospel, that it would grab them and transform their lives.
2. Pray for clarity for Josh as he preaches tonight.