

The Epistle of James

Journal Questions

LESSON
ONE

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES



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Journal Questions

1. According to James, it is possible to be joyful in the midst of suffering. Have you ever experienced this? How do you typically respond to trials and suffering in your life?
2. James tells us that true faith bears the fruit of good deeds. Take a moment and consider the way you live your life. In what areas of your life do you need to repent?
3. What does it look like to "love your neighbor as yourself"? Where have you found opportunities to observe the "royal law" in the past, and what are the greatest needs in your community right now?
4. How do you encourage others in your ministry to strive for obedience to Christ without falling into a theology of "works righteousness"? In other words, how do you promote obedience without teaching that our good works can save us?
5. The tongue can be used for building up or for tearing down. What circumstances most tempt you to use your words for tearing down? How can you overcome those temptations?
6. There is a wide chasm between the wisdom of the world and wisdom from God. What most tempts you to give in to the wisdom of this world? How does James' epistle teach us to focus on heavenly wisdom?
7. In James 4:13-17, James tells us that only God controls the future, and we should not make plans as if we are in control. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.
8. The epistle of James contains many condemnations for those who hoard their wealth and refuse to give to the needy. What are at least three practical ways you and your ministry can use their resources to provide for those who are in need?
9. It can be hard to wait patiently for the Lord in the midst of trials. How might James' epistle encourage you during these times? How can you encourage others who are struggling in trials?
10. James repeatedly exhorted his readers to devote themselves to prayer. How would you judge your prayer life? Where does prayer fit into your daily routine?
11. How can we responsibly and compassionately confront those who have wandered from the faith? What strategies does your ministry have in place to call back those who have wandered away?
12. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
TWO

TWO PATHS OF WISDOM



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1. Do you face any of the same temptations as those of James' original audience? Which are most challenging for you individually? Which are most challenging for those in your area of ministry?
2. God often tests his people's faith through trials. Have you experienced a particular time of testing in your life? How did it change you?
3. Have there been times when you doubted God's goodness or wisdom? What were the circumstances? How did you get through those times of despair?
4. James condemns the idea that God tempts us to sin. How would you answer someone who blames God for their failures?
5. Earthly wisdom divides God's people. Has your church or ministry ever experienced division? What methods, if any, did you find that brought healing to the situation?
6. James confidently claimed that the law gives freedom. How can an obligation to follow God's law provide freedom?
7. Which of Jesus' two greatest commands do you tend to focus more of your energy toward – loving God or loving our neighbors as ourselves? How can you observe both more faithfully?
8. James said that true religion is “to look after widows and orphans ... and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (1:27). What does this mean to you? How can we put James' words into practice?
9. James' discussion of faith and works is one of the most challenging passages in his letter. How much do you think our actions matter to God?
10. Are you ever tempted to minimize the importance of obedience because of Paul's doctrine of justification? Explain your answer.
11. What strategies can you develop to help you faithfully examine your life, both your faith and your works? What are some ways you can share these with others that you disciple?
12. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?