

James

James was one of several brothers of Christ, probably the oldest since he heads the list in Mat 13:55. At first he did not believe in Jesus and even challenged him and misunderstood his mission (John 7:2–5). Later he became a leader in the church (Acts 15:13). He was one of the select individuals Christ appeared to after his resurrection (see 1Cor 15:7). Paul called him a “pillar” of the church (Gal 2:9). Paul, on his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem, saw James (Gal 1:19), and did again on his last visit (Ac 21:18). When Peter was rescued from prison, he told his friends to tell James (Ac 12:17).

Read James 1:1-18

Greeting (1:1) - After Stephen was martyred (Acts 7:55 – 8:3) persecution of Christians increased. James wrote to Jewish Christians who had been scattered throughout the Mediterranean because of persecution. Because these early believers did not have the support of established Christian churches, James wrote to them as a concerned leader. James’ message is clear: if you are going to call yourself a child of God, live like a child of God.

- Many acknowledge the existence of Jesus without taking the action steps to make Him master of their lives. Can we truly be the servant of Jesus if we do not recognize Him as "Master"? Look up: Matthew 7:21-23

James uses the word "brethren" (or brother) in writing to Christians throughout this book in reference to other Christians. The Greek word *adelphos* means "from the same womb" which is a good description of all true believers because we are all "born again" the same way (John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:23).

- Specifically, what were the trials that James was addressing? Do we face these same trials today?

- Can we truly know the depth of our own character without having it tested under pressure? Look up: Rom 5:3,4

- What is the "fruit" that trials yield in the believer's life? Look up: Hebrews 12:11, 1 Peter 4:14

Verse 3 - The word "patience/perseverance" in the Greek (*upomonen*) is stronger than just being patient, but rather a tenacious attitude. James is telling us that trials are not intended to weaken us, but to strengthen us. Trials build endurance in us not only so we can compete in the race, but that we can run to win the race also (1 Cor. 9:23-27).

- What must we remember when going through a trial? Look up: Job 1:12, Job 2:6

Verse 5 – How many have reached the point of spiritual maturity where they no longer must ask for wisdom? Look up: Proverbs 8:11, 1 Kings 3:9,10

Verse 8 - What does it mean to be "double minded" in regard to our prayer life? The Greek word *dipsuchos*, means two-spirited; vacillating in opinion or purpose.

Verses 9-11 - James tells us that the Christian should rejoice not because of their earthly circumstances or their poor economic situation, but because of their spiritual position.

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

– Prov 11:2

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Verse 12 - *makarios*, the Greek word for “Blessed” is defined as “supremely blessed, fortunate, well off, happy”. Happiness doesn't come from never having trials, but in having victory over our trials.

-What action are we to take when faced with trials and temptations? Look up: 2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Corinthians 10:13

- When does it become a "sin", when confronted with temptation? Look up: Hebrews 4:15

Verse 17 - we are given an illustration of God's reliability. Since God gives us every good and necessary gift, we do not need to give in to Satan when he tempts us.

- What does James mean when he writes: “that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created”? (Leviticus 23:10)