



***High Definition  
Faith***

**A Study of the Book of James**

***Even so faith, if it has no works,  
is dead, being by itself.***

***James 2:17***

## JAMES: HIGH DEFINITION FAITH

Hard hitting. To the point. Plain and simple. In your face. These are all phrases that accurately describe God's Word through James. The book of James is well known for its straight forward and easy to understand teaching of what it means to follow Jesus. This study guide is meant to help you have a deeper understanding of God's Word through James, so that you might honor God by "proving yourself to be a doer of the word" (James 1:22).

### Helpful Hints for Understanding James

- The life of James:
  - James was the half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3).
  - Before Jesus' resurrection, James did not believe Him to be the Messiah (Mark 3:21; John 7:5), but after Jesus appeared to James (1 Corinthians 15:3-7), he began to follow Jesus as the Lord (Acts 1:14).
  - James went on to become the leader of the church of Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13-29; 21:17-18) and was influential in the Apostle Paul's early ministry (Galatians 1:19; 2:9).
  - Jewish historian Josephus records that James was stoned to death by the Jewish priesthood (*Josephus, Antiquities, Book 20, Chapter 9, 1*)
- Date of writing:
  - James' letter is probably the earliest writing in the New Testament, written in the mid 40's AD.
- Distinguishing marks of James' letter:
  - Practical - It is challengingly practical, known as "The Proverbs of the New Testament." James shows much familiarity with Jesus' teaching, especially the Sermon on the Mount. He also uses many practical illustrations and word pictures to clarify his teaching (1:6, 9-11, 23-25; 2:2-3, 15-16; 3:2-8, 11-12; 4:13-14; 5:2-5, 7).
  - Jewish - It is very Jewish in its tone. In fact, it is originally addressed to the "twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad" (referring to Jewish Christians scattered in previous persecutions, Acts 8:1; 11:19). James references the Old Testament on many occasions (2:8, 11, 21-23, 25; 4:6, 11; 5:4, 10-11, 17-18).
  - Thematic - It is thematically arranged, rather than arranged in a linear way. His themes are linked by key words, making some of his transitions abrupt. Also, he revisits some of his themes throughout the letter (i.e. rich vs. poor; 1:9-11; 2:1-6; 5:1-6).

## **Study Guide**

### ***Day 1 - Joy in Trials***

*Read:* James 1:1-4, 12

*Think:*

- ❖ Why is it hard to consider your trials as joy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ How might knowing that God is accomplishing His purpose in your life through trials help you endure them?

*Pray:* Ask God to give you His perspective on life's trials.

### ***Day 2 – Faith in Prayer***

*Read:* James 1:5-8

*Think:*

- ❖ What does your current prayer life exhibit about your dependence on God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ What attributes of God's character can help you pray in greater faith?

*Pray:* Thank the Lord that He answers prayer and ask Him help you rely on Him more through prayer.

### ***Day 3 - Humility***

*Read:* James 1:9-11

*Think:*

- ❖ Would God say that you are rich or poor in terms of faith? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ How have you let the pursuit of this world blur the fact that your life is temporary?

*Pray:* Ask the Lord to make you rich in faith and poor towards worldly pursuits.

### ***Day 4 – The Source of Temptation***

*Read:* James 1:13-17

*Think:*

- ❖ What is the source of your temptation? Who is not the source?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ What personal lusts do you need to be aware of in order to avoid the consequences of sin?

*Pray:* Ask the Lord to make you aware of your personal lusts and to diminish their power by the Holy Spirit.

## ***Day 5 – Hear it and Do it***

*Read:* James 1:18-25

*Think:*

- ❖ What is the typical posture of your heart when you read or hear God's word?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ What heart attitudes do you need to have in order to receive God's word in a way that honors Him?

*Pray:* Ask your heavenly Father to make your heart fertile soil for the seed of His word, that it might bear fruit through obedient actions.

## ***Day 6 – Caring for the Helpless***

*Read:* James 1:26-27

*Think:*

- ❖ If a co-worker were to judge your devotion to Christ simply by what he hears come out of your mouth, what would be his conclusion?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Name someone you know who needs help. What practical action would God like you to do to help them?

*Pray:* Dear God, give me your heart of compassion and justice so that I can be more like Jesus, helping those in dire need.

## **Day 7 – Impartial Mercy**

*Read:* James 2:1-13

*Think:*

- ❖ In what ways are you prone to show partiality to others?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ What person can you intentionally show God's love, mercy, and compassion to today?

*Pray:* Ask Jesus to change you so that you love like He loves.

## **Day 8 – Workless Faith is Worthless Faith**

*Read:* James 2:14-26

*Think:*

- ❖ In what ways is a mere claim to faith described in this passage?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ If someone were to review a video tape of your life, what evidence would there be to support your claim of being a follower of Jesus Christ?

*Consider:* The Apostle Paul's and James' teaching on this subject do not contradict but complement one another. Paul used the word *justified* to speak of our declaration of righteousness by God. James uses the same word to speak of our demonstration of our righteousness before people. ~*Introduction to the New Testament, by Carson, Moo, & Morris, p. 419.*

*For Further Study:* Read Genesis 22:12 and Joshua 2:9-11. These verses show that Abraham and Rahab were both acting upon their faith.

*Pray:* God, please give me a faith that results in actions that please You and help others.

## ***Day 9 – Taming My Tongue***

*Read:* James 3:1-12; Matthew 12:34b

*Think:*

- ❖ What pictures does James use to illustrate the destructive power of the tongue?  
How have you experienced this to be true in your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ List the ways God is speaking to you about this issue in your life.

*Pray:* Seek the Lord, asking Him to change your heart so your words will honor Him.

## ***Day 10 – Heavenly vs. Worldly Wisdom***

*Read:* James 3:13-18

*Think:*

- ❖ Have you been relying on heavenly or worldly wisdom? How has this been shown in your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Search your heart. Is there any envy or selfishness in your heart right now?  
Confess it to God.

*Pray:* Ask God to strip away your reliance on worldly wisdom and to give you heavenly wisdom. James 1:5 says God will gladly answer this prayer.

## **Day 11 – Controlling My Anger**

*Read:* James 4:1-3

*Think:*

- ❖ How often do you get angry? What does God say is the source of your anger?
  
- ❖ What selfish desires do you need to identify in order to control your angry responses?

*Pray:* God, take away my selfishness and give me your grace, patience, love, and forgiveness toward others.

## **Day 12 – Forsaking Worldliness**

*Read:* James 4:4-10

*Think:*

- ❖ In what areas of your life are you a friend of the world and an enemy of God?
  
- ❖ What commands does God give in order to be friends with Him?

*Pray:* Ask the Lord to help you leave the world behind and draw closer to Him.



### ***Day 13 – Leave Judging to THE Judge***

*Read:* James 4:11-12

*Think:*

- ❖ How have you spoken against a brother or sister in Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ Instead of judging them, how does God want you to respond?

*Pray:* Seek God's help in leaving the judging to Him.

### ***Day 14 – My Life is in God's Hands***

*Read:* James 4:13-17; Psalm 31:14-15a

*Think:*

- ❖ How does the fact that your life is just a vapor prompt you to trust God with your future?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- ❖ What decision(s) are you facing in your life right now? Have you asked God for His input?

*Pray:* Submit your future to the Lord and seek His leading for your remaining days.

## **Day 15 – Faulty Trust**

*Read:* James 5:1-6; Matthew 6:19-21, 24

*Think:*

- ❖ Is your life's focus on material gain or spiritual gain? Why do you say that?
  
- ❖ Is the Lord bringing to mind anyone you have treated unfairly? What is He asking you to do about it?

*Pray:* Sincerely ask Jesus to change you so that you have eternal values in increasing measure.

## **Day 16 – God Will Work it All Out**

*Read:* James 5:7-12

*Think:*

- ❖ How does the fact of Jesus' soon return help you deal with injustices against you?
  
- ❖ How does Jesus' soon return help you endure suffering? Remember that the Lord is full of compassion and mercy (5:11).

*Pray:* Confess any instances of wanting to take revenge against others who've wronged you. Ask the Lord for His comfort and mercy to endure suffering until He makes all things new.

## **Day 17 – Prayer for Healing**

*Read:* James 5:13-18

*Think:*

- ❖ Have you taken the step of confessing sins to a fellow Christian and asking them for prayer? Why is this important?
  
- ❖ How does the example of Elijah inspire you to pray expectantly?

\* If you would like prayer according to James 5:14-15, contact a Pastor or Elder.

*Pray:* Ask the Lord to provide you with another Christian with whom you could share openly.

## **Day 18 – You are Your Brothers' Keeper**

*Read:* James 5:19-20

*Think:*

- ❖ Is the Lord prompting you to talk to a Christian friend who is wandering away from the Lord? If so, what is their name?
  
- ❖ According to verse 20, how does God want to use you in their life?

*Pray:* Ask God for the courage to lovingly confront Christian friends who are straying from Him.

## **High Definition Faith Lessons**

Summarize what God taught you about living a high definition faith: