

James Family Devotional Guide

Week 1

James 1:1-18

1. Pray for the family and God to guide your time in the Word.
 2. Read James 1:1-18.
 3. Summary:
 - a. The book of James begins with an important lesson: God will use testing and trials as a way of perfecting faith. We are encouraged that in tough times our faith produces patience and wisdom. Patience is produced as we wait to see what God is teaching us. And as we wait we are still finding wisdom. Wisdom is found as we continue to desperately pray for God to illuminate His Word and His Path, this is unwavering faith in the middle of trials. In this passage James also shows us the origin of hard times and sin. Temptation does not come from God. Our wrong wants come from our own hearts. If we let these bad thoughts lead to actions it results in sin (v. 15). But God is a Father who gives good gifts, so no matter how hard of times we need to seek God and on the other side of hardship we will see how God used that for His good and receive the crown of life.
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. What part of this text stood out to you most?
 - b. What is a hard time that you have gone through that later you have seen God use for good?
 - c. How did you grow stronger in your faith during these trials?
 - d. What is something that you had to wait longer than you expected for?
 - e. Are you in the middle of a time when you are overcome with a hard time or bad thoughts?
 - i. Can you see God work in the midst of this?
 - ii. What can we do to help you?
 5. Close in Prayer.
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Week 2

James 1:19-27

1. Pray for those going through hard times and God to make His Word clear in our heart.
 2. Read James 1:19-27
 3. Summary:
 - a. A Godly man is fast to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. At times when we are filled with anger we say things that we will later regret and produce filth instead of good fruit. The way we respond to hard times and situations reveal our heart. This is because what we do reveals what we believe. This is why God commands us to be doers of the Word, not just hearers. Being only someone who hears the Word of God is like someone who looks in the mirror and sees their hair is messed up or they have something in their teeth, but then we do nothing about it. Divine wisdom comes from listening to the Word of God and then doing what God commands. There is danger waiting for the one who only hears but never does the Word of God.
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. What part of this text stood out to you most?
 - b. How powerful do you think the words we say are? (v. 19-20, 26)
 - c. Was there ever a time when you said something you regret out of anger?
 - d. What are we called to lay off and what do we replace that with? (v. 21)
 - e. What are some things that God is calling you to do that you haven't started doing yet?
 - i. What do you think is holding you back from doing that?
 5. Close in Prayer.
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Week 3

James 2:1-13

1. Pray for any of your family's worries or upcoming events and for the Lord to guide your time together.
 2. Read James 2:1-13.
 3. Summary:
 - a. As Christians our lives should not look like the lives of the rest of the world. When we walk into school, concerts, or sporting events we see a world separated. In schools there are areas in the cafeteria where only upperclassmen sit, areas where only the cool kids sit. Certain people are elevated over the rest of the school it seems. At paid events the richest sit courtside, and tickets are sold for VIP sections. James says that our church should not look like this. We do not show favorites in the family of God by giving the rich better seats, more opportunities, and more care. We do not judge based upon the world's standard because James says, "Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?" Every man is guilty before God and we all must humbly come together giving mercy to all because we have the greatest mercy from God.
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. Have you ever felt that you weren't treated right because you weren't someone's favorite?
 - b. Do you show favorites in any area of your life? What can we do better to not show favorites in our life?
 - c. How does verse 10 apply to us?
 - i. If verse 10 is true what does this mean we deserve?
 - d. Are there any people that you need to apologize to for neglecting?
 - i. Challenge them to do that as soon as possible.
 5. Close in Prayer.
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Week 4

James 2:14-26

1. Pray that as a family we center our actions on the Word of God.
 2. Read James 2:14-26.
 3. Summary:
 - a. Faith is a key doctrine in the Christian life. As sinners we are saved by faith (Eph. 2:8-9), and also the believer must walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). And we learn from James today that faith is only truth faith we also act in faith, this is what we call works. Faith without works is dead and works without faith is dead as well. If we say we believe in Jesus and do not listen to Him then we in fact do not believe. It would be the same as someone saying they believe $2+2=4$ but then when you go to answer it on the test you write that $2+2=5$. In the Christian life we practice dynamic faith, this is faith that begins in our heart, what we believe, and ends in an overflowing of actions that show what we believe. James described this as true saving faith by using the examples of Abraham and Rahab who displayed their faith in actions. So too we must be displaying our faith through actions like believing and then being baptized, seeking friendships with other believers in the church, and spending daily time with God.
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. We must examine our hearts because out of the heart flows our actions. The next questions are ways we can examine our hearts.
 - b. Was there a time when I honestly realized I was a sinner and admitted this to myself and to God?
 - c. Was there a time when my heart stirred me to flee from the wrath to come? Have I ever seriously been scared over my sins?
 - d. Do I truly understand the gospel, that Christ died for my sins and rose again? Do I understand and confess that I cannot save myself?
 - e. Did I sincerely repent of my sins and turn from them? Or do I secretly love sin and want to enjoy it?
 - f. Have I trusted in Christ and Christ alone for my salvation? Do I enjoy a living relationship with Him through the Word and in the Spirit?
 - g. Has there been a change in my life? Do I maintain good works, or are my works occasional and weak? Do I seek to grow in the things of the Lord? Can others tell that I have been with Jesus?
 - h. Do I have a desire to share Christ with others? Or am I ashamed of Him?
 - i. Do I enjoy the fellowship of God's people (the church)? Is worship a delight to me?
 - j. Am I ready for the Lord's return? Or will I be ashamed when He comes for me?
 5. Close in Prayer.
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Week 5

James 3:1-12

1. Pray that the Lord bless our lips and guide us as we open His Word.
 2. Read James 3:1-12.
 3. Summary:
 - a. Our tongue is so small, but what James says is that it holds more power than we could imagine. When we ride horses we control the direction they go by their mouth, ships are directed by a small rudder. We can lead our ships to safety or straight into destruction. Oftentimes, wildfires that destroy hundreds of trees are started by a small camp fire that friends were enjoying together. The words that we say have such a great impact, encouraging words can cause friends to believe in themselves to do great things. On the other hand, a rude comment or bad rumor can ruin someone's day, week, year or life. There is a saying that "Life and death is in the tongue." The words we say come from the heart. In moments when we are angry, typically the first thing we do is say something that we regret. The Lord calls us to uplifting talk because God is a God of redemption, His Words convict and comfort us and so too we should use our words wisely.
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. In our text, James gives six different illustrations for the power of the tongue, what are the illustrations and what do they mean? (Horse, Ships, Forest Fire, Animal Commands, Types of Water, Types of Trees)
 - b. We talked last week about how our actions depict our faith, now this week, how do our words display our heart?
 - c. What is an example of something someone has said to you that discouraged you and how did that affect your confidence?
 - d. What is an example of something someone has said to you that encouraged you and how did that affect your confidence?
 - e. What are we to do when we say something that was wrong and hurt someone? How do we handle these problems face to face?
 5. Close in Prayer.
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Week 6

James 3:13-18

1. Pray meekness and true wisdom
 2. Read James 3:13-18.
 3. Summary:
 - a. Wisdom is the ability to use knowledge. We all may know someone that are perhaps almost geniuses but are unable to carry out simple tasks. Knowledge enables us to take things apart, but spiritual wisdom enables us to put things together and relate God's truth to daily life. James explains that there are two different beginnings of wisdom, wisdom that is from above and wisdom that is beneath. We can call these Godly Wisdom and Man-made Wisdom. Whatever does not come from God is deemed to fail and James describes this wisdom as self-seeking, full of envy, leading to boastful pride, and causing confusion. When we get in debates with people what is our motive in proving our point? Oftentimes it is to make us feel smarter than them rather than genuinely seeking the truth even if that means you are wrong. Whereas we see true wisdom is from God, we must humble ourselves, fully depending on God to give us understanding. When we seek Godly wisdom it is not about ourselves, but it is about God. James describes this as pure wisdom that doesn't show favoritism to man, doesn't show hypocrisy or exceptions. We lay down what we think is right and replace it with what God says is right in a gentle and peaceful way.
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. Who are some people you know that you consider are wise? What are some characteristics to describe them?
 - b. Does James here that we can't have arguments?
 - i. Since we can have arguments, then how does this text show that we should approach Godly arguments?
 - c. Do you find areas where you are boastful of your own man-made wisdom and how is this harmful?
 - d. What does James mean when he writes that Godly wisdom is willing to yield in verse 17?
 - e. Are there any areas we are hypocrites of the wisdom that we have?
 5. Close in Prayer.
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Week 7

James 4:1-12

1. Pray
 2. Read James 4:1-12.
 3. Summary:
 - a. In the beginning of chapter 4 James shows that he disagreements and fights that happen begin within people. The prideful hearts of man lead to strife. We want things that often we haven't gone to God and asked for and even when we do ask we ask God for things only for our own selfish gain and not that we may use these gifts for God's glory. God gives us everything that we need, he is the great provider. But if we only desire things of this earth, like making the best team, making the perfect grades, being the coolest in school, then what makes us any different than the world. Our hearts must desire God, the gift-giver over the gifts. We do not want like the world or else we are enemies of God because the world opposes the Lord (v. 4). No matter how many physical blessings we have in this life only God can fill our hearts. Therefore we are commanded to humble and submit to God and he will draw near to us. God is faithful to be near to those who truly seek Him. He is the one that will lift us up. The opposite of pride is humility which leads to Godliness, cry and the Lord will lift you up. We correct others with love, using the Word of God not our own rules and regulations.
 - b. We ask and do not receive because we misuse the gifts of God.
 - c. V. 4 friends of the world are enemies of God.
 - d. The opposite of pride is humility which leads to Godliness, cry and the Lord will lift you up.
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. Have you ever wanted anything just for yourself? Think about maybe as a kid fighting over toys.
 - b. Has God given you a blessing that you have abused for your own gain and never used it as a witness for Him?
 - c. How does the end of verse 4 impact how the people of God should expect to be treated by the world?
 - d. Why do you think humility is important in our relationship with God and others?
 - i. What are some ways we can practice humility as a family?
 - e. What does it mean to "cleanse your hands" and "purify your hearts"?
 - i. What is the result of true repentance in verse 7-10?
 5. Close in Prayer.
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Week 8

James 4:13-17

1. Pray
 2. Read James 4:13-17.
 3. Summary:
 - a. This short but powerful passage of scripture displays one central idea. It is the idea that God is in total control over all creation, including ourselves. He begins by giving an example of making plans, we make plans of our own and yet God is the one who will direct our steps. When we have plans outside, either to swim or maybe a sporting event, but the weather does not cooperate. Sometimes we get frustrated because things didn't go as we planned. We must remember that God was not surprised by this, instead he is directing your steps another way today. Follow His way and we will receive peace. Daily, we need God to live, He is the Creator and Provider. We do not know what will happen tomorrow, God does. This is why James says it is best to say "If the Lord wills" when we make plans because ultimately His Will will be done. Let us not boast thinking that we have control of the next week, month, or year. Instead, daily remain faithful to the one who is in full control, God.
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. How do you react when things don't go the way you want? Can you give an example?
 - i. What is something that the Lord may want to use us for in those new circumstances?
 - b. What is verse 14 trying to get us to understand? Does this mean we should work as hard as we can to gain as much as we can in this life because it is so short?
 - c. How does God provide for you every day?
 - d. How can we as a family incorporate and rely on God as Provider for us everyday?
 5. Close in Prayer.
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Week 9

James 5:1-12

1. Pray for the Lord's coming and that we be excited and prepared for Christ's return.
 2. Read James 5:1-12.
 3. Summary:
 - a. In this text we are given a picture of what the end of your life looks like if you only strive for the riches of this world. The reality is that everything physical deteriorates, our bodies grow old, our clothes get worn down, the jewelry we own fades, and when the Lord returns all the riches we pile up here will be gone. The life of a believer is one that is lived focused on the eternal. We worship a God of justice and we must be prepared for His return. It matters how we handle the blessings and riches that God has given us. The second half of this passage focuses on the encouragement that we can have during suffering. James says that we must be patient, patient when we experience trials and persecution because the Lord will reward us with everlasting life! We look to examples like Job in the Bible when the Lord rewards those who wait upon Him. Justice is the Lord's and so we look forward to the day when all of God's people's enemies are judged.
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. Who does James warn about his coming?
 - i. Why do you think he chose the rich to warn them?
 - b. What are some ways that we can abuse the blessings and riches that God has given us?
 - c. What does patience show to others around us even when we are suffering?
 - d. How were the prophets and Job treated by others and what were their rewards?
How does this encourage us when we go through hard times?
 5. Close in Prayer.
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Week 10

James 5:13-20

1. Pray that the Lord guide our steps and lead us in dependence upon Him.
 2. Read James 5:13-20.
 3. Summary:
 - a. The key to taming the tongue is prayer. James says for those who are suffering, pray. For those who are cheerful, pray. For those who are sick, pray. For those who have sinned, pray. The ultimate way to tame the tongue is by praying to God in all things. In hard times, He is the source of life. In the good times, He is the source of the blessing. Our prayers are not just for us but verse 16 shows that we are to pray for others. The way of righteousness is through consistent prayers to God. God has great power and through prayer we have God's ear to hear our requests. And then James ends his book with a great encouragement for us. If we ever have friends that go off the narrow path we are called to bring them back, bring them back by giving them the Word of God and praying for them. This is such great work because when we lead someone to Christ this is not just a good choice. This is a life altering decision! Someone that was heading straight to eternal death and separation from God now is given life and an eternal relationship with God. God can use you to change eternities!
 4. Discussion Questions:
 - a. What is prayer?
 - b. Do you have a consistent time when you pray to God? If so, please share. If not, how can we help you start this?
 - c. What is something we can do as a family to pray together more regularly?
 - d. How is a friend that you know God has called you to pray for and help lead to Christ?
 5. Close in Prayer for the friends God has placed on our heart and any prayer requests that the family has.
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