

James “*Confronting Counterfeit Christianity*”  
“*When Faith Gets Real*” (James 1:1-27)

~ INTRO ~

HAS ANYONE EVER HAD A \$100 BILL?

- Was it real? How do you know?

A COUNTERFEIT \$100 BILL CAN BE USED...

- At the gas station to fill up your car...
  - o Then used to pay the rent for that gas station...
    - Then taken to the bank by the land owner to pay down the loan
- That bill could circulate for a while...
  - o Doing business / making deals / even helping people.
- It's not until the bank holds it up to the light...
  - o Checks it's marks & tests it's authenticity...
    - That you find out what it really is...
      - It works until it's tested!

FOR THE MONTH OF JULY...

- We're going to be studying the book of James...
  - o Where he “*Confronts Counterfeit Christianity*”
    - By speaking to the faith of believers...
      - And pointing out the inconsistencies in their lives.
- A faith that looks good on the outside & says the right things...
  - o But under the surface doesn't line up with Christian doctrine.
- James teaches the church about authentic faith...
  - o That's not just claimed but proven!

AS A CHURCH WE WILL LEARN...

- How to spot the parts of our lives...
  - o That don't line up with the gospel that Jesus preached...
    - And how we can live out our faith in real life.

~ BACKGROUND ~

(V. 1)

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JAMES WAS A MAN WHO KNEW JESUS...

- But didn't believe He was the Messiah...
  - Until he was confronted with His resurrection...
    - Then he believed and followed Him.

*“His life teaches us that proximity to Jesus doesn't guarantee faith! He was raised in the same house as Jesus yet dismissed the very teachings of Christ.” Pastor Jeff*

AFTER THIS HE BECAME A MAN...

- Who passionately prayed consistently...
  - Receiving the nickname “*Old Camel Knees*”
- Then he was raised up to become the leader...
  - Of the first Church in Jerusalem...
    - Integral in important decisions for the global church.
      - (Acts 15)

AS A RESPECTED LEADER IN THE EARLY CHURCH...

- James is prompted by the Holy Spirit
  - To write a bold and direct letter
    - To Jewish believers scattered across the region
      - Confronting their lifestyles and patterns of thinking
        - With the truth of what Jesus taught

THIS IS WHY I'VE TITLED THE SERIES...

- “*Confronting Counterfeit Christianity*”...
  - Because James shows us that following Jesus
    - Makes a difference in every aspect of our lives.
  - His letter helps us test this reality personally...
    - And calls us back to authenticity!

THE TITLE OF TODAY'S MESSAGE IS...

- “*When Faith Gets Real.*”
  - James isn't giving us doctrine / defense / detailed testimony
    - Shows us what authentic faith looks like in everyday life...
      - When I'm tested,
      - When I'm tempted

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- When I have to submit to God’s Word.

~ IDEA 1 – When It’s Tested (vv. 1-11) ~

(v. 2-4)

FOLLOWING JESUS BECOMES REAL WHEN LIFE HURTS...

- Because trials test what I say I believe...
  - And reveal what I actually believe
    - About Jesus & His promises.

JAMES GIVES US THREE TRUTHS TO CLING TO...

- That help us respond in real faith...
  - And not crumble under the pressure.

#1 – DON’T WASTE IT

- Trials aren’t random difficulties...
  - They are tools in God’s hand...
    - To test our trust
    - To strengthen trust
      - Will I respond by faith or by sight?
  - (examples in my life)
    - Adi (lung disease)
    - Joshua (car accident)
    - Justan (stomach issues)
- Three faith responses:
  - Considering – To guide or lead to something
    - Great joy!
  - Know – Remember
    - There’s a purpose in the process
  - Let – cooperate with God
    - Endurance needs to grow

#2 – WE HAVE SUPPORT – JUST ASK

- “Why?!” Is the typical first question we ask...

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- God’s response isn’t explanation...
  - It’s application of His word
- Wisdom is given to provide a view from God’s perspective...
  - Helps us respond in faith & gives insight in how to go forward.

#3 – REMAIN FOCUSED – NOT DOUBLE-MINDED

- This person wants their will & God’s will at the same time...
  - I want to follow God on my terms.
- We must release our grip on our desired outcome...
  - And trust the purpose & plan of God

(Vv. 9-11)

JAMES WANTS US TO UNDERSTAND...

- Trials hit every tax bracket...
  - The poor get to trust God for provisions...
  - The rich get to trust God when they lose everything
    - Or their money can’t fix the problem.

THERE’S AN O.T. EXAMPLE OF THIS (2 min. Side track) ...

- In (Ex. 15:22-27) NLT “The Smell Test”
- **Context:** Israel had just experienced a huge spiritual high—God parted the Red Sea, delivered them from Pharaoh, and they *sang a worship song* (Ex. 15:1–21).
- **Then comes the test:** (v. 22-23) Just three days into the wilderness, they hit a trial—no water. And when they find water at Marah, it’s bitter and undrinkable.
- **Their reaction:** (v. 24) They grumble. Instead of seeking the Lord, they complain against Moses. Their faith is shaken *immediately*.
- **God’s purpose:** (v. 25) says “*There He tested them.*” God was using this trial not to punish them—but to expose and grow their trust.
  - Literally to smell (like a gallon of milk)

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- **The provision:** (v. 25) God gave wisdom and direction—He showed Moses a tree, and when he threw it in, the waters became sweet.
- **God’s promise:** (v. 26) “If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord... I will put none of the diseases on you which I brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you.”

JUST LIKE ISRAEL...

- The church goes from mountain top experiences to difficult seasons...
  - o In fact: we’ve just come through a season of great victory!
    - God brought on a new staff pastor
    - Opened the door for expansion
    - Has begun the work of building

BUT NOW, WE’VE SEEN OUR LOVE TESTED...

- Skirmishes have surfaced...
  - o Between congregants / servants / even toward pastors.
- These trials aren’t here to destroy us...
  - o But to reveal the cracks in our faith and strengthen our love...
    - If we’ll let the Lord lead us through them.

AUTHENTIC FOLLOWERS OF JESUS...

- Aren’t revealed on the mountaintop...
  - o They’re proven in the testing.

**~ IDEA 2 – When I’m Tempted (vv. 12-18) ~**

(v. 12)

TRIALS TEST US WITH PRESSURE FROM THE OUTSIDE...

- Now James transitions to tackle the pull from the inside...
  - o Temptations

THINK OF IT THIS WAY...

- **Trials are** like lifting weights at the gym...
  - o Hard & difficult...
    - **Designed to strengthen**

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- **Temptation is** like going home & eating junk food...
  - o Appealing & attractive...
    - **Designed to sabotage** the work.

(vv. 13-15)

JAMES DOESN'T JUST TELL US TEMPTATION IS REAL...

- But he tells us where it comes from...
  - o And **how it works** so we're not caught off guard.

**#1 – TEMPTATION IS ALWAYS LURKING**

- Temptation is a “when” not “if”
  - o Stay alert – especially after victory
    - An unguarded strength is a double-weakness

**#2 – GOD DOESN'T TEMPT YOU**

- He's never trying to trap you...
  - o He's available to help you. (Isa. 65:1)

**#3 – THERE'S A PROCESS**

- Hunting & fishing language
  - o Desire -> Deception -> Disobedience -> Death
    - It doesn't start with sin...
      - It starts with an unchecked craving

**#4 – DON'T BE DEFINED BY YOUR DESIRES**

- Just because I feel it doesn't mean I have to follow it...
  - o Real faith knows the difference between...
    - What I want & what's right

THERE'S AN O.T. CHARACTER...

- We can learn from when it comes to temptation – Sampson...
  - o The weakest strongman!

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1. (Judges 13:5) NLT

- a. God gave him a calling

2. (Judges 14:1–3) NLT

- a. He followed his desires

3. (Judges 16:1) NLT

- a. He grew comfortable in compromise
  - i. Continued to move closer to sin...
    - 1. Instead of protecting himself from it.

4. (Judges 16:15–17) NLT

- a. He gave in fully to Delilah.

5. (Judges 16:20–21) NLT

- a. He lost what mattered most

6. (Judges 16:28) NLT

- a. He remembered his identity and where his strength came from

(vv. 16-18)

JAMES ENDS THIS SECTION BY WARNING US...

- That temptation isn't *just* about lust or greed...
  - o It's about lies!

ONE OF THE BIGGEST LIES WE TELL OURSELVES IS...

- *'I have a peace about it,'* OR *'I feel like God is leading me to do this'*
  - o Even when it clearly goes against God's Word.
    - That's not peace—that's deception.

TEMPTATION DOESN'T ALWAYS FEEL LIKE REBELLION...

- Sometimes it can feel spiritual.
  - o But if it contradicts Scripture, it's not the Spirit
    - It's a setup!

FOLLOWING JESUS BECOMES REAL...

- When I stop pretending temptation isn't a big deal...
  - o And I start letting God shape my desires.

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**~ IDEA 3 – When I Have to Submit (vv. 19-27) ~**

JAMES MOVES ON FROM WHAT WE FIGHT AGAINST...

- To what we build our lives on...
  - Living out God’s truth.
- Following Jesus becomes real...
  - When I allow scripture to overrule me!
- A simple way to remember is...
  - Temptation shows what’s inside...
    - But submission shows what’s real!

THIS IS WHAT OBEDIENCE LOOKS LIKE...

- For the man or woman who is following Jesus...
  - Belief + Action = Real Faith
- It’s walked out in three practical ways.

**#1 – LISTENING / NOT ARGUING (vv. 19-21)**

- Being quick to listen means...
  - Listening to understand & not to answer back
- Being slow to speak means...
  - Controlling our tongue
- Being slow to get angry means...
  - When I’m confronted with God’s direction...
    - I don’t respond defensively or in anger.
      - Anger dismisses correction

**#2 – RECEIVING / NOT WALKING AWAY (vv. 22-25)**

- This describes fully embracing the truth...
  - Setting aside evil & wicked desires
  - Turning from pride (My way is better)
  - Accepting the instruction

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#3 – RESPONDING WITH TANGIBLE EVIDENCE (vv. 26-27)

- This means there's evidence of change in my life...
  - o (2 Cor. 7:11) Fruits of repentance

REMEMBER:

- The culture of the kingdom...
  - o And the culture of this fellowship...
    - “Where there is Godly leadership...
      - There should be Godly submission
- But rebellion has popped up among us!
  - o When we think we can take or leave the council God gives us...
    - Through the leaders He's placed among us.

IN THE O.T. WE HAVE ANOTHER EXAMPLE...

- Of a man who lived this out...
  - o In (2 Kings 22)
    - (v. 11) NLT He listened to God's Word
    - (V. 13) NLT He received God's Instruction
      - Accepted responsibility for his actions
    - (23:3) NLT Responded tangibly by renewing the covenant.

OBEDIENCE ISN'T ABOUT CHECKING BOXES...

- It's about letting the Word of God shape our...
  - o Reactions / relationships / & real life...
    - That's when faith gets real...
      - When I don't just say I believe...
        - o But when I live like it's true!

~ IN CLOSING (CALL WORSHIP TEAM) ~

JUST AS JOSIAH LED THE PEOPLE...

- TO RENEW THEIR COVENANT WITH GOD...
  - o Today we come to the communion table.

WE AREN'T MAKING A NEW PROMISE...

- We're remembering the on God made with us through Jesus...

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- His body was broken & His blood was poured out...
  - By faith we're apart of that covenant

THIS IS WHERE FAITH GETS REAL...

- Not just hearing the truth of Jesus sacrifice...
  - But standing before God saying...
    - I believe this / I receive this / I will live this!
      - (1 Cor. 11:23-26) NLT