

James 1:1-12

What is the result of ignoring things such as the yard, the housework, pool, car, office etc?
What does it take to get these things back in order?

What happens if we ignore the behaviour or antics of young children for any length of time?

What is the result of ignoring our personal holiness?

Read James 1:1-12. What is strange about the command in v2?

What is joy **not**? What does it mean to be joyful in trials?

How is it that we might have joy through the fiercest trial?

What do trials and hardship show us about where we put our hope and focus?

As we face hardship and trials what is it that v5 suggests we are lacking? What is biblical wisdom?

What is the high position of the humble and vice versa? V9-10

What is it that awaits those who persevere through trials and hardships? V12

What is the view that helps us to see trials and hardships with joy?

How do we live this in our lives?

James 1:13-18

What is the good news James introduces this section with?

If it isn't God who tempts us what is it that we are tempted by? Vv13-14

What is a common response, to God, that people have during a difficult time?

What is the temptation we face in every trial?

What is the end result of ignoring God and giving into our desires? V15

What might the pathway that vv14-15 describe look like in our lives?

What makes it so difficult to get off this pathway?

How might vv16-18 help us in our struggle to face and overcome trials?

How might v18 help you with any doubts that God does want what is best for us?

James 1:19-27

What changes do you like? What changes do you dislike?

In what ways are we often slow to listen, quick to speak and quick to become angry?

What are the dangers of living/acting this way?

What is the righteous life that God desires, v20, to consist of?

How might we deceive ourselves by merely listening to the word?

What is the difference between listening and doing what it says?

What is the absurdity of v23-24? What point is James trying to make here?

What is the 'perfect law that gives freedom', v25? How does it give freedom?

What is the difference between the religion God accepts and the religion the world tries to offer?

How is your life being continually shaped and changed by God's word?

James 2:1-13

What forms of I.D. do we have? What is the use of I.D?

What proof of Spiritual life is James looking for in this passage?

Who were the ones being favoured in the time of James v3-5? Why was this so absurd v6-7?

Why might some people be more valued in our world over others?

Why is this a silly way to judge people?

How might we be guilty of favouritism?

From verses 5-7 why is it that favouritism is unacceptable?

What is James encouraging as an alternative to favouritism v8? What does James describe exactly what favouritism is in vv9-11?

What is James looking for instead of favouritism? Vv 12-13

What things ensure we don't show favouritism?

James 2:14-26

Do you believe in Jesus? What does it look like?

What are some of the commands that James has given us so far in this book?

How do we go living these commands in our day to day lives?

What does 'actions speak louder than words' mean according to verses 14-17?

How should our actions show the faith we have? Be specific!

What is James response to someone who might say to you, "I believe in God"? v19

What is the evidence of real faith that James gives us in vv 20-26?

What evidence is there in your life, that what you believe has actually changed the way you live?

James 3:1-12

What problems does a teacher face? Why?

What do horse, ships, forest fires and the human tongue have in common? Vv3-6

What do animals, birds, reptiles, sea creatures and the human tongue not have in common? Vv7-8

Is there anyone who can control the tongue? V7

If no man can tame the tongue, do you think v10 presents an impossible demand?

How might Jesus teaching in Matthew 12:33-37 throw light on this passage?

In terms of our speech how can we make sure what comes out of our mouths is fresh water and not salt water?

When are you most tempted to slander or gossip about other people? What is the underlying problem here?

Jesus says, *“out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”* How can we then tame our tongue?

James 3:13-4:12

What would it take for you to live your version of the 'good life'? Is there such a thing as the 'good life'?

What does James say in v13 that the good life consists of?

What is the alternative to living the good life according to v14-15?

What is the fruit of that sort of living v16?

What is it that the wisdom from heaven consists of and what does it lead to vv17-18?

What according to 4:1-5 is the road block to the good life?

What areas do our own desires destroy?

These verses paint a very ugly picture. What hope do we find in 4:6-10?

With Gods grace comes responsibility, what is the responsibility James says we have?

Why is the good life God has for us so different from the 'good life' we imagine for ourselves?

What can we do about changing our view of the 'good life' to line up with Gods view?

James 4:11-5:6

What places would you not travel to at this time? Why?

Life is often described as a journey. If this is the case how does James say we should treat our fellow travellers in 4:11-12?

How might we be tempted toward arrogance in this area?

How according to vv13-17 can we be smart travellers?

What is the presumption that is made in v13? What is wrong with this?

How will the smart person view life according to v14?

Do these verses speak against planning for the future? What do they say then?

What does 5:1-6 say about our journey? Is this warning against being rich or something else?

How does your view of wealth affect the way you live?

In summary what is the way James is encouraging us to travel on this journey?

James 5:7-20

How do you prepare for a wait at the doctor's surgery or other places you know that there will be a wait involved?

How are you waiting for Jesus return?

What does James compare our waiting to in vv7-8?

How might we be tempted to grumble against each other in the context of our waiting v9?

Think of some examples of Prophets and their patience in waiting. How might we be encouraged by this?

What about Job, how might his patience and trust in God be a great example and encouragement to us?

When do you find it very difficult to be patient as we await the return of the Lord? What things might test this patience?

What does v13 say about when we should pray? How do we go with that? When are you most likely to pray most?

In verses 14-15 we come across some of the most difficult verses in the bible. But we will attempt here to come to some kind of understanding. The word used for sickness here is used for the physical and spiritual sickness or weakness. The context seems to be talking about a bed ridden illness not the common cold or upset tummy. Sickness is not always due to sin in the life of the one who is sick but there is enough evidence in scripture to suggest that this could be a gracious nudge to examine your life and to repent ask God for forgiveness.

So why call the elders at all?

- I see that it has to do with understanding the place of **the prayer of faith** & the **anointing** with oil (v14).
- The way it is written sounds as if healing (and possibly forgiveness) is linked to the amount of faith that the elders can muster as they pray for the sick person & maybe some qualities in the olive oil.

James 5:7-20

- That's not Biblical. Not what James is saying either. This could also be read as "the prayer of faith".
- It seems that the prayer of faith is a prayer offered by the elders for healing when they are convicted that it is God's will to bring healing. A prayer offered on the basis of the Spirit's conviction to the elders that in this circumstance it is God's will that the person be healed.

Faith is a gift to us from God (Ephesians 2). A Spirit enabled conviction that the gospel is true.

- The Holy Spirit does work this way, every follower of Jesus has experienced it one way or another.
- Eldership is a position in the church establishment and authorised by God. His church, his method.
- Can God heal? Of course he can. (*What if people say that God doesn't do miracles in these days? They are not the boss*).
- Will he give the leaders of his people the ability to lead as he calls them to? Of course He will/does.
- Is this example of leading (the prayer of faith) inconsistent with the teaching of the Bible? Not at all.
- Does it mean that they will all be healed? No it is all to do with God's will.
- Does this bring to light a heightened understanding of the responsibilities of leadership? Indeed it does.
- Does this confront us with things we may not have been aware of or been practicing? Very possible.
- Does that mean it's not right? No, it may mean that we are not right and that we need to amend things.

What about the oil? Short answer: it is symbolic that this healing, which confirms in a gracious way forgiveness, comes from Jesus.

And the final verses 19-20 may help us to put these verses into a bit more context.

How can we encourage each other to continue in the truth? How does your growth group help you to not wander from the truth?

How can our church family help in this way?