

Book of James Reading Plan and Study Guide

| Mike Signorelli Commentary |

2024

Day 1 (Jan 14): Introduction to James

- Read James 1:1-4
- Explanation: Author Introduction, James, and set the stage for the themes of trials and perseverance. Discuss how facing challenges can lead to spiritual growth.

Day 2 (Jan 15): WILD Wisdom in Trials

- Read James 1:5-8
- Explanation: Explore the theme of seeking wisdom during trials. Discuss the relevance of relying on God's guidance when facing life's difficulties.

Day 3 (Jan 16): Rich and Poor in Christ

- Read James 1:9-11
- Explanation: Reflect on the idea of riches and poverty in a spiritual context. Discuss how our identity in Christ transcends material wealth.

Day 4 (Jan 17): Perseverance in Trials

- Read James 1:12-15
- Explanation: Delve into the concept of enduring trials and avoiding temptation. Discuss the impact of perseverance on character development.

Day 5 (Jan 18): Hearing and Doing the Word

- Read James 1:19-27
- Explanation: Emphasize the importance of not just hearing but actively applying God's Word in daily life. Discuss practical ways to live out one's faith.

Day 6 (Jan 19): Partiality and Faith

- Read James 2:1-13
- Explanation: Explore the issue of favoritism and how genuine faith should be expressed through love for all. Discuss the challenges of treating everyone equally.

Day 7 (Jan 20): Faith and Works

- Read James 2:14-26
- Explanation: Discuss the relationship between faith and works. Emphasize the idea that true faith is evidenced by actions and how it impacts daily choices.

Day 8 (Jan 21): Taming the Tongue

- Read James 3:1-12
- Explanation: Reflect on the power of words and the importance of controlling the tongue. Discuss the impact of speech on relationships and daily interactions.

Day 9 (Jan 22): Wisdom from Above

- Read James 3:13-18
- Explanation: Explore the characteristics of godly wisdom and how it differs from worldly wisdom. Discuss practical ways to seek and apply divine wisdom.

Day 10 (Jan 23): Submit to God

- Read James 4:1-10

- Explanation: Discuss the dangers of worldly desires and the importance of submitting to God. Explore how surrendering to God's will impacts daily choices.

Day 11 (Jan 24): Humility and Planning

- Read James 4:11-17

- Explanation: Reflect on the themes of humility and recognizing the uncertainty of life. Discuss the importance of acknowledging God's sovereignty in planning.

Day 12 (Jan 25): Warning to the Rich

- Read James 5:1-6

- Explanation: Discuss the warnings against the misuse of wealth and the call to consider the well-being of others. Explore the responsibilities that come with financial resources.

Day 13 (Jan 26): Patience in Suffering

- Read James 5:7-12

- Explanation: Reflect on the theme of patience in the midst of suffering. Discuss how trusting God's timing can bring hope and endurance in challenging times.

Day 14 (Jan 27): The Power of Prayer

- Read James 5:13-18

- Explanation: Explore the significance of prayer in times of joy, sickness, and confession. Discuss the transformative power of prayer in the life of an average person.

Day 15 (Jan 28): Restoring the Wanderer

- Read James 5:19-20

- Explanation: Series Conclusion. Discuss the importance of reaching out to those who have strayed. Explore the role of community and accountability in the life of a believer.

Day 16 (Jan 29): Introduction to James

- Recap and review key themes from the first day. (Go back to the start)

- Explanation: Revisit the introductory verses to reinforce the foundation of the teaching series. You should have a fresh revelation.

Day 17 (Jan 30): Wisdom in Trials

- Recap and discuss personal experiences related to seeking wisdom during trials.

- Explanation: Share personal stories of relying on God's guidance during challenging times.

Day 18 (Jan 31): Rich and Poor in Christ

- Recap and discuss how identity in Christ transcends material wealth.

- Explanation: Explore practical ways to view and treat others based on their spiritual identity rather than worldly status.

Day 19 (Feb 1): Perseverance in Trials

- Recap and share testimonies of perseverance in trials.
- Explanation: Emphasize the impact of enduring trials on character development and spiritual growth.

Day 20 (Feb 2): Hearing and Doing the Word

- Recap and discuss practical applications of actively living out God's Word.
- Explanation: Share examples of how the teachings from this section can be implemented in daily life.

Day 21 (Feb 3): Partiality and Faith

- Recap and explore challenges and successes in treating everyone equally.
- Explanation: Discuss strategies to overcome favoritism and demonstrate genuine love for all.

Day 22 (Feb 4): Faith and Works

- Recap and reflect on personal experiences of faith being expressed through actions.
- Explanation: Share stories of how faith has influenced decisions and actions in everyday life.

Day 23 (Feb 5): Taming the Tongue

- Recap and discuss the impact of speech on relationships and daily interactions.
- Explanation: Explore practical steps to control the tongue and promote positive communication.

Day 24 (Feb 6): Wisdom from Above

- Recap and delve deeper into applying godly wisdom in various life situations.
- Explanation: Discuss specific scenarios where divine wisdom can guide decision-making.

Day 25 (Feb 7): Submit to God

- Recap and share insights on the dangers of worldly desires and the importance of submission.
- Explanation: Discuss personal challenges in submitting to God's will and ways to overcome them.

Day 26 (Feb 8): Humility and Planning

- Recap and discuss the impact of humility on acknowledging God's sovereignty in planning.
- Explanation: Share personal reflections on recognizing God's guidance in life's uncertainties.

Day 27 (Feb 9): Warning to the Rich

- Recap and explore the responsibilities associated with financial resources.
- Explanation: Discuss practical ways to use wealth for the well-being of others and the kingdom.

Day 28 (Feb 10): Patience in Suffering

- Recap and reflect on the theme of patience in the midst of suffering.
- Explanation: Share stories of how trusting God's timing brought hope and endurance during challenging times.

Day 29 (Feb 11): The Power of Prayer

- Recap and discuss personal experiences with the transformative power of prayer.
- Explanation: Encourage participants to share testimonies of answered prayers and the impact of a consistent prayer life.

Day 30 (Feb 12): Restoring the Wanderer

- Recap and emphasize the importance of reaching out to those who have strayed.
- Explanation: Discuss practical ways to foster community and accountability within the faith community.

Day 31 (Feb 13): Reflection and Application

- Recap key lessons and insights from the entire series, again, now, with a total understanding of the book of James.
 - Explanation: Allow time for personal reflection and discussion on how the teachings can be applied to your life. What stood out to you? How has this process transformed you?
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Libro de Santiago Plan de lectura y guía de estudio | Mike Signorelli | 2024

Día 1 (14 de enero): Introducción a Santiago

- Leer Santiago 1:1-4
- Explicación: Introducción del autor, Santiago, y preparar el escenario para los temas de las pruebas y la perseverancia. Discutir cómo enfrentar los desafíos puede conducir al crecimiento espiritual.

Día 2 (15 de enero): Sabiduría SALVAJE en las pruebas

- Lea Santiago 1:5-8
- Explicación: Explorar el tema de buscar sabiduría durante las pruebas. Discutir la relevancia de confiar en la guía de Dios al enfrentar las dificultades de la vida.

Día 3 (16 de enero): Ricos y pobres en Cristo

- Lea Santiago 1:9-11
- Explicación: Reflexionar sobre la idea de riqueza y pobreza en un contexto espiritual. Discutir cómo nuestra identidad en Cristo trasciende la riqueza material.

Día 4 (17 de enero): Perseverancia en las pruebas

- Lea Santiago 1:12-15
- Explicación: Profundizar en el concepto de soportar las pruebas y evitar la tentación. Discutir el impacto de la perseverancia en el desarrollo del carácter.

Día 5 (18 de enero): Escuchar y hacer la Palabra

- Lea Santiago 1:19-27
- Explicación: Enfatizar en la importancia de no sólo escuchar sino aplicar activamente la Palabra de Dios en la vida diaria. Discutir formas prácticas de vivir la fe.

Día 6 (19 de enero): Parcialidad y Fe

- Lea Santiago 2:1-13
- Explicación: Explorar el tema del favoritismo y cómo se debe expresar la fe genuina a través del amor por todos. Discutir los desafíos de tratar a todos por igual.

Día 7 (20 de enero): Fe y Obras

- Lea Santiago 2:14-26
- Explicación: Discutir la relación entre fe y obras. Enfatizar en la idea de que la verdadera fe se evidencia en las acciones y en cómo éstas impactan las decisiones diarias.

Día 8 (21 de enero): Domar la lengua

- Lea Santiago 3:1-12

- Explicación: Reflexionar sobre el poder de las palabras y la importancia del control de la lengua. Discutir el impacto del habla en las relaciones y las interacciones diarias.

Día 9 (22 de enero): Sabiduría desde arriba

- Lea Santiago 3:13-18

- Explicación: Explorar las características de la sabiduría divina y en qué se diferencia de la sabiduría mundana. Discutir formas prácticas de buscar y aplicar la sabiduría divina.

Día 10 (23 de enero): Sometete a Dios

- Lea Santiago 4:1-10

- Explicación: Discutir los peligros de los deseos mundanos y la importancia de someterse a Dios. Explorar cómo rendirse a la voluntad de Dios impacta las decisiones diarias.

Día 11 (24 de enero): Humildad y planificación

- Lea Santiago 4:11-17

- Explicación: Reflexionar sobre los temas de la humildad y el reconocimiento de la incertidumbre de la vida. Discutir la importancia de reconocer la soberanía de Dios en la planificación.

Día 12 (25 de enero): Advertencia a los ricos

- Leer Santiago 5:1-6

- Explicación: Discutir las advertencias contra el mal uso de la riqueza y el llamado a considerar el bienestar de los demás. Explorar las responsabilidades que conllevan los recursos financieros.

Día 13 (26 de enero): Paciencia en el sufrimiento

- Lea Santiago 5:7-12

- Explicación: Reflexionar sobre el tema de la paciencia en medio del sufrimiento. Discutir cómo confiar en los tiempos de Dios puede traer esperanza y resistencia en los tiempos retantes.

Día 14 (27 de enero): El poder de la oración

- Lea Santiago 5:13-18

- Explicación: Explorar el significado de la oración en momentos de gozo, enfermedad y confesión. Discutir el poder transformador de la oración en la vida de una persona promedio.

Día 15 (28 de enero): Restaurando al Errante

- Lea Santiago 5:19-20

- Explicación: Conclusión de la Serie. Discutir la importancia de tender la mano a aquellos que se han extraviado. Explorar el papel de la comunidad y la responsabilidad en la vida de un creyente.

Día 16 (29 de enero): Introducción a Santiago

- Recapitular y revisar temas clave del primer día. (Volver al inicio)

- Explicación: Revisar los versículos introductorios para reforzar la base de la serie de enseñanza. Deberías tener una revelación fresca.

Día 17 (30 de enero): Sabiduría en las pruebas

- Recapitular y discutir experiencias personales relacionadas con la búsqueda de sabiduría durante las pruebas.

- Explicación: compartir historias personales sobre cómo confiar en la guía de Dios durante tiempos difíciles.

Día 18 (31 de enero): Ricos y pobres en Cristo

- Recapitular y discutir cómo la identidad en Cristo trasciende la riqueza material.
- Explicación: Explore formas prácticas de ver y tratar a los demás en su identidad espiritual en lugar de su estatus mundano.

Día 19 (1 de febrero): Perseverancia en las pruebas

- Recapitular y compartir testimonios de perseverancia en las pruebas.
- Explicación: Enfatizar en el impacto de las pruebas duraderas en el desarrollo del carácter y el crecimiento espiritual.

Día 20 (2 de febrero): Escuchar y hacer la Palabra

- Recapitular y discutir aplicaciones prácticas de vivir activamente la Palabra de Dios.
- Explicación: Compartir ejemplos de cómo las enseñanzas de esta sección se pueden implementar en la vida diaria.

Día 21 (3 de febrero): Parcialidad y Fe

- Recapitular y explorar los desafíos y éxitos al tratar a todos por igual.
- Explicación: Discutir estrategias para superar el favoritismo y demostrar amor genuino por todos.

Día 22 (4 de febrero): Fe y Obras

- Recapitular y reflexionar sobre experiencias personales de fe expresadas a través de acciones.
- Explicación: Compartir historias de cómo la fe ha influido en las decisiones y acciones en la vida cotidiana.

Día 23 (5 de febrero): Domar la lengua

- Recapitular y discutir el impacto del habla en las relaciones y las interacciones diarias.
- Explicación: Explorar pasos prácticos para controlar la lengua y promover la comunicación positiva.

Día 24 (6 de febrero): Sabiduría desde arriba

- Recapitular y profundizar en la aplicación de la sabiduría divina en diversas situaciones de la vida.
- Explicación: Discutir escenarios específicos donde la sabiduría divina puede guiar la toma de decisiones.

Día 25 (7 de febrero): Sometimiento a Dios

- Recapitular y compartir ideas sobre los peligros de los deseos mundanos y la importancia de la sumisión.
- Explicación: Discutir los desafíos personales al someterse a la voluntad de Dios y las formas de superarlos.

Día 26 (8 de febrero): Humildad y planificación

- Recapitular y discutir el impacto de la humildad en el reconocimiento de la soberanía de Dios en la planificación.
- Explicación: Compartir reflexiones personales sobre cómo reconocer la guía de Dios en las incertidumbres de la vida.

Día 27 (9 de febrero): Advertencia a los ricos

- Recapitular y explorar las responsabilidades asociadas a los recursos financieros.
- Explicación: Discutir formas prácticas de utilizar la riqueza para el bienestar de los demás y del reino.

Día 28 (10 de febrero): Paciencia en el sufrimiento

- Recapitular y reflexionar sobre el tema de la paciencia en medio del sufrimiento.
- Explicación: Compartir historias de cómo confiar en el tiempo de Dios trajo esperanza y resistencia durante tiempos difíciles.

Día 29 (11 de febrero): El poder de la oración

- Recapitular y discutir experiencias personales con el poder transformador de la oración.
- Explicación: Alentar a los participantes a compartir testimonios de oraciones contestadas y el impacto de una vida de oración constante.

Día 30 (12 de febrero): Restaurando al Errante

- Recapitular y enfatizar la importancia de tender la mano a aquellos que se han extraviado.
- Explicación: Discutir formas prácticas de fomentar la comunidad y la responsabilidad dentro de la comunidad de fe.

Día 31 (13 de febrero): Reflexión y Aplicación

- Recapitular las lecciones y puntos de vista clave de toda la serie, nuevamente, ahora, con una comprensión total del libro de Santiago.
 - Explicación: Permita tiempo para la reflexión personal y la discusión sobre cómo se pueden aplicar las enseñanzas a su vida. ¿Qué te llamó la atención? ¿Cómo te ha transformado este proceso?
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Día 1 (14 de enero): Introducción a Santiago (REINA VALERA 2020)**Saludo inicial (1.1)**

1 Santiago, siervo de Dios y del Señor Jesucristo, saluda a las doce tribus que están en la dispersión.

II. Capítulo preliminar (1.2-27)**La sabiduría que viene de Dios**

2 Hermanos míos, gozaos profundamente cuando estéis pasando por diversas pruebas, 3 pues sabéis que cuando vuestra fe es puesta a prueba produce paciencia. 4 Pero procurad que la paciencia lleve a feliz término su obra, para que seáis perfectos y cabales, sin que os falte cosa alguna.

5 Si alguno de vosotros tiene falta de sabiduría, pídasela a Dios, el cual da a todos abundantemente y sin reproche, y le será dada. 6 Pero pida con fe, sin dudar nada, porque el que duda es semejante a la ola del mar, que es arrastrada por el viento y

llevada de una parte a otra. 7 Quien así sea, no piense que recibirá cosa alguna del Señor, 8 pues el hombre indeciso es inconstante en todo cuanto emprende.

9 El hermano que es de humilde condición debe sentirse orgulloso cuando sea exaltado; 10 el rico, debe sentirse igual cuando sea humillado, porque pasará como la flor de la hierba: 11 cuando sale el sol con calor abrasador, la hierba se seca, su flor se cae y desaparece su hermosura. Lo mismo le sucederá al rico en todas sus empresas.

Victoria en la prueba

12 Dichoso el que resiste la tentación, porque cuando haya pasado la prueba, recibirá la corona de vida que Dios ha prometido a los que lo aman. 13 Cuando alguno es tentado no diga que es tentado de parte de Dios, porque Dios no puede ser tentado por el mal ni él tienta a nadie; 14 sino que cada uno es tentado por sus propios malos deseos, que lo arrastran y lo seducen. 15 Estos malos deseos conciben y dan a luz el pecado; y el pecado, una vez cometido, da a luz la muerte.

16 Amados hermanos míos, no os engaños. 17 Toda buena dádiva y todo don perfecto descende de lo alto, del Padre de las luces, en quien no hay cambio ni sombra de variación. 18 Él, por su propia voluntad, nos hizo nacer por la palabra de verdad, para que seamos las primicias de su creación.

Hacedores de la palabra

19 Por esto, mis amados hermanos, sed todos diligentes para oír, pero lentos para hablar y lentos para airarse, 20 porque un hombre airado no es capaz de actuar conforme a la justicia de Dios. 21 Por eso, dejando toda inmundicia y tanta maldad, recibid con docilidad la palabra plantada en vosotros, la cual puede salvar vuestras almas.

22 Sed hacedores de la palabra y no tan solo oidores, de manera que os engaños a vosotros mismos. 23 Si alguno es oidor de la palabra pero no la pone por obra, ese es semejante al que se mira la cara en un espejo: 24 se ve a sí mismo, pero tan pronto se va, se olvida de cómo es. 25 Pero el que se fija atentamente en la ley perfecta, la de la libertad, y persevera en ella, y no es un oidor olvidadizo sino que la pone en práctica, será dichoso en lo que hace.

26 Si alguno de vosotros se considera muy religioso, pero no refrena su lengua, se engaña a sí mismo y su religión no sirve para nada. 27 La religión pura y sin mancha delante de Dios el Padre es esta: ayudar a los huérfanos y a las viudas en sus aflicciones, y no contaminarse con la maldad del mundo.

Week 1 (Jan 14): Introduction to James

1 I, James, am a slave of God and the Master Jesus, writing to the twelve tribes scattered to Kingdom Come: Hello!

- **Never mentions he's Jesus' brother. Humility in a time when family ties/genealogy was everything.**
- **Slave of God could appear "works based," but it's a reciprocation of what was done that James could never pay back (that'll preach)**
- **Willing to call his step-brother "Master" means he understands that Kingdom is divided into hierarchical levels that must be acknowledged and submitted to.**
- **Mentions the 12 tribes of Israel, which gives us a window into God's divine plan to graft gentiles in, while not replacing Israel.**

2-4 Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

- **Gifts are given, and must be received. Think of a test and a challenge as a gift. Don't reject (ignore) (escape) it, but rather receive it. Like cold plunging example.**
- **God's mechanism to debut the true you to the public is pressure.**
- **Timing matters. You CAN try to get out of a test and challenge, but make sure you don't get out too soon. Getting out too soon is escape. Getting out too late is destruction. Timing matters.**
- **Those who escape are deficient. Worship music can be an escape. Obsessively listening to Bible teaching can be an escape. For ministers, preaching can be an escape.**

5-8 If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.

- The primary purpose of tests and challenges is to develop our relationship with the Father (of all titles and names, James is specific about “Father”)
- Tests and challenges are secondarily intended to change the boldness of our “asking”. How you ask determines what you get. If you doubt in the midst of the test, you get nothing. If you ask boldly, you will receive direct help from God, the Father.

9-11 When down-and-outers get a break, cheer! And when the arrogant rich are brought down to size, cheer! Prosperity is as short-lived as a wildflower, so don't ever count on it. You know that as soon as the sun rises, pouring down its scorching heat, the flower withers. Its petals wilt and, before you know it, that beautiful face is a barren stem. Well, that's a picture of the “prosperous life.” At the very moment everyone is looking on in admiration, it fades away to nothing.

- The command to “cheer” is about changing YOUR relationship with what you hear. How you respond reveals what you believe. If you get angry when someone succeeds it's because you are trusting in the wrong source. The appropriate response, according to James, to when someone gets a breakthrough is to “cheer,” which demonstrates you know who is ultimately behind raising people up and bringing them down low— it's GOD, your Father, at work!
 - This directly ties into the introduction to James's letter where he refers to God as “Master”. He understands that nothing happens lest God is in control. Spiritual authority is inescapable, even if we don't actively choose to submit to it.
 - Therefore, “cheering” when we hear news is the proof that we believe if God raised them up, He will raise us up too!

12 Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.

- Life is something we can have in increased measure. “More life” is the portion of those who truly believe. You see this when you put a Christian next to a non-Christian. Both are alive, but one has “more life”. Both are breathing, but one is cheering and another is complaining.

13-15 Don't let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, “God is trying to trip me up.” God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one's way. The temptation to give in to evil comes from us and only us. We have no one to blame but the leering, seducing

flare-up of our own lust. Lust gets pregnant, and has a baby: sin! Sin grows up to adulthood, and becomes a real killer.

- **Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond. The things that kill our purpose always start inside of us! We entertain them, conceive them into full blown actions, and then the consequences of those actions destroy us. God is not evil. God does not play games to try to trip us up. We can only be seduced by what is already inside of us. Tests aren't just an opportunity to fail, they are our greatest opportunity to cry out to God for help to remove!**

16-18 So, my very dear friends, don't get thrown off course. Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light. There is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle. He brought us to life using the true Word, showing us off as the crown of all his creatures.

- **Heaven is a location, which makes it a destination. Geographic locations have cultures, items, smells, and experiences. Heaven is the same. When a close friend or family member comes back from vacation, they often bring you things that you do not have in your region. In the same way, Jesus gave access to gifts from a place that we did not have access to. We must train ourselves to desire gifts from Heaven.**
- **Just as the first church in Jerusalem struggled with their perception of the personality and character of God, believers today need an alignment!**

Act on What You Hear

19-21 Post this at all the intersections, dear friends: Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue, and let anger straggle along in the rear. God's righteousness doesn't grow from human anger. So throw all spoiled virtue and cancerous evil in the garbage. In simple humility, let our gardener, God, landscape you with the Word, making a salvation-garden of your life.

- **Calibrate your reaction and you will change the entire course of your life. Train yourself to listen and then be slow to respond. Internet culture teaches outrage...but the root of the word outrage is rage.**
 - **"Let God landscape you". It's not about the news you hear, it's about how it can be designed by God to make you better! While the world is adding their commentary, we should be letting God remove the cancer of our**

character! It's not what is happening in the news, it's about how my reaction to the news happens to change me!

22-24 Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like.

- **Action is the evidence of listening. You "heard" it when it went into your ears, but you "listened" when you started acting on it.**

25 But whoever catches a glimpse of the revealed counsel of God—the free life!—even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action.

- **The early church in Jerusalem was dealing with distraction. Cell phones didn't introduce distraction, they enhanced it.**
 - **When we discard distraction, we find delight and affirmation in the action.**
 - **Delight is the result of action.**
 - **The world wants to be affirmed for being without doing. But God's affirmation is connected to our action. His affirmation is the result of our decision to obey.**

26-27 Anyone who sets himself up as "religious" by talking a good game is self-deceived. This kind of religion is hot air and only hot air. Real religion, the kind that passes muster before God the Father, is this: Reach out to the homeless and loveless in their plight, and guard against corruption from the godless world.

- **As God takes us higher, we must choose to go lower. As God increases your wealth, you must give more away. As God increases your influence, you must help without being seen. The way up is down.**

Close: According to Church Traditions, James carried the nickname "Old Camel Knees" because of thick calluses built up on his knees from many years of determined prayer. Prayer is the foundation of WILD WISDOM.

The Royal Rule of Love

2 1-4 My dear friends, don't let public opinion influence how you live out our glorious, Christ-originated faith. If a man enters your church wearing an expensive suit, and a street person wearing rags comes in right after him, and you say to the man in the suit, "Sit here, sir; this is the best seat in the house!" and either ignore the street person or say, "Better sit here in the back row," haven't you segregated God's children and proved that you are judges who can't be trusted?

Nothing reveals your character more than how you treat people who can do nothing for you.

Don't attend asking, "who has reached out to me?" but rather, "who have I reached out to?"

Julie recently gave an example, even when you're in an emergency, you call 911. You must be willing to reach out. Leaders shouldn't segregate, but also the congregation shouldn't segregate.

5-7 Listen, dear friends. Isn't it clear by now that God operates quite differently? He chose the world's down-and-out as the kingdom's first citizens, with full rights and privileges. This kingdom is promised to anyone who loves God. And here you are abusing these same citizens! Isn't it the high and mighty who exploit you, who use the courts to rob you blind? Aren't they the ones who scorn the new name—"Christian"—used in your baptisms?

8-11 You do well when you complete the Royal Rule of the Scriptures: "Love others as you love yourself." But if you play up to these so-called important people, you go against the Rule and stand convicted by it. You can't pick and choose in these things, specializing in keeping one or two things in God's law and ignoring others. The same God who said, "Don't commit adultery," also said, "Don't murder." If you don't commit adultery but go ahead and murder, do you think your non-adultery will cancel out your murder? No, you're a murderer, period.

Redefine who is “important”. Shift from “you” to “them”. Don’t rank sin. You’ve graduated, passed adultery and murder, but missed the point about loving others as yourself (as a command).

Try to read the Bible through the lens of categories. Is it:

Prophecy

Promise

Proverb (wisdom)

Precept

12-13 Talk and act like a person expecting to be judged by the Rule that sets us free. For if you refuse to act kindly, you can hardly expect to be treated kindly. Kind mercy wins over harsh judgment every time.

- **κατακαυχᾶται ἔλεος κρίσεως (katakauchatai eleos kriseōs):**
"mercy triumphs over judgment" - This emphasizes the superiority of mercy over harsh judgment. (Harsh, but accurate)
 - We live in a world of inaccurate judgment. It's actually when what we've done is accurately discerned and the consequences of our actions truly realized that mercy is most potent.

14-17 Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it? For instance, you come upon an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved and say, "Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!" and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup—where does that get you? Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?

Beware of those that see their primary mission as talk. James calls it nonsense. When we overemphasize the spiritual, to the detrimental of the physical, we are revealing our motive. If your motive is to be heard, you'll talk, but if your motive is to help, you'll feed, you'll clothe.

18 I can already hear one of you agreeing by saying, "Sounds good. You take care of the faith department, I'll handle the works department."

Not so fast. You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works. Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove.

You become complete with you marry faith and works. Talk and Action.

19-20 Do I hear you professing to believe in the one and only God, but then observe you complacently sitting back as if you had done something wonderful? That's just great. Demons do that, but what good does it do them? Use your heads! Do you suppose for a minute that you can cut faith and works in two and not end up with a corpse on your hands?

Demons believe God is one. But they will still experience God's judgment. Why? Belief should be the basis for action, not the replacement for action! People say, "I'm a Christian" – but I say, "don't tell me what you believe, show me what you believe."

Mark 16:17

These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues;

21-24 Wasn't our ancestor Abraham "made right with God by works" when he placed his son Isaac on the sacrificial altar? Isn't it obvious that faith and works are yoked partners, that faith expresses itself in works? That the works are "works of faith"? The full meaning of "believe" in the Scripture sentence, "Abraham believed God and was set right with God," includes his action. It's that weave of believing and acting that got Abraham named "God's friend." Is it not evident that a person is made right with God not by a barren faith but by faith fruitful in works?

It demonstrates faith when you wake up, faith when you go to work, faith when you stay free from unforgiveness.... Faith is found in the walk, not just the talk. Faith inconveniences you. Faith can't be traced, but it can be tracked.

25-26 The same with Rahab, the Jericho harlot. Wasn't her action in hiding God's spies and helping them escape—that seamless unity of *believing* and *doing*—what counted with God? The very moment you separate body and spirit, you end up with a corpse. Separate faith and works and you get the same thing: a corpse.

Good news: you're more than just a body. You are a spirit in a body. Just as it's essential to have both a spirit and a body to function in this world. You must have faith and works in order to be alive and functioning as a Christian.

Week 3 | James 3 | Sunday, Jan 28, 2024

James 3:1-2

"Don't be in any rush to become a teacher, my friends. Teaching is highly responsible work. Teachers are held to the strictest standards. And none of us is perfectly qualified. We get it wrong nearly every time we open our mouths. If you could find someone whose speech was perfectly true, you'd have a perfect person, in perfect control of life."*

Commentary: James begins by cautioning against a hasty desire to become a teacher. Teaching is a weighty responsibility, and those who take on this role are held to high standards. James emphasizes the inherent imperfection in human communication, noting that even the most well-intentioned teachers make mistakes. The logical conclusion is that such a large number of people were in a rush to become teachers that he had to apply Spirit-lead wisdom to it.

3 Things that don't dismiss responsibility for those attempting to teach:

1. Intention—you mean right, but you interpret the scriptures inaccurately
2. Desire—you want to help, but lack the wisdom to see the whole picture
3. Affirmation—the people approve, but lack knowledge

What do you do when you want to teach? If James says "don't be in a rush" the solution is to slow down. Change your timeline. Get into alignment with God's timeline.

James 3:3-5

"A bit in the mouth of a horse controls the whole horse. A small rudder on a huge ship in the hands of a skilled captain sets a course in the face of the strongest

winds. A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it!"*

Commentary: James uses vivid imagery to illustrate the power of the tongue. Just as a small bit controls a horse and a rudder guides a ship, the words we speak have significant impact. Words can build or destroy, emphasizing the importance of mindful speech.

Colossians 4:6 (NIV):

"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Salt preserves and flavors.

Your words:

Wound or heal

Build or tear down

Encourage or discourage

Confuse or Clarify

James 3:5-6

"It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech, we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell."

Commentary: James further emphasizes the potential destructive power of words, comparing it to a spark that can ignite a massive fire. He warns against the impact of careless or malicious speech, highlighting the far-reaching consequences of words.

James 3:7-10

"This is scary: You can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue—it's never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With our tongues, we bless God our Father; with the same tongues, we curse the very men and women he made in his image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth!"

Commentary: James emphasizes the difficulty in controlling the tongue, comparing it to taming a wild animal. He points out the inconsistency of using the

same tongue to bless God and curse fellow human beings, emphasizing the need for self-awareness and restraint in speech.

James 3:10-12

"My friends, this can't go on. A spring doesn't gush fresh water one day and brackish the next, does it? Apple trees don't bear strawberries, do they? Raspberry bushes don't bear apples, do they? You're not going to dip into a polluted mud hole and get a cup of clear, cool water, are you?"

Commentary: James uses analogies to illustrate the impossibility of producing contradictory outcomes. Just as a spring consistently produces a particular type of water, our speech should reflect a consistent and positive character. Mixing good and harmful speech is incongruent and unacceptable.

James 3:13-16

"Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here's what you do: Live well, live wisely, live humbly. It's the way you live, not the way you talk, that counts. Mean-spirited ambition isn't wisdom. Boasting that you are wise isn't wisdom. Twisting the truth to make yourselves sound wise isn't wisdom. It's the furthest thing from wisdom—it's animal cunning, devilish plotting. Whenever you're trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others' throats."*

Commentary: James shifts the focus from speech to wisdom. True wisdom is not demonstrated through boastful or manipulative speech but through a life lived well, wisely, and humbly. He warns against selfish ambition and deceptive tactics, highlighting the destructive consequences of such behavior on relationships.

James 3:17-18

"Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterized by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced. You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honor."

Commentary: James concludes by describing the characteristics of genuine wisdom. It starts with a holy life and is reflected in relationships characterized by gentleness, reasonableness, mercy, and consistency. The key to building a

healthy church community is the diligent effort to treat others with dignity and honor, fostering unity.

Week 4 | James 4 | Sunday, Feb 4, 2024

Title: God's Promotion 101: Silencing Strife, Amplifying Favor

**Marriage Conference - Fri Feb 9
(Indiana and other campuses)**

Pastors Conference - May 14-16 (Indiana)

Youth Conference - July 5-7 (Indiana)

Men's retreat - Aug 9-10 (Indiana)

Breakers conf - Oct 26th (Chicago)

James 4:1-2:

"Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask."

Commentary: James begins this chapter by addressing the conflicts within the early church community in Jerusalem. He attributes these conflicts to uncontrolled desires, illustrating how personal lusts and cravings will lead to strife. The reference to murder and coveting metaphorically emphasizes the severity of the discord. James suggests that seeking one's desires without asking God leads to conflict— that is comparable to war.

James 4:3:

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."

Commentary: James highlights the importance of proper motives in prayer. If people ask with selfish intentions solely for personal pleasure, their requests may go unanswered. This emphasizes the need for aligning one's desires with God's will in prayer. Selfishness between humans creates unanswered desires. Selfishness between God and man creates unanswered prayers.

James 4:4:

"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Commentary: James uses strong language to describe those whose actions are inconsistent with their professed faith. The imagery of adultery underscores the seriousness of compromising spiritual commitment for worldly desires. Friendship with the world, in the sense of prioritizing worldly values over God's, is seen as opposition to God.

James 4:5:

"Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, 'The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously'?"

Commentary: James refers to the scriptural idea that God's Spirit desires loyalty and devotion from believers. The use of "jealously" suggests a passionate desire for an exclusive relationship with His people.

James 4:6:

"But He gives more grace. Therefore, He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"

Commentary: James introduces the concept of God's abundant grace, contrasting it with resistance to the proud. Humility is presented as

the key to receiving God's favor. This aligns with broader biblical teachings emphasizing the importance of humility in the Christian life. We all will be humbled: 1) By our own choosing 2) forcefully, by God

James 4:7-10

"Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."

Commentary: James provides a practical exhortation for believers to submit to God, resist the devil, and draw near to God in humility. The call to repentance is expressed vividly, emphasizing the seriousness of sin and the need for genuine sorrow and humility. The promise is that, by humbling themselves, believers will experience God's uplifting.

This begs the question: Who do you think will lift you up? Pride says, I'm my own promoter. Humility says, if I stay in the posture of a servant, I have to be lifted up.

James 4:11-12:

"Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge."

Commentary: James admonishes against speaking ill of fellow believers. He connects speaking evil of others with judging the law itself, emphasizing the unity of believers and the importance of treating one another with honor. The exhortation is to be doers of the law rather than judges.

James 4:13-16:

"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.' But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil."

Commentary: James addresses those who plan without considering God's will. He highlights the uncertainty of life and the need to acknowledge God's sovereignty in all plans. Boasting about future plans without acknowledging God's providence is condemned as arrogant.

James 4:17:

"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him, it is sin."

Commentary: James concludes by highlighting the responsibility of knowing and doing what is right. Failing to do good when one knows what is right is considered a sin, emphasizing the importance of active obedience in the Christian life.

Week 5 | Sunday, February 11, 2024 |

James 5

5¹⁻³ And a final word to you arrogant rich: Take some lessons in lament. You'll need buckets for the tears when the crash comes upon you. Your money is corrupt and your fine clothes stink. Your greedy luxuries are a cancer in your gut, destroying your life from within. You thought you were piling up wealth. What you've piled up is judgment.

Commentary: when reading biblical judgements, never make the mistake of assuming you're not the one being talked about. Wealth is a relative term.

⁴⁻⁶ All the workers you've exploited and cheated cry out for judgment. The groans of the workers you used and abused are a roar in the ears of the Master Avenger. You've looted the earth and lived it up. But all you'll have to show for it is a fatter than usual corpse. In fact, what you've done is condemn and murder perfectly good persons, who stand there and take it.

Commentary: James is showing us a prophetic edge. That means he's speaking into societal issues and rendering judgement. This reveals the governmental aspect of the Kingdom. James has been authorized by God to administrate and execute judgement.

* * *

⁷⁻⁸ Meanwhile, friends, wait patiently for the Master's Arrival. You see farmers do this all the time, waiting for their valuable crops to mature, patiently letting the rain do its slow but sure work. Be patient like that. Stay steady and strong. The Master could arrive at any time.

Commentary: James shifts audiences now from the rich to "friends". Stay faithful and patient because you don't work for "them" you work for "Him".

⁹ Friends, don't complain about each other. A far greater complaint could be lodged against you, you know. The Judge is standing just around the corner.

Commentary: It's not that you don't have anything to say in judgement, it's that you want to avoid the consequences of The Judge judging you! James is also emphasizing that doing the work assigned to you is more important than assuming your work is judgement.

¹⁰⁻¹¹ Take the old prophets as your mentors. They put up with anything, went through everything, and never once quit, all the time honoring God. What a gift life is to those who stay the course! You've heard, of course, of Job's staying power, and you know how God brought it all together for him at the end. That's because God cares, cares right down to the last detail.

Commentary: God is faithful to the faithful! As long as you stay submitted and surrendered, you will experience the same outcome of those listed in verses 10-11.

¹² And since you know that he cares, let your language show it. Don't add words like "I swear to God" to your own words. Don't show your impatience by concocting oaths to hurry up God. Just say yes or no. Just say what is true. That way, your language can't be used against you.

Commentary: James is revealing that the words that leave our mouth will be used in relationship to God. In this chapter, God is being referred to as The Judge (Capital J), which indicates the importance of understanding judicial matters. In the courtroom of Heaven, everything you say can and will be used against you. When Job, who was referenced in the preceding scriptures, was being tempted it was to "curse God". It was an issue with his heart's disposition to authority and ultimately what his heart would produce on his tongue.

Prayer to Be Reckoned With

¹³⁻¹⁵ Are you hurting? Pray. Do you feel great? Sing. Are you sick? Call the church leaders together to pray and anoint you with oil in the name of the Master. Believing-prayer will heal you, and Jesus will put you on your feet. And if you've sinned, you'll be forgiven—healed inside and out.

Commentary: James saw supernatural healing as being distributed through the leaders of the Church. Again, James understands structure. Power is released through those who have been given authority.

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed. The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with. Elijah, for instance, human just like us, prayed hard that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't—not a drop for three and a half years. Then he prayed that it would rain, and it did. The showers came and everything started growing again.

Commentary: The true nature of your relationship to one another in the church is revealed here— it is to confess your sins one to another! How often do we use our relationship to discuss the perceived shortcomings of leaders and how rarely do we use our relationships in the church to confess our own real sin to each other?!

There's division through fault finding,

But there's healing through exposing our own sin.

This is a biblical protocol. James says it's comparable to a draught in our lives when we aren't confessing our sins one to another. There's a parallel made between confessing our sins to one another and being in right standings with God.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ My dear friends, if you know people who have wandered off from God's truth, don't write them off. Go after them. Get them back and you will have rescued precious lives from destruction and prevented an epidemic of wandering away from God.

Commentary: by going after the few that have wandered off, you prevent an epidemic of many others wandering off. Sometimes you can't stop them; but you can divinely sow the seeds.