

James



“Living Out Your Faith”

Ed Blankenship

“In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

James 2:17

James knew that our faith shouldn't just be head-knowledge. It needs to be lived out!

Does your faith really do that?

The book of James is only five chapters, but it is packed with many truths that will change your life. Things such as “Faith in Action”, “Getting Over Prejudice”, “Perseverance and Effectiveness in Prayer”, “Getting Control of Your Mouth”, and “Warnings to the Rich”! There’s almost more in this little book than you can apply in a lifetime!

This study takes you through the book of James chapter by chapter, asking questions to get you to: 1) Observe what the Scripture says, 2) Understand what it means, and finally to 3) Apply what it says to your life. And it’s comprehensive as well, including not only Bible study, but also a daily journal, pages for prayer, a New Testament reading plan, and a page to help you set goals for your spiritual life. Included is helps for the small group leader and ways to build greater accountability into your group. So come on. Don’t be afraid to see your faith exercised a bit. Live it out! That’s what really matters!



Ed Blankenship came to Christ in college through the ministry of The Navigators where he was discipled and learned how to apply the Bible. He later served 12 years on staff with the Navigators Church Discipleship Ministry in Arkansas and Tennessee where he helped churches establish discipleship ministries. He and his wife Janice are now members of Mount Ararat Church in Stafford, Virginia where they teach a small group and also a class on “Strengthening Your Walk” using the Navigators *Colossians 2:7 Discipleship Series*. Ed is currently a retired federal worker and mentors men in his spare time. Ed and Janice have three grown children and nine terrific grand-children!

James

Living out your Faith...

A Spiritual Journey

Dedication

To Gigi Burgess, our dear friend, who is such an encouragement to us as she totally displays the love of Jesus Christ, and lives out her faith, each and every day!

My wife and I thank the Lord for you and your family, and we wish you “God’s speed” and strength as you continue to make great strides in your recovery!

Some Studies in The Transformation Series

- *Reflections* – Spending Time With God
- *Excavations* – Digging Deep Into God’s Word
- *Meditations* – Becoming a Person After God’s Own Heart
- *Directions* – Moving Others Towards Christ
- *Acts* – Reaching the World for Christ
- *2nd Timothy* – Sharing Spiritual Truth

And a stand-alone 6-month *Life’s Log Book – My Time With God*

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Intro to the Bible and Prayer

The Bible actually consists of numerous individual "books". The table of contents in your Bible should be used to help you locate the individual "books" of the Bible. Note that some book titles are very similar, such as the book of John, the book of 1 John, the book of 2 John, and finally the book of 3 John. If a particular verse you are looking up doesn't make sense in regards to the question, you may be in the wrong Bible book! The references to Bible passages in this study are in the traditional manner - by book, chapter, and verse. So John 3:16 refers to the book of John in the Bible, chapter 3, the 16th verse.

It is helpful to have a separate Bible for Bible study in addition to the paperback Bible or New Testament used for your Quiet Time. Bibles are available in any book, department, or discount store. There are major differences in the language used by different versions of the Bible sold today. Some versions (e.g. the King James Version) were translated in the 1600s and use old English. Others use modern English. Make sure you use a Bible you can fully understand for your study as well as your Quiet Time.

It is important for every Christian to read their Bible regularly. The New Testament is an excellent place to start reading. Use the chart near the back of this study to keep track of your reading in the New Testament. This chart lists every book of the New Testament and every chapter number. Put an "X" through the chapter numbers as you read them.

Many Christians use prayer lists to be more consistent in their prayer life. In the back you will find several prayer pages that have a column for specific prayer requests and another for God's answers. Remember that God can answer in 3 ways – Yes, No, or Wait. If he answers No or Wait, he is not trying to be mean, but knows that this isn't either the best thing or not the right time! Keep praying, be specific, and be consistent in your prayers and God will bless you with many wonderful answers to prayer! (Colossians 4:2)

Purpose of this Study and Suggested Use

Most Christians never study the Word of God. Yet the Bible is the most wonderful book there is! Jesus, when tempted by Satan said that it is to be what we live by. But how can we if we don't know it. Jeremiah 15:16 says, "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and they words became to me the joy and delight of my heart." Only as we get into the Word does it become real to us. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do them." That is the purpose of Bible study, to help unlock those secrets.

The studies in this guide are question and answer. Some ask for Observation – What did the Scripture Say? Others ask for Interpretation – What does the Scripture mean? And finally others ask about Application – How will you put it into practice in your daily life? Putting it into practice is so important you will make an application for each chapter in James. Look on these as a way to change your life to become more like Christ! That's the goal, not head-knowledge!

In this study we also will have a daily Quiet Time with God and share thoughts from those times with God during our group time each week. We also have a Goals page which allows us to tailor the study to meet our own needs. The purpose of this is to include some accountability which we all need, to insure that the concepts we learn are also the concepts we practice.

The purpose behind all this is not to fill out blanks on a sheet, nor is it even to achieve certain goals, but to study His Word weekly and to meet with God on a daily basis as often as we can. When we do that, He will change our lives. That is my prayer for you as you begin this journey into His Word!

For the Small Group Leader

Thanks for leading this study in your small group! Prayer is the number one thing you need to do for the group, praying for individuals as God leads you to pray. Also, spend time with them outside of the study so you get to know them better. But also set the pace, doing your study ahead of time. This is also important as far as the Quiet Time is concerned. In week 1 you will share what this has meant to you. Even if you have had devotions regularly, we encourage you to do the practice Quiet Time in week 1 ahead of time and use the Journal Pages for 2 weeks to personally see the benefits before you teach it in your group.

When leading the studies go through it question by question, initially asking individuals to read the question and the verse. Then get several answers before going on to the next question and repeating the process. After a week or two, expect most everyone to have done their homework and so only read a question or the Scripture in rare instances to emphasize a point. Most of the time, just get several answers. Don't forget that you are a member of the group too and should share occasionally.

Note: As application of the Word is such a key part of the book of James we have introduced a new kind of application for each chapter. It consists of several parts. In week three there is an Example of an Application. Please go over this with your group members to make sure they grasp what is being asked. Doing this kind of application will greatly help them in their walk with God.

Each week, there is material that is to be read. It is best if this is read aloud by group members (rather than by the leader), going around the room and letting each person read

a paragraph aloud, in sequence. This allows even the quiet person to hear his or her voice in the group and participate. Each week group members will be sharing something they have written down on their Journal. This is not to be rushed. In week 1, during the practice session have everyone share as time permits. In subsequent weeks, ask for volunteers, and encourage them in what they have written down. Try to allow for all to share, including yourself, even going first at times. Note that it is recommended that members choose their own book in the Bible to read rather than assigning specific devotional readings. This allows for better sharing.

Encourage members to get a paperback New Testament or Bible for their Quiet Times so they will feel free to mark in it. They will want a different Bible for their Bible study and should also be encouraged to get some Bible reference books.

The Goals Page is meant to be a measure of accountability to help encourage members to complete the assignments and have regular Quiet Times. Allow time for people to share their accomplished goals and get them initialed off weekly. As the leader you may want to add a note of encouragement!

WEEK 1

Get acquainted and Open in prayer

Read the material on Introduction to the Book James

Leader share about his or her Quiet Time

Read the material on Personal Time With God

Practice having a Quiet Time

Share practice Quiet Time writings

Discuss assignment for next week and Close in Prayer

Introduction to the Book of James

The Bible is a book with deep meaning. But it is also a book that can change and transform lives. To do so we must get in it and uncover those personal truths for ourselves. Acts 17:11 says about the Berean Christians, “These Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica because they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.” They didn’t just live by (and accept) what they heard, **they studied the Bible for themselves. And it changed their lives!**

The book of James is one of the “Letters” in the New Testament. “Letters” are instructions to believers. James was one of the Lord’s half-brothers. His letter shows the need to have a faith that results in good works. It is sometimes called the “Proverbs of the New Testament” as it gives many wise sayings. There are five chapters in the book of James and we will study them in the next six weeks, taking two weeks on the first chapter.

An overall outline for the book of James follows:

Chapter 1

Introduction (James 1:1)

Faith and Endurance (James 1:2-18)

Listening and Doing (James 1:19-27)

Chapter 2

Warning Against Prejudice (James 2:1-13)

Faith Without Works is Dead (James 2:14-26)

Chapter 3

- Taming the Tongue (James 3:1-12)
- Two Kinds of Wisdom (James 3:13-18)

Chapter 4

- Submit Yourself to God (James 4:1-12)
- Boasting About Tomorrow (James 4:13-17)

Chapter 5

- Warning to the Rich (James 5:1-6)
- Patience in Suffering (James 5:7-12)
- Prayer of Faith (James 5:13-20)

Personal Time With God

Bible study is key to long-term knowledge and application of the Word of God. But another discipline which is also foundational is personal time with God. God wants us to grow in our knowledge and love for Him each day. But how does a believer do this? The answer is simple - "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." James 4:8a. "Drawing near to God" involves daily meeting Him, talking with Him, and He with you. As we do this, we begin to build a deeper and deeper relationship with Him, the most important relationship of all.

One key habit that can help build this deeper relationship with God is having a daily "quiet time", or a daily "devotional" as it is sometimes called. This is a time of Bible reading and prayer where you quiet your heart before God and listen to Him through His Word and then also commune (or talk) with Him in prayer. It doesn't have to be long, maybe just 5 to 10 minutes at first, but it is a time you will soon find grows and means more and more to you each day!

WHY HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME?

First, God desires to meet with you daily! He died on the cross to make that a possibility. Each and every day, He is interested in your life, and having a daily quiet time is a wonderful way to commune with Christ. (See Zephaniah 3:17 and Revelation 3:20.)

Secondly, you need a daily quiet time. By doing so, you will get to know Jesus better. It will enrich your day. God will use it for cleansing

and to guide you in everyday decisions. It will help in all areas of your life. As Jesus says in Luke 10:38-42, "Only this is really needed."

Third, it will give you something to share with others. A passage you read today may be just what someone else needs to hear. Keeping a journal is an excellent way to have those thoughts from God available to you for others' needs. (See 1 John 1:3)

HOW TO HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME.

While there are many ways to have a quiet time with God, here is one that can often work best to get you started.

1. Find a quiet place, apart from distractions, where you can be alone. Many find the morning to be the best time. (Fill in below):

My Quiet Time will be at _____ (am/pm). Place: _____

2. Pray, telling God you love Him, and ask for wisdom and for Him to speak to your heart. Thank Him, and confess any sin you know of.

3. Read a passage in the Bible. Start with a chapter, perhaps in the New Testament, particularly if the quiet time is a new concept. As you read, underline verses that stand out to you. Many people prefer a paperback Bible for their quiet time so they feel "more free" to underline.

I will use this modern paperback version: _____

4. When completed reading, go back and review the verses you underlined. Pick one underlined verse that impresses you. Fill out a journal entry on it. For the appropriate day, write down in a journal what you read in the Bible, what verse stood out to you the most, what that verse said (paraphrase it or put down what it said verbatim), how it impressed you, and your response. Here's an example:

◊ **Monday:** Date: 12/4/09 What I read: Phillipians 1 Best Verse: 25

What it said: Paul lived so he can help others grow and experience the joy of salvation.

How it impressed me: He was focused on helping people grow more mature in their faith.

My response: Lord, help me (and use me) to help others grow and experience You daily!

5. After completing your journal entry, talk to God in prayer about this verse, how it impacts you, and how you want to respond as a result of it. Then go on to pray about other items from your daily prayer list(s).

Practice Having a Quiet Time

Read and mark the passage that corresponds with your birthday, then fill out the practice journal entry that follows:

Birthday is January 1 – March 31

Psalms 1 - 1. Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. 4. Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. 5. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 6. For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. (NIV)

Birthday is April 1 – June 30

Psalms 23 - 1. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3. he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (NIV)

Practice Journal Entry

◊ **Today:** Date: _____ What I read: _____ Best Verse: _____

What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response: _____

Read and mark the passage that corresponds with your birthday, then fill out the sample journal entry that follows:

Birthday is July 1 – September 30

1 Thessalonians 1

1. Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. 2. We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. 3. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5. because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia--your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9. for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10. and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (NIV)

Practice Journal Entry

◊ **Today:** Date: _____ What I read: _____ Best Verse: _____

What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response: _____

Read and mark the passage that corresponds with your birthday, then fill out the sample journal entry that follows:

Birthday is October 1 – December 31

1 John 1

1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4. We write this to make our joy complete. 5. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (NIV)

Practice Journal Entry

◊ **Today:** Date: _____ What I read: _____ Best Verse: _____

What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response: _____

One Final, Yet Most Important Word Before We Begin...

This is a guide on one book of the Bible. Jesus says in John 5:39-40, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life". So we don't want to just study the written Word without first knowing the Living Word! So have you realized that God has a wonderful plan for your life, but that we are all separated from God and His plan because of our sin? Have you been convicted of that sin and are you willing with God's help to turn from it? Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty from those things and to give you the gift of eternal life? Have you asked Him to come into your life, take away your sins, and give you the gift of eternal life? Turning your life over to Christ is the only way to really understand His Word, because only then do you know the author.

Assignment for next week

1. Get a paperback Bible or New Testament in a version you prefer and begin reading in it daily wherever you like. You have just read an entire chapter of one of the books of the Bible during our practice time. You may want to continue in the same book by reading the next chapter in that book. The book of John is also a good place to start if the Bible is new to you. (Note that the Bible actually consists of numerous individual "books". Use the table of contents in your Bible or New Testament to find a particular "book".) Each day, underline what stands out to you, pick one underlined verse and complete a journal record. Be ready to share at least one journal entry next week.
2. The group will fill out the Bible study lesson together in your small group next week. You will want to have a good leather or hard-back Bible available for your Bible Study. If you want, you may complete the lesson ahead of time on your own. This will allow you to share more during the discussion next week. You will also gain more from the lesson.

WEEK 2

Get further acquainted

Open in prayer

Time for Group Members to share from their Quiet Time

Complete James Chapter 1, 1st Half

Read “Who’s Rich?”

Discuss assignment for next week

Close in Prayer

JAMES, CHAPTER 1 (1ST Half)

James starts talking about faith and endurance. We all have trials, and we all need faith. Let’s see what aspects of both James teaches us in these first 18 verses.

To: Jewish Believers Outside Israel

From: James, Slave of Christ Jesus

Greetings! (James 1:1)

Faith and Endurance (James 1:2-18)

1. Early Christians experienced much persecution. What does James 1:2-4 say we should do when troubles come and why?

2. James is sometimes called the “Proverbs of the New Testament” as it contains much practical wisdom. What does James 1:5-8 say we must do to get wisdom, and what are some conditions to do so?

3. In the world there are the rich and the poor. What does James say about both? (James 1:9-11)

Poor (Humble):

Rich:

This seems contrary to the world's view. What is the world view?

The rich go after many things. What do you go after? What would God want you to go after?

4. Temptations are common to everyone. What does James say about what happens when we are tempted, who tempts us, and what are the results? (James 1:12-15)

What happens when tempted:

Who (or what) tempts us:

Results:

5. God doesn't tempt us. In fact what does God do for us?
(James 1:16-18)

What do these verses say about God?

God wants us to be happy when trouble comes. It builds our faith. Faith is important as it is foundational for our prayers. As we pray, let's remember there are rich and poor in this world, yet both have temptations. Realize these are a result of our fleshly desires and not from God. He tempts no one.

Who's Rich?

James talks several times about the rich versus the poor. Many other passages in the Scripture also talk about the rich. We all know the rich should help the poor. But who is really rich? Of course there's Bill Gates. And then there's also Warren Buffet. And don't forget Oprah Winfrey and Michael Bloomberg among others. All those are billionaires and they are certainly rich. But did you know that you may also be considered rich? Yes, it's true. The average American is in the top 5% of the wealthiest people in the world! I just looked it up. The International Monetary Fund in 2009 lists the United States as the sixth highest per capita income in the world at \$46,443. Qatar, an Arab emirate oil-rich nation is the highest with \$87,717. On the flip side, the poorest country is Zimbabwe with an annual average income of only \$9.00. Next to the bottom is the Democratic Republic of Congo with an annual income of \$334. Slightly better than that is Liberia at \$379. That's \$1.00 per day! I personally don't know how you can survive on that. In reality, unfortunately many of them die!

Richard Stearns, President of World Vision U.S., tells in his book, *The Hole in Our Gospel*, that 26,500 children die each day of preventable causes due to poverty. That's 10 million kids in a year dead due to not having enough money!

We are truly blessed in this country. In fact if you compare us with people in other countries you'll find that not only does the average American make over 5,000 times what a Zimbabwean makes, he makes 35 times what a person in Haiti makes (\$1,340), seven times what the Chinese do, and even three times what the average Russian makes.

But you may be thinking you're not average. Below is an approximate table of world income distribution. Find your income by looking for the number of people in your household, then go down until you find the number corresponding closest to your annual income (from all sources) and then read across to find out approximately how many people in the world are poorer than you. For example, for a family of four making around \$55,000 annually there are at least 80% of the people in the world who are poorer.

If your income (\$ Thousands) is MORE than amount below						Then...
Based on the Number of People in Household						The % of People in the World that are "Poorer"
1	2	3	4	5	6	
\$87.7	\$175.4	\$263.1	\$350.8	\$438.5	\$526.2	99%
\$46.4	\$92.8	\$139.2	\$185.6	\$232.0	\$278.4	95%
\$33.7	\$67.5	\$101.2	\$135.0	\$168.7	\$202.5	90%
\$23.6	\$47.2	\$70.8	\$94.4	\$118.0	\$141.6	85%
\$13.7	\$27.4	\$41.0	\$54.7	\$68.4	\$82.1	80%
\$8.7	\$17.4	\$26.2	\$34.9	\$43.6	\$52.3	70%
\$7.0	\$14.0	\$20.9	\$27.9	\$34.9	\$41.9	60%
\$6.6	\$13.2	\$19.7	\$26.3	\$32.9	\$39.5	50%
\$4.1	\$8.2	\$12.4	\$16.5	\$20.6	\$24.7	40%
\$3.2	\$6.3	\$9.5	\$12.6	\$15.8	\$18.9	30%
\$2.9	\$5.9	\$8.8	\$11.7	\$14.7	\$17.6	20%
\$1.5	\$3.1	\$4.6	\$6.2	\$7.7	\$9.3	10%
\$1.2	\$2.4	\$3.6	\$4.8	\$6.0	\$7.2	5%
\$0.4	\$0.8	\$1.1	\$1.5	\$1.9	\$2.3	1%

Source: Based on International Monetary Fund 2009 Per Capita Income Data

It's a real blessing to have such opportunity. But it's also a real responsibility. Jesus said to the rich young man to sell all he had and give to the poor and have treasures in heaven. If I have extra, shouldn't I too help others? Yes! There are people abroad that need help as well as people here in the States that need our help. The point is there are some who are rich, or at least richer, and those who are poor, or at least poorer. You are either in one group or another, but there is always someone poorer than you. Does what James say about the rich apply to us? Sounds like it to me. The real question then becomes, "What will we do about it?" Francis Chan, the author of *Crazy Love*, sold his house, down-sized into a much smaller house, and gave the excess cash away. His family says they like not having as much to take care of now. Wow, that's liberating! Another way is to learn to live on less than your income and give some of it away. I know of Christians who give way beyond 10% of their income (20%, 30%, 40%, 50%) to God's work. And I've never seen happier people! Their giving includes missionaries, the poor, and of course, their church. Unfortunately, many Christians don't give very much at all. They see what's left over at the end of the month and then give that, instead of praying, making a budget, and giving what God would have them give. It's fun seeing God work as we give! (Malachi 3:10) He will open the windows of heaven for you! Pray that God would show you what He would have you do in this area. Let Him touch your heart!

And as a result of our income we also have many time-saving conveniences (washers, microwaves, cars, mega-markets, etc.) that allow us to get more done in less time, giving us additional free time outside of work. Most of the world does not have those things or that luxury of free time. You could say we are rich in time as well. Many Christians unfortunately use that free time simply to watch TV. But there are prayers that need to be prayed, people with needs to be helped, others that need to hear about Christ, and still others that could use a listening ear. Even family members often get short-shrift to the TV! So use a good chunk of your spare time as a ministry to others, not just for yourself. And when you read in the Scripture about the rich, don't just assume

that isn't you. Remember how God has blessed you and increased your time and money so that you can help others!

Pray and ask God what He might have you do in this area. Write it here: _____

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week.
2. Complete as much of the lesson as you can for next week. Next week will be the last time we will look up verses during the study. Completing the lesson ahead of time will give you more to share next week.

WEEK 3

Open in prayer

Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Complete the Lesson

Read the material on Setting Goals

Discuss assignment for next week

Close in Prayer

JAMES, CHAPTER 1 (2ND Half)

The last half of James chapter 1 is about listening to and applying the Word of God. Both of these will change your life.

Listening and Doing (James 1:19-27)

6. James 1:19-20 are “Proverbs-like” verses. What do these verses say we should do and why?

7. James 1:21 says we should also do what and why?

If there is something in your life that you think God would consider “filth”, bring it to Him in prayer right now.

8. Just listening to the Bible isn’t enough. What else should we do and why? (James 1:22-25)

9. What are key aspects of being a Christian according to James 1:26-27?

We should be quick to hear and slow to speak. We should also get rid of the filth in our lives (and yes, we all have it to some degree). In contrast we need to fill our minds with His Word and then live it out in the world.

DO AN APPLICATION FOR THIS CHAPTER

One way to apply the Bible is using this simple method based on one verse or thought from the passage studied.

An Example (Have someone read in your group):

The verse that God laid on my heart: *James 1:1*

What it Said? *"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"*

What it Means? *Here was a man committed to God and to Christ. He put himself aside and took the role of a servant just like Jesus did.*

Where do I Fall Short? *I often think first of myself and what I should do. I hold back when talking with others about Christ. I don't allow the Spirit to lead (or direct) me as I should. I follow more of my will than of His will.*

What I will do about it? *Seek to follow the maxim of asking often throughout the day, "What would Jesus do in this situation?"*

What is the First Step I'll take this week? *Begin a practice of when I first come into a situation, particularly involving others, to pray. "Lord, what would Jesus do here? How can I best serve You here?"*

Check that I completed this first step: _____ **X**

Now, it's Your Turn:

1st – Re-read James Chapter 1 and review your answers to the questions in both last week's and this week's lesson.

2nd - Pick a verse that God lays on your heart _____

3rd - What does it Say?

4th - What does it Mean?

5th - Where do I fall short?

6th - What will I do about it?

7th - What is the first step I'll take this week?

Check _____ when 1st step is completed. (Then enter it on page 71.)

What Are You Doing With Your Life?

Everyone has people they come into contact with, whether it be family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, a homeless person, or even people you just meet in your daily life. All have needs and God placed you in their life to be a help and encouragement to them. Maybe it's a call, a batch of cookies, a meal, a cup of coffee, or just to listen. It could be volunteering at a school, helping out at a soup kitchen, or teaching a Sunday School class. Be used of God in some way.

Who comes to your mind? _____

What would God want you to do? _____

Check here _____ when completed.

Make it a point to regularly think and pray about who God would want you to help and then do it.

Setting Goals

We set goals in many areas of life. It may be to get a new job, to save for a down payment on a house, to start a family, to lose 10 pounds, to start college, etc. It is often helpful to set goals in the Christian life as well. During this study we have made it a priority to have daily Quiet Times, to read the Bible, to do Bible study, and regularly attend small group. Hebrews 10:24 says, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.” And Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpens iron and one person sharpens another.” We want to be an encouragement and help to each other. Part of that is to set some goals and help each other achieve them.

In the back of this study there is a page you can use to set spiritual goals for this quarter, semester, or some other period. A Quiet Time goal is already given of 7 consecutive days. Note that it may take several attempts to get 7 days in a row, but that is OK, for as you continue to try and eventually succeed your walk with God will be greatly strengthened. In future journals you may want to increase the number of consecutive days as experience has shown it takes 21 days to form a new habit. So moving up to 14 and eventually 21 consecutive days can help build this habit into your walk with God for a lifetime. Just remember that the ultimate goal is spending time with God, not some legalistic number of days. Another goal that is already given is to complete at least three of the five Bible study Applications in this guide.

Another goal you might have would be to read certain books of the New Testament, or even the entire New Testament. It could be to complete all the questions in the Bible study lessons or to memorize a verse from each of the studies. It could also be to pray for a specific person or for something specific to happen. Another goal could be to bring someone to church, or to get involved in a

specific ministry. It is sometimes good to set long-term goals, but to begin we recommend setting goals you can achieve in one to three months. This helps make your goals more achievable and help build on success. As Proverbs 13:19 says, “A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul.” During the rest of this study we will be weekly checking each other on our progress towards meeting our goals. And your group leader may also want to see your progress and write a specific note of encouragement about the growth evidenced in your walk with God during this study. Prayerfully consider what goals you should set and work towards achieving them. Remember, goals are not an end in themselves, but are an aid to help each of us grow to spiritual maturity.

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week.
2. Work on the lesson for next week. Next week we will not read any of the verses or complete any of the work in class so come prepared to share and join in the discussion. Complete as much of the lesson as you can before next week. Use paper or on-line study tools in your study. Then come prepared to share insights and write down observations from others in your group. Remember, the more you put into your study, the more you will get out of it. As 2 Timothy 2:15 says “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”
3. Read the My Prejudice article.
4. Look over the Goals page in the back of this study and prayerfully consider what goals God would have you set for your Christian life for this quarter or semester. Write down some goals for the next month or so. Come prepared to share next week what you’ve written down.

WEEK 4

Open in prayer

Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Share Goals you have set for yourself with your group

Discuss the Lesson

Discuss My Prejudice article

Discuss assignment for next week

Close in Prayer

JAMES, CHAPTER 2

In this chapter of James we'll learn how what we think about others has a profound impact on our lives and on others. We'll also see how faith and works are intertwined. In fact, so much so that we may need to rethink what comes first and foremost – faith or works.

Warning Against Favoritism or Prejudice (James 2:1-13)

1. What does this book state totally discredits our faith in Christ? (James 2:1)
2. What is the example of prejudice seen in this book? (James 2:2-4)
3. What is involved in prejudice against the poor and what is the root cause of this prejudice? (James 2:3-4)

4. If you dig deeper, what qualities do the poor and the rich often have (or display)? (James 2:5-7)

Poor:

Rich:

How do you see this taking place today?

5. Based on James 2:9, how would you define prejudice and what is the result?

6. From James 2:8 what does God want instead?

7. Is it OK to have some prejudices? Why or why not?
(James 2:10-11)

Why do you think prejudice happens?

8. What is God's promise to us regarding prejudice? (James 2:13)

What (or how) do you need God to show mercy to you?

9. What is the significance of James 2:12 as far as prejudice is concerned?

Faith without Works is Dead (James 2:14-26)

10. What kind of faith is basically worthless? (James 2:14)

11. What would be an example of faith in action? (James 2:15-16)

What would be other examples of faith in action?

12. What is wrong with faith without good deeds? (James 2:17)

13. There are two positions you could conclude on faith and deeds from James 2:18-20. One of either faith OR deeds. A third position is someone who has BOTH. **Explain each and the pros/cons.**

1st Position: Faith without Works

2nd Position: Works without Faith

3rd Position: Faith AND Works

Which do you think is best and why?

14. What does the example of Abraham show? (James 2:21-24)

15. What do we see from Rahab? (James 2:25-26)

A good acronym for **FAITH** is, “**Forsaking All I Take Him**”.

16. What is the analogy James uses in James 2:26?

We need to be essentially “color-blind” when it comes to how we treat others. God accepts us just as we are and we need to do the same with others. No one is better than someone else and God holds us accountable if we think otherwise. He wants us instead to live out our faith, to help those in need. Actions are as important as our faith!

DO AN APPLICATION FOR THIS CHAPTER

1st – Re-read James Chapter 2 and review your answers to the questions in this week’s lesson.

2nd - Pick a verse that stands out to you_____

3rd - What does it Say?

4th - What does it Mean?

5th - Where do I fall short?

6th - What will I do about it?

7th - What is the first step I'll take this week?

Check _____ when 1st step is completed. (Then enter on page 71.)

OVERCOMING MY PREJUDICE

When I was growing up I had an intense hatred for African Americans. My Dad was also prejudiced against blacks and was actually a member of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). He and I would often talk about race relations and we both had very much the same opinion. All my friends were white and I wanted it to stay that way.

In college I had to study real hard, but I also became a Christian and God began working in my heart. On campus we would go around in the dorm and do door-to-door evangelism and some of the students we would talk with were black. We had weekly Bible studies and all students were invited. Being a new Christian I had much to learn and God started showing me things in His Word that we should love everyone. One of the students that came to the study was a black guy by the name of Veo. He was a new Christian and I got to know Him. There were several other new Christians that I also got to know that first year of my Christian life. I thought they were all great!

At the end of the school year I was tired of studying for my classes and was looking forward to the summer break. I grew up in St. Louis, Missouri and still lived with my parents. But I knew I would miss the Bible studies and so I had the idea of having a weekly Bible study at my parents house. I asked my Dad if I could invite some students over to study the Bible and even though he wasn't a Christian he said it was OK.

So I invited the students that lived in St. Louis and a bunch of us met in my parent's basement for our first study. After it was over,

and everybody had left, my Dad looked real mad and said to me, “Son, what are you doing?” I said I was having a Bible study like I told him earlier. He said, “No, I know what you were having, but why did you have him here?” I started to ask who he was talking about when it dawned on me. Veo had been there and he was black and my Dad hated blacks. A year ago I myself would never have had Veo in our house, but now after God had worked in my heart I had never even thought about the fact he was black. He was a Brother in Christ and that was all that mattered to me now. God had changed my heart that much and it had never occurred to me that it would bother my father.

Now some of my closest and best friends are African Americans. And I have friends of other races too. Some of them are Brothers and Sisters in Christ, while others are still on the way. I can honestly say that I now see them as no different from someone who is white. God did that! Praise the Lord! And to all that I have wronged or hurt by any of my previous thoughts or words, I am truly very sorry!

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week. Mark the New Testament chapters that you've read on the New Testament Reading Chart if you like.
2. Complete the lesson for next week.
3. Work towards achieving one of your goals in the next few weeks. Maybe it's having a Quiet Time for 7 consecutive days, or completing more of the Bible studies. Maybe it's talking to a specific person. Whatever it is, seeing God work to help you accomplish it will be an encouragement to you and to others in your group. Come prepared to share next week what you've seen God do in your life.

WEEK 5

Open in prayer

Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Share progress on your Goals

Discuss the Lesson and the ABCs of Knowing God's Will

Discuss using Prayer Lists

Discuss assignment for next week

Close in Prayer

JAMES, CHAPTER 3

In this chapter of James we'll learn that the tongue is like a "wild animal" that we need to tame. We'll also look at the two kinds of wisdom in the world today.

Taming the Tongue (Our Language or Speech) (James 3:1-12)

1. Teaching is a good thing, however, why is the role of teacher such an important one? (James 3:1)

2. But we should all be good examples. What is a good check as to how we are doing? Why? (James 3:1-2)

3. James 3:3-7 uses various analogies to the tongue. What do they do?

Horses Bit

Rudder

Spark

What might these indicate your tongue (your language or speech) will do?

4. What is the problem with our tongue? Why? (James 3:7-12)

What does that show about what we put into our minds, do you think?

Two Kinds of Wisdom (James 3:13-18)

5. When we are walking with God what should be the result of our wisdom? (James 3:13)

6. What is “bad” wisdom and what is the result? (James 3:14-16)

“Bad” Wisdom:

Result:

Contrast that with godly wisdom and its result. (James 3:17-18)

Godly Wisdom:

Result:

What would be needed to see more godly wisdom in your life?

What we say has a profound effect on others and on our lives as well. God wants us to say things that help others, not tear them down. As we do that we become peace-makers, not dividers.

The ABCs of KNOWING GOD'S WILL

James says we must ask for guidance to know His will, yet there is no magic formula to knowing the will of God. His will is often revealed step-by-step as we walk with Him. There are, however, certain things we can do that allows us to better grasp God's will and then act upon them. You can easily remember them with the letters of the alphabet, A through G.

Ask God. Pray and ask Him for wisdom and guidance in whatever situation you are facing. (James 1:5)

Bible. Look in the Word for wisdom, particularly during your daily devotions. (Psalm 119:105)

Counsel. Get advice from Godly Christians who know you well. (Exodus 18)

Desire. Delight in Him. God will give you the desire to do His will. Ask, what has He given you the desire to do? (Psalm 37:4)

Evaluate. Prayerfully review what the above have shown you. If all of them point to a single course of action, it makes sense to proceed. (1 Thessalonians 5:6)

Forge Ahead. Act on what He has shown you to do. Trust Him for the outcome. (Exodus 14:15)

God has the final say. He will either open or close the door to reveal His perfect will. (Acts 16:6-10)

As you follow the above steps, don't forget to praise God for His perfect will, whatever the outcome!

DO AN APPLICATION FOR THIS CHAPTER

1st – Re-read James Chapter 3 and review your answers to the questions in this week's lesson.

2nd - Pick a verse that stands out to you _____

3rd - What does it Say?

4th - What does it Mean?

5th - Where do I fall short?

6th - What will I do about it?

7th - What is the first step I'll take this week?

Check _____ when 1st step is completed. (Then enter on page 69.)

Using a Prayer List

Many Christians use prayer lists to help them be more consistent in their prayer life. In the back you will find several prayer pages that have a column for specific prayer request and another for God's answer. (There is also some space for prayer items on each weekly Journal Page.) It helps to be specific in your prayers as much as possible. For example if some friends you know are going through a difficult time, in addition to just asking for "Prayer for Bill and Sue", also ask that "God would provide a job and finances for Bill and Sue." This will help you see specific answers.

Remember that God can answer in 3 ways – Yes, No, or Wait. If he answers No or Wait, he is not trying to be mean, but knows that this isn't either the best thing or not the right time. Keep praying and be consistent in your prayers and God will bless you with many wonderful answers to prayer. (Colossians 4:2)

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week.

Continue marking the New Testament chapters that you've read on the New Testament Reading Chart if you like.

2. Complete the lesson for next week. Also read "The Many Names for God".

3. There are some prayer pages in the back of this guide. You can add some prayer requests to the prayer pages. Use these to help you be more specific and consistent in your prayers. Pray these requests AFTER you have responded back to God about what he has impressed on your heart during your Quiet Time.

4. Work towards achieving one of your goals in the next few weeks. Come prepared to share next week what you've seen God do in your life.

WEEK 6

Open in prayer

Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Share progress on your Goals

Discuss the Lesson

Discuss the Many Names of God

Discuss assignment for next week and then Close in Prayer

JAMES, CHAPTER 4

The fourth chapter of James is about submission to God. We need to let Him control our life and direct our plans.

Submit Yourself to God (James 4:1-12)

1. What is the root cause of strife and what results? (James 4:1-2)

Root Cause:

Results:

2. In opposition to that, prayer should be a peaceful way to end strife. Yet what can cause prayer to not work? (James 4:2-3)

3. We're often trying to be two different people – nice around Christians, but worldly otherwise. What is the problem in that approach and what are the results from that type of action? (James 4:4)

Problem:

Results:

4. What is God's promise in James 4:5-6?

5. What should we be doing instead? (James 4:7-12)

In regard to God:

In regards to people:

In regards to Satan and the world:

What will God do?

Look over the things you've written above for this question.
Which seem most important to you now and why?

Boasting about Tomorrow (James 4:13-17)

6. What is true about our life and what should it cause us to do?
(James 4:13-16)

7. We have all heard about the sins of commission, doing something we know is wrong, such as stealing, anger, lies. But what else is a sin according to James 4:17?

What might be examples?

These are called sins of omission, not doing what we know we should. They are just as wrong as sins of commission!

Our problems stem from ourselves. We fight instead of pray. But God wants us to be different. Focus on Him and trust Him for your future. Be obedient to what He shows you to do.

Look at Matthew 22:37-39. What does Jesus say we should do?

DO AN APPLICATION FOR THIS CHAPTER

1st – Re-read James Chapter 4 and review your answers to the questions in this week's lesson.

2nd - Pick a verse that stands out to you _____

3rd - What does it Say?

4th - What does it Mean?

5th - Where do I fall short?

6th - What will I do about it?

7th - What is the first step I'll take this week?

Check _____ when 1st step is completed. (Then enter it on page 71.)

THE MANY NAMES FOR GOD

James says we should draw near to God and He will draw near to us (James 4:8). That drawing near certainly involves getting time with Him in prayer and His Word. It involves walking with Him daily, realizing He is working all around us. But it also involves knowing Him better as who He really is. Part of that includes understanding His many different names. As you read the Bible you'll come across God referred to by many names and in many different ways. In the book of James God is

referred to as “God”, “Lord Jesus Christ”, “Generous God”, “the Lord”, “God our Father”, “He”, “the Glorious Lord Jesus Christ”, “Jesus Christ”, and “Merciful God”. Many books in the Bible use even more. All these different names can be confusing, but it doesn’t have to be. In fact, it’s really makes a lot of sense if you think about it. Each show a different aspect (or picture) of God.

One way you can think of it is like this. I’m a Father. My kids call me Pop or Dad. Sometimes when my kids were young they called me Daddy. My wife calls me Sweetheart or Honey because she loves me. To my grandkids I’m Pa-Pa. To my parents they called me Son. I’m called Ed or Edward by adults. I’m the same person, but have many names. If I have that many names, think how many God must have. Well He has many, many more!

Think of Jesus. Some of His other names are Messiah, Savior, and Lord. He is the Messiah because He is the one told about in the Old Testament to come for the Jewish people. He is the Savior because He saves us from our sins (the bad things that we do). And He is the Lord because He is in control over everything. All these are names for Jesus, who is God’s Son. He’s also called the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Immanuel, the Alpha and Omega (A to Z), the Lamb of God, the Prince of Peace, Master, and the Son of Man.

Jesus was God in a human body. He was just like us. He lived like you and I live and ate food like we do. He would get tired and then sleep. He cried when He was sad. He could be hurt. He got angry too. But He was also God. He never did anything wrong. He died for our sins, not His. When He died, He came back to life. He still lives and will live forever. Even though He was born, He existed before that. He has always existed. **He is God and He is also called God’s Son.**

God is also called the Spirit or the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit also is God. Another name for Him is the Counselor because He listens to us and encourages us. As Christians the Holy Spirit goes with us all the time. We can’t see the Holy Spirit but we can feel

Him sometime. As we read the Bible sometimes God makes a verse mean something very special to us. That is the Spirit doing that. The Spirit also lets us know when we do something bad. We feel guilty. When that happens we need to tell God we're sorry. Other names for the Holy Spirit are Comforter and Helper. He makes us feel better and helps us.

God is also called the Father. Even Jesus refers to God this way. Other names for the Father (and for God in general) are Heavenly Father (because He lives in heaven), Jehovah or Yahweh (the Hebrew name for God), the God of Israel (because they are a special people to Him), the Most High, God Almighty, IAM WHO I AM (or just I AM), Everlasting Father (because He has always existed), and Abba Father (which means Daddy). And while I try to be good Dad, God is always the Perfect Father. Wow, isn't that a lot of names!

THE TRINITY - Three in One and One in Three

Together, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit make up what Christians call **The Trinity**. Trinity means three in one! There is only one God, but He exists in three "persons". While the name Trinity is not used in the Bible, there are verses that talk about God in this way. One is when Jesus was baptized. The Bible says the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove, and the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Another is when Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19. He said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." He refers to all three Persons of the Godhead in this verse. The Trinity is a hard concept, but one way you can think of it is like water. Water exists in three forms: liquid, solid, and as a vapor or gas. You can have a glass of water with ice in it and you can see both the liquid and ice. They are distinct, but both water. Scientists tell us that just above the water in the glass there is also water in the form of a gas or vapor which we can't see. A glass of ice water then actually has three different forms of water. All exist at the same time in the one glass of ice

water. One glass of water, but in three forms. In the same way, there is one God, but He exists in three “persons”.

Water is something we can drink. It is necessary for life and refreshes us. It causes things to grow. Jesus (**God the Son**) is like that. He does all that for us. When water gets very hot it turns into steam. Steam is a gas. We can't see it, but it's there. **God the Holy Spirit** is like that. He's always there with us as Believers even though we can't see Him. When water gets real cold, it turns into ice. Ice is hard. Ice can even cut and shape things. You can create igloos (Eskimo houses) out of ice. **God the Father** is like that. He spoke the Old Testament laws which are very rigid. He created the whole world. Together with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, God created everything. Awesome!

Some Other Names of God in Scripture (Use these sometimes in your prayers to Him.)

El Shaddai: “God Almighty.”

El Elyon: “The Most High God.”

El Olam: “The Everlasting God.”

Yahweh (YHWH): I AM (or I exist). Also called **Jehovah**.

Yahweh (or Jehovah) Jireh (Yireh): “The Lord will provide.”

Jehovah Nissi: “The Lord is my Banner.”

Jehovah Shalom: “The Lord is Peace.”

Jehovah Sabbaoth: “The Lord of Hosts.”

Jehovah Maccadesshcem: “The Lord your Sanctifier.”

Jehovah Ro'i: “The Lord my Shepherd.”

Jehovah Tsikenu: “The Lord our Righteousness.”

Jehovah Shammah: “The Lord is there.”

Jehovah Elohim Israel: “The Lord, the God of Israel.”

Adonai: “Master, Owner.”

God: Primary name for God used in the New Testament. Its use teaches: (1) *He is the only true God* (Matt. 23:9; Rom. 3:30); (2) He is unique (1 Tim. 1:17; John 17:3; Rev. 15:4; 16:7); (3) He is transcendent (Acts 17:24; Heb. 3:4; Rev. 10:6); (4) He is the Savior (John 3:16; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10). This name is used of Christ as God in John 1:1, 18; 20:28; 1 John 5:20; Tit. 2:13; Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:8; 2 Pet. 1:1.

Lord: Stresses authority and supremacy.

Master: Carries the idea of ownership, supreme authority

And finally, Father: A distinctive New Testament revelation is that through faith in Christ, God becomes our personal Father. Father is used of God in the Old Testament only 15 times while it is **used of God 245 times in the New Testament**. As a name of God, it stresses God's loving care, provision, discipline, and the way we are to address God in prayer. See Matthew 7:11, James 1:17, Hebrews 12:5-11, John 15:16 and 16:23, Ephesians 2:18 and 3:15, and 1 Thessalonians 3:11.

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your daily Quiet Time. Come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week.
2. Complete the lesson and read the article on Prayer.
3. Work towards achieving some of your goals in the next week. Come prepared to share next week what you've seen God do in your life. You may also want to ask your group leader to write something on your Goals page. This will be an encouragement to you and to them.
4. Look over the questions on "How Has Your Life Changed?" and think through each of them. Come prepared to share.

WEEK 7

Open in prayer

Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Share progress on your Goals

Discuss the Lesson

Discuss Prayer, the One Thing I Needed to Do

Discuss How Has Your Life Changed?

Discuss Continuing On and then Close in Prayer

JAMES, CHAPTER 5

In this last chapter of James we see more warnings to the rich. We also learn about being patient in suffering and how to pray effectively.

Warning to the Rich (James 5:1-6)

1. What is a common problem of those who are rich and what are the results and impact on others? (James 5:1-6)

Problem:

Results:

Impact on others:

2. What should the rich be like, do you think?

Patience in Suffering (James 5:7-12)

3. James mentions farmers as needing to be patient. What other professions require patience and why?

4. Why is it important for us to be patient and not complain?
(James 5:8-9)

5. The Bible gives us examples of patience in the midst of suffering. Who were some of these and what was the result? (James 5:10-11)

6. James 5:12 is another “Proverbs-like” stand-alone verse. What is it saying?

Prayer of Faith (James 5:13-20)

7. The book of James then talks about prayer. What does James 5:13-14 say are some reasons we should pray?

Do any of these surprise you? Why or why not?

8. What are some necessary conditions to answered prayer? (James 5:15-16)

9. What do you learn from the example of Elijah? (James 5:17-18)

10. In light of all this, what do you think is needed to be a real “prayer warrior”?

How can you build faith in your life?

11. What are some of the things that God would have you pray for that would stretch your faith?

12. The final admonition in James 5:19-20 is about bringing back people who wander from the truth of God. What part do you think prayer has to do with this?

What else would be needed or help?

God gives some warnings to the rich which we need to prayerfully consider, then respond as He leads us. He also gives us reasons to be patient. Finally, He shows us how to pray and pray effectively. Pray in faith.

DO AN APPLICATION FOR THIS CHAPTER

1st – Re-read James Chapter 5 and review your answers to the questions in this week's lesson.

2nd - Pick a verse that stands out to you _____

3rd - What does it Say?

4th - What does it Mean?

5th - Where do I fall short?

6th - What will I do about it?

7th - What is the first step I'll take this week?

Check _____ when 1st step is completed. (Then enter it on page 69.)

PRAYER – THE ONE THING I NEEDED TO DO!

My Dad was 49 when I was born. As a teenager I thought it was odd that my friend's parents were so young. Mine were in their 60s by that time, and not in the best of health. So after I went away to college and became a Christian at age 18, I was excited and came home one weekend and told them what I had done. My Mom was pleased that I had become a Christian, and I found out she was one too. My Dad, however, seemed bothered by what I said and asked if I thought he had raised me wrong, and then told me "not to go off the deep end on this". Well as I grew in my faith I learned several ways to share the gospel, and whenever I came home I would talk with my Dad, but he would always change the subject. As the years went by his health issues increased and despite having had cancer twice, he reached age 79, yet still wasn't interested in the gospel. I began to think to myself, "You know, my Dad's not going to make it spiritually." I had shared with him every way I knew how to become a Christian. I didn't know what else to do. So I resigned myself to the fact that the only thing left for me to do was pray.

I started praying for my Dad regularly. Don't get me wrong, I had prayed some for my Dad before, but I now made a commitment to God that I would pray daily for my Dad to come to Christ. I also prayed that if God had anything else He wanted me to do regarding

my Dad that He would let me know. Well I believe He did tell me one thing. The Good News Bible had just come out, and so I got the idea to get two copies, one for my Dad and one for my Mom (so my Dad wouldn't feel singled out) and I wrote something in the front of each one. To my Dad I said, "Thanks Pop for all the things you've taught me", and then I listed 12 things and then signed it. I wrote a similar thing for my Mom. I gave them to my Mom and my Dad. Then I began praying daily that my Dad would somehow read that Bible.

I bet I prayed that daily for almost a whole year. Well we lived about 1,000 miles away and so didn't see them for about a year and when we did come home to visit as soon as we came in the house my Dad said, "Son, sit down here." Well my Dad started asking me questions about the Bible. Questions about Moses, questions about Abraham, questions about David, questions about Jesus, questions about Peter and Paul. I had answers to some of them, but he had answers to all of them. I said, "Pop, how do you know so much about the Bible?" He said, "Son, you know that Bible you gave me a year ago? I bet I haven't missed a day reading that thing!"

Well I about fell off my chair! I had prayed that he would read it, and had wanted to believe that he would, but hadn't really thought it possible. But God took my tiny scrap of faith and blessed it. So I talked some more with my Dad that day. I had just learned a new way of sharing the gospel and asked him if I could tell him what I was learning. He now said, "Yes!" which was definitely different from past conversations. I shared what I had just learned. That God has a wonderful plan for our life, but that we are all separated from God and His plan because of our sin. That we need to be convicted of that sin and be willing with God's help to turn from it. That Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty from those things and to give us the gift of eternal life. That we need to ask Him to come into our life, take away our sins, and give us the gift of eternal life. I then asked him if he would like to receive Jesus Christ personally. He said he would think about it. The next day Janice and I visited my wife's parents for a few days and I kept

praying for my Dad. When we came back a few days later and walked in the door he grabbed me by the shoulder and said, “You know that thing you talked with me about the other night? Well I prayed and asked Jesus into my life just after you left!”

So my Dad became a Christian at age 80, and he lived to 83. I got him memorizing a few key verses and having a Quiet Time. (He was already reading the Bible daily.) I saw changes in my Dad’s life those last 3 years that you sometimes don’t see in someone much younger who comes to Christ. As I mentioned earlier he was very prejudiced, but God softened his heart towards others. And he and Mom started going to church, something they had never done before. Mom was thrilled!

Yes, I had discouragingly thought that the only thing left for me to do was pray for my Dad as I had exhausted all possibilities. I was relying on myself, not God. Now I know that committed prayer was the one thing I needed to do! And I also now firmly believe that we should pray not only for someone to come to Christ, but also pray for ourself that God would show us what He wants us to do in regards to that person. I believe God laid that Bible and the inscription on my mind and heart. I found out later that my Dad was so proud of that Bible after I gave it to him that he showed it to everyone he knew. He’d say, “See what my Son thinks of me!” I bet after saying that numerous times he thought, “Gee, if my Son thinks so much of me, then maybe I should read the book that he gave me.” He probably started reading it just to please me, but it helped change his life. So thank you God for using your Word and prayer in my Dad’s heart, and in mine too!

Think though on whom you could be praying for to come to Christ.

How Has Your Life Changed?

1. Overall, what have you thought of these studies?

2. Since going through these studies how has your life changed?

3. What new habits have you picked up?

4. What new attitudes are beginning to develop in your life?

5. Where would you like to see your Christian life in 1 year? 2?

Continuing On

We have reached the end of this study, but this really isn't the end, it's only the beginning. The beginning of hopefully a new and strengthened walk with the Lord. I encourage you to keep having a daily Quiet Time in the Word and prayer. And if you continue in a small group, keep sharing what God shows you from your Quiet Times with each other as part of your small group time as well. Also keep setting some spiritual goals for yourself and asking others to check you on the completion of those goals. Confess your sins when you talk with Him and don't forget to pray for others. And keep reading and applying the Word of God to your life. He wants you to live out your faith. God will bless you as you continue these disciplines and walk with Him throughout your life!

QUIET TIME JOURNAL (Week 1)

GET STARTED: Pray for guidance. Pick a chapter in a **paperback Bible or New Testament**. (You may want to continue in the Bible book you read for practice in week one.) **Read and underline** what stands out to you. Pick what you consider to be the best verse and fill out the appropriate journal entry. Then talk to God about it. Do this daily. Then as God leads, share what God shows you with others.

◊ **SUNDAY** Date: _____ Read: _____ Best Verse: _____
What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response: _____

◊ **MONDAY** Date: _____ Read: _____ Best Verse: _____
What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response: _____

◊ **TUESDAY** Date: _____ Read: _____ Best Verse: _____
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How it impressed me: _____

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PRAYER PAGES

“Very early in the morning, Jesus got up, went to a solitary place, where He prayed.” Mark 1:35

Date/Request

Date/God's Answer

PRAYER PAGES

"Very early in the morning, Jesus got up, went to a solitary place, where He prayed." Mark 1:35

Date/Request

Date/God's Answer

NEW TESTAMENT READING CHART

It is important for every Christian to read their Bible regularly both for encouragement and for guidance. Psalm 119:9 says that a person should guard his (or her) life according to God's Word. But to do so you must be in The Book, not just have it in your house! The New Testament is an excellent place to start. Some people like to keep track of where they read to record their progress. Use the chart below to keep track of your reading in the New Testament. Put an "X" through the chapter numbers as you read them. Our prayer is that this will encourage you to read through the entire New Testament. You should be able to do so in about 9 months if you read 1 chapter daily. 3 chapters a day will get you through the entire Bible in about a year. (A sheet like this listing all the chapters in the Old and New Testaments is found in the back of *Growing Strong in God's Family* by NavPress.)

Matthew	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28										
Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
Luke	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24														
John	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21																	
Acts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28										
Romans	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
1 Corinthians	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
2 Corinthians	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13						
Galatians	1	2	3	4	5	6													
Ephesians	1	2	3	4	5	6													
Philippians	1	2	3	4															
Colossians	1	2	3	4															
1 Thess.	1	2	3	4	5														
2 Thess.	1	2	3																
1 Timothy	1	2	3	4	5	6													
2 Timothy	1	2	3	4															
Titus	1	2	3																
Philemon	1																		
Hebrews	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13						
James	1	2	3	4	5														
1 Peter	1	2	3	4	5														
2 Peter	1	2	3																
1 John	1	2	3	4	5														
2 John	1																		
3 John	1																		
Jude	1																		
Revelation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22																

My Goals

Set up specific goals in your spiritual life for this study. Two goals are given, one to have a Quiet Time for 7 consecutive days, the other to carry out at least three (3) applications in this guide. Set up any others that you like. Then **have someone else in your group initial on the line before each goal as you complete them.** You may also want to show them to your leader and ask for him or her to write about the growth they have seen in your walk with God during this time.

 Have a Quiet Time daily for 7 consecutive days (as shown by 7 consecutive journal entries)

 Carry out at least 3 Applications. Check when completed:

- Application for James Chapter 1***
- Application for James Chapter 2***
- Application for James Chapter 3***
- Application for James Chapter 4***
- Application for James Chapter 5***

 Pray for _____

 Tell _____ about Christ

 Invite/Bring _____ to church

 Read _____

Other Goals

Leader Comments (Optional)

Verses to Memorize

There are particular verses that you will find that mean so much to you or impact your life in such a significant way that it makes sense to commit them to memory so you can carry them with you everywhere! This page is for you to write down these verses as you find them so you can begin to memorize and put them in your heart and mind. (Some from James are given below.) Learn the verse a phrase at a time, adding phrases until you can say it all from memory. And also learn the address (reference) of the verse as well (e.g., John 3:16) so you can show someone else where it is. I find it helpful to also write the verses out on small cards and carry them with me for review. Research has shown that once you can initially say a verse from memory you will be unable to do so in about an hour. But you will find that it will then take much less time to re-learn it. The same thing then occurs about a day later, a week later, etc., but each time taking less and less time to re-learn. Eventually it will be "in there" for good. I know verses I learned 42 years ago, and it's made such an impact on my life that I'm still learning new ones today. So the key to remembering a verse is not only to memorize it, but also to review. Reviewing with another person is also helpful, and will be an encouragement to them. Think about this, if the Bible is ever banned, the verses we've memorized will be the only ones we'll have. But even now, with Bibles in every book store and home, there are times during the day when we don't have one with us, or it is impractical to pull out our Bibles. So at those times, the verses we've memorized are all that we have at that particular moment. The Holy Spirit will then use the verses you've memorized in your life and help you to be a ministry to others at any time! So memorize key verses. God bless you as you memorize.

James 1:2-4; James 1:5-6; James 1:19; James 1:23-25; James 1:27; James 2:17; James 3:16-17; James 4:1; James 4:4; James 5:16 .