

# PETE BUMGARNER MINISTRIES

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JAMES

STUDY GUIDE



# JAMES

## SCRIPTURE READING

The Book of James

## THEME

Although James seems to be talking about different subjects, his main theme is "faith requires corresponding action." The tongue can make its boast, but without corresponding action its words are futile. Faith will be tried by tribulations; therefore, patience must be exercised. The believer must act upon what he believes.

### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The book of James is believed to have been written by James, the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, a Palestinian theologian, the writer of this letter was also known as "James the Just" because of his eminent virtue.
- C. It is also believed that the writer of this letter was the first bishop of the church in Jerusalem.
- D. This letter is believed to have been written in Jerusalem.
- E. The contents of this letter are directed to the twelve tribes of Israel that have been scattered throughout the Roman Empire.

### II. CHAPTER ONE

- A. The book of James is written to the "twelve tribes in the dispersion." (James 1:1)
- B. James identifies himself as a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. (James 1:1)
- C. When surrounded by various temptations, we are to consider them something in which to delight, realizing that these temptations are working for our good. (James 1:2)
- D. When faith is tested, patience must go to work. (James 1:3)

- E. We must allow patience the opportunity to complete its work. (James 1:3)
- F. When faith patiently endures the temptations, we are perfected and developed. (James 1:3-4)
- G. One who lacks wisdom should ask God for the wisdom needed. (James 1:5)
- H. God will freely give wisdom unto the petitioner without rebuking or criticizing him. (James 1:5)
- I. It is imperative that the one who asks for wisdom ask in faith without doubting; otherwise, he will not receive. (James 1:6)
  - 1. One who doubts can be compared to a wave of the sea. (James 1:7)
  - 2. A wave is controlled by the circumstances; it changes as the circumstances change.
  - 3. One who doubts, or oscillates back and forth, will not receive anything from the Lord. (James 1:7)
  - 4. A man who thinks one thing one minute and another thing the next is not dependable; he is unstable in all his ways. (James 1:8)
  - 5. Only single-minded people receive from the Lord. Single-minded people are established in what they believe.
- J. Wisdom will use the circumstances to its advantage. (James 1:9-11)
  - 1. One in humble circumstances should rejoice when he is lifted up.
  - 2. One who is rich should rejoice when he is humbled. He must realize that like the grass he, too, will pass away.
  - 3. Just as the hot sun will cause the grass and its beauty to dry up and fade, the rich man will also dry up and fade.
  - 4. This passage seems out of place unless one realizes the subject is wisdom.

5. Wisdom teaches that faith never fails; it works for everyone, both rich and poor.
- K. One who endures temptation will be blessed. (James 1:12)
- L. The "crown of life" awaits those who do not succumb to temptation. (James 1:12)
1. Overcoming temptations reveals our love and commitment to God.
  2. The "crown of life" is promised to those who love the Lord.
  3. Those who truly love the Lord are committed to Him in all circumstances.
- M. No one should ever accuse God of tempting him; God is not tempted to do evil, nor does He tempt anyone. (James 1:13)
- N. Temptation comes through lust. (James 1:14)
1. One who seeks to please the natural man will pursue things that appeal to the physical man.
  2. When attention is placed upon these things, they become enticing. (James 1:14)
- O. Enticement produces conception which will give birth to sin. (James 1:15)
- P. Sin will consummate in death. (James 1:15)
- Q. Temptations are designed to destroy an individual, but those who overcome the temptations are rewarded by God.
- R. We are encouraged not to go astray by following the flesh. (James 1:16)
- S. Every act of giving that which is good and every perfect gift comes from God. (James 1:17)
1. God is called the Father of lights; He is the source of illumination, both naturally and spiritually. (James 1:17)
  2. God is consistent; He does not change. There is no variation in Him.

3. The "Father of lights" is so thoroughly brilliant that He will never display any hint of darkness. Unlike all other lights, He is incapable of casting a shadow.
- T. It is because of God's will and purpose that we have been born through the Word of Truth. (James 1:18)
- U. We are a kind of first fruit of God's creation; redemption of creation will follow. (James 1:18)
- V. We must be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. (James 1:19)
- W. The wrath of man does not facilitate right standing with God. (James 1:20)
- X. We must remove from ourselves all uncleanness and the abundance of evil. (James 1:21)
- Y. In meekness, we must receive the implanted Word, which is able to save our souls. (James 1:21)
- Z. We must become **doers** of the Word, not just **hearers** of the Word. (James 1:22)
- AA. Those who hear the Word and do not act upon what they have heard deceive themselves. (James 1:22)
- BB. One who hears the Word and does not act upon what he has heard can be compared to a man who looks in a mirror and later forgets how he looked. (James 1:23-24)
- CC. One who continues to look into the liberating Word of God and to act upon the Word will be blessed as a result of his actions. (James 1:25)
- DD. One who thinks he is religious but does not control his tongue deceives his own heart. His religion does not accomplish anything. (James 1:25)
- EE. Pure religion that is undefiled before God is to visit the fatherless and widows **in their affliction** (pressure/tribulation) and to remain uncontaminated by the world. (James 1:26)

### III. CHAPTER TWO

- A. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ must be impartial. (James 2:1-4)
  - 1. As believers, we must not make distinction in class; we must treat all classes of people with the same respect.
  - 2. One who favors the rich over the poor has evil intents.
- B. God has chosen the poor of the world who are rich in faith, and He has made them heirs of the kingdom because they love Him. (James 2:5)
- C. The poor have been despised by the church, yet it is the rich who oppress the church. (James 2:6)
- D. It is the rich, not the poor, who blaspheme the name of Jesus. (James 2:7)
- E. Those who fulfill the "royal law" do well. The royal law is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (James 2:8)
- F. Those who show partiality sin. The "law" condemns partiality. (James 2:9)
- G. Those who keep all but one point of the "law" are guilty of violating the whole "law." (James 2:10-11)
- H. We must speak and act as people who will be judged by the "law of liberty." (James 2:12)
  - I. Those who do not show mercy will be judged without mercy, but those who show mercy can take comfort in the fact that mercy rejoices over judgment. (James 2:13)
- J. Faith without works is unprofitable; it will not save anyone. (James 2:14)
- K. If someone is without food and clothes and we tell him to depart in peace and be warmed and filled, but we do nothing to meet his need, we have not helped him. (James 2:16)
- L. Faith follows the same principle as verse sixteen. Without works, faith is dead. (James 2:17)

- M. Some say they have faith and others have works, but true faith is revealed by its works. (James 2:18)
- N. Believing without acting is unprofitable. Those who believe there is one God but never act on their belief are no better than the devils who believe and tremble. (James 2:19)
- O. One who does not act upon his beliefs is vain (empty). (James 2:20)
- P. Faith without works is dead; it will not produce anything. (James 2:20)
- Q. Abraham was justified **when** he offered Isaac on the altar. (James 2:21)
  - 1. It is imperative that we understand the difference between "works of faith" and "works of the law."
    - a. "Works of faith" are actions that demonstrate faith.
    - b. "Works of the law" are actions that attempt to gain right-standing with God.
  - 2. The "works" emphasized by James does not refer to keeping rules and regulations.
  - 3. The "works" emphasized by James refers to actions that come as a result of faith.
  - 4. One who truly operates in faith will demonstrate his faith by his actions.
  - 5. Abraham was justified when he acted on his faith and offered Isaac.
    - a. If Abraham had not offered Isaac, he would not have been justified.
    - b. When James says that Abraham was justified by works, he is referring to "works of faith," not "works of the law."
- R. Without works, Abraham's faith was incomplete. (James 2:22)

- S. Through works, Abraham's faith was consummated. (James 2:22)
- T. The scripture, "Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness," was not fulfilled until Abraham demonstrated his faith by offering Isaac. (James 2:23)
- U. Abraham was called the friend of God because he **demonstrated** his faith in God. (James 2:23)
- V. Justification comes when one's actions correspond with his faith. (James 2:24)
- W. Rahab, the harlot, was justified when her actions confirmed her belief. She followed the same principle Abraham followed; she acted on her faith and hid the spies. (Joshua 2:1-21; James 2:25)
- X. Just as the body without the spirit is dead, faith without corresponding action is dead also. It cannot accomplish anything. (James 2:26)

#### IV. CHAPTER THREE

- A. A warning of standard and accountability is given to those who teach others. (James 3:1)
  - 1. Those who teach must realize their responsibility and accountability.
  - 2. Those who teach others should be called and anointed by God.
- B. We all offend in various ways, but one who does not offend with his words is a mature person with the ability to control his whole body. (James 3:2)
- C. We are able to control powerful horses by placing bits in their mouths, and we are able to control huge ships with small rudders, but we have not learned to control the tongue consistently. (James 3:3-5)
- D. Although the tongue is a very small member of the body, it declares great things. (James 3:5)
- E. The tongue can be compared to a small fire that ignites and burns an entire forest. (James 3:5)

- F. The tongue contaminates the whole body and influences our nature. (James 3:6)
- G. The tongue is influenced by hell (Gehenna).
- H. Man has learned to tame all types of beasts, birds, snakes, and fish, but he has not learned to tame the tongue. (James 3:7-8)
  - 1. The tongue can be tamed, but not apart from God.
  - 2. It is imperative that we submit our tongues to God, Who does have the power to tame them.
- I. The tongue is an evil that man has not learned to restrain. (James 3:8)
  - 1. Restraint comes as a result of submission.
  - 2. Submission is an act of our will which comes as a result of our desire.
- J. The same tongue that blesses God, the Father, will curse men, who are made in the image of God. (James 3:9)
- K. Blessing and cursing should not proceed from the same mouth. (James 3:10)
- L. A fountain does not dispense both sweet and bitter water; a fig tree does not produce olives; and a vine does not produce figs; neither should the tongue produce good and evil. (James 3:11-12)
- M. A man who is wise and knowledgeable will reveal his works through humility and good behavior. (James 3:13)
- N. Those who harbor bitter jealousy and contention in their hearts are prideful and in opposition to truth. (James 3:14)
- O. The wisdom of these actions is not from God; this wisdom is earthly, carnal (beastly), and devilish. (James 3:15)
- P. Jealousy and contention are accompanied by confusion and evil practices. (James 3:16)

- Q. Godly wisdom is pure, peaceable, patient, compassionate, and full of mercy; it will produce good fruit, being also impartial and without hypocrisy. (James 3:17)
- R. The harvest of righteousness is sown in peace, not contention. The peaceable, not the contentious, receive the seeds that will produce a harvest of righteousness. (James 3:18)

V. CHAPTER FOUR

- A. When attention is given to the carnal man, lust is produced.
- B. Lust creates an atmosphere for strife and conflict. (James 4:1)
- C. These sensual desires produce jealousy, covetousness, and hatred. (James 4:2)
- D. When attention is placed upon self instead of God, evil will surely prevail.
- E. Some have not received possessions because they have not asked God for them. Others have asked God for certain possessions, but their desires have been driven by lust; therefore, God does not honor their requests. (James 4:3)
- F. Those who have transferred their allegiance from spiritual things to carnal things are called adulterers and adulteresses. (James 4:4)
- G. Those who want to become friends with the world become enemies of God. (James 4:4)
- H. The spirit which has dwelt within us (the spirit of the world) intensely craves with envy. God does not want our attention upon the things of the world, so He gives more grace, which enables us to overcome the fleshly longings. (James 4:5)
- I. God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6)
  - 1. Pride says, "Serve me."
  - 2. Humility says, "Let me serve you."
- J. When the believer submits himself to God, it produces a resistance against the devil that causes him to flee. (James 4:7)

1. There appears to be a divine order in this verse of scripture: submit to God; resist the devil; **after** the believer submits to God and resists the devil, the devil will flee.
  2. The devil is resisted by the believer's submission to God.
  3. The devil will not **remain** in the presence of those who are fully submitted to God.
- K. God will draw near to those who draw near to God. (James 4:8)
- L. Those who have sinned against God must repent of their ways, purge their hearts from evil desires, and become single-minded. (James 4:8)
- M. True repentance will be demonstrated through shame and grief. The flesh will be denied so that the spirit may gain its rightful position in the individual's life. (James 4:9)
- N. Those who choose to humble themselves will be exalted by the Lord. (James 4:10)
- O. Christians should not speak against one another. (James 4:11)
- P. One who speaks against and judges a brother is actually speaking against and judging the "law." (James 4:11)
- Q. One who speaks against and judges a brother becomes a judge of the "law" (Word of God), not a doer of the "law" (Word of God). (James 4:11)
- R. There is only one lawgiver, and He is able to save and destroy. (James 4:12)
- S. We do not have the right to judge one another. (James 4:12)
- T. A warning is given to those who make plans without consulting God. (James 4:13)
- U. **We** cannot accurately predict the future. (James 4:14)
- V. The life of a man is compared to a vapor, which is seen for a moment and then disappears. (James 4:14)
- W. Our decisions and actions should be based on the will of God for our lives. (James 4:15)

- X. Boasting through presumption (that which is taken for granted) and self-conceit (over estimation of oneself) is evil. (James 4:16)
  - 1. Making plans without consulting God is presumptuous.
  - 2. This verse warns against acting independently of God.
- Y. One who knows to do good and does not do it sins. (James 4:17)

## VI. CHAPTER FIVE

- A. The rich are told to weep and lament for the miserable things they are going to experience. (James 5:1)
- B. Both the wealth of the rich and their abundance of clothes are ruined through lack of use. (James 5:2-3)
- C. The money that has been hoarded by the rich will testify against them. (James 5:3)
- D. The rich will be destroyed, not saved, by the accumulation of wealth. (James 5:3)
- E. The rich have accumulated wealth for the last days, but they have taken advantage of their employees. (James 5:4)
- F. The cries of those who have been cheated will reach the ears of the Lord. (James 5:4)
- G. The rich live self-indulgent lives, and they do not care whom they hurt in the process. (James 5:5-6)
- H. The brethren are encouraged to be patient (longsuffering) until the coming of the Lord. (James 5:7)
  - I. Just as the farmer patiently waits for the fruit of the earth, we, too, must wait for coming of the Lord. (James 5:7)
  - J. We must be patient and established in our hearts, realizing that the coming of the Lord is near. (James 5:8)
  - K. We must not complain against one another; complainers will be condemned, and the Judge is already waiting at the door. (James 5:9)

- L. The former prophets should serve as an example of patience through afflictions. (James 5:10)
- M. Those who endure affliction are blessed. (James 5:11)
- N. God's response to Job's patience should serve as an excellent example for us. (James 5:12)
  - 1. Job never sinned against God, neither did he falsely accuse God.
  - 2. He demonstrated his faith by his actions.
  - 3. God rewarded Job by giving him twice as much as he had in the beginning.
- O. Brethren should not swear; they should always honor their word. Swearing can lead to condemnation. (James 5:12)
- P. Those who are afflicted should pray. (James 5:13)
- Q. Those who are cheerful should sing. (James 5:13)
- R. One who is sick should call for the elders of the church to come pray over him. (James 5:14)
  - 1. The "elders" are those who are spiritually mature.
  - 2. In this particular situation, the elders are to anoint the sick with oil. (James 5:14)
  - 3. After anointing with oil, the elders are to pray **in faith**; the sick will be healed through the prayer of faith and raised up by the Lord. (James 5:15)
- S. We should confess our offenses to one another and pray for one another so that we can be healed. (James 5:16)
- T. The prayer of one in right standing with God is strong and effective. (James 5:16)
- U. Although Elijah was a natural man subject to feelings like all human beings, he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it did not rain for three and a half years. He prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced fruit. (James 5:18)

1. Great things can be accomplished through ordinary people when they operate in faith.
  2. God uses fallible (capable of error) people to accomplish His will and purpose on earth.
  3. We must come to the realization that God is not a respecter of persons, and He will do great things through those who submit to His principles.
- V. One who converts someone who has erred from the truth saves his soul (psuche) from death and hides a multitude of sins. (James 5:19-20)
1. There seems to be an underlying message in this verse that condemns rejection, judgment, and exposure.
  2. Compassion forgives and disregards the error for the purpose of reaching out to restore.
  3. Our objective should be restoration and protection, not judgment and exposure.