

JAMES

GROWING IN CHRIST





His divine power has granted to us
all things that pertain to life and
godliness, through the knowledge
of him who called us to his own
glory and excellence.

2 PETER 1:3



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GET A RUNNING START

Each lesson in our study begins by asking you to meditate on the passage of Scripture you are studying that week. But what does it mean to meditate on Scripture? How do you make observations about a passage in the Bible? And why is this an important place to start your study of God's Word?

MAKING OBSERVATIONS IN SCRIPTURE

Being an observer of God's Word is no different than sitting on a bench at a busy park and noticing all the people there. Who are they? What are they doing? Who is with them? How are they relating to one another? Why are they there? When you take time to look and listen, there are so many things you can observe. The same is true of God's Word.

Observation is the act and art of noticing details. In its simplest form, it is asking these seven basic questions: who, what, when, where, why, how and wherefore? And with that initial understanding, we can be effective observers of God's Word if we are patient and disciplined to do so. If you are in a hurry or are just trying to complete a lesson, you will miss out on seeing exciting details in God's message to you. Stop, slow down and see what is not obvious to the casual reader. Make observation of God's Word a habit you enjoy.

MEDITATING ON A BIBLE PASSAGE

Meditation is the act of pondering or thinking deeply. In the case of a believer, it is reflecting on the meaning, implication and application of a particular Bible passage. It provides the foundation for study by allowing God to reveal key verses, repeated words, phrases or ideas that point us to the message He has for us. Meditation comes naturally for some and is more difficult for others; but we are all called to meditate on God's Word often.

The challenges we face today are the many distractions and stresses in our daily lives. In order to effectively meditate on God's Word, we need the Holy Spirit's help in allowing us to block out worldly cares and to focus solely on His Word and its implications for our lives. Think of meditation as the quieting of your life to listen to God's voice. You may need a special place in your home that is away from others, or a particular time of day when no one else needs your attention. Either way, meditation does not just happen because we want it to. Just like effective observation, it must be intentional. Make meditation a priority and see what God can do in your life as you allow His word to sink into the very fibers of your soul.

LESSON 1



JAMES 1:1-18

¹ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:
Greetings.

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹ Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰ and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

- 5.** What do the following verses teach you about God that could help you remain steadfast in trials: Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 91:4; Lamentations 3:22-23; John 15:5; 2 Thessalonians 3:3.

- 6.** What do you learn about wisdom from James 1:5-8 and 3:17?
(See also Proverbs 1:5; 2:6; 3:7, 13; 8:11; 9:10; 13:20.)

- 7.** What do verses 9-11 teach us? (See also Psalm 25:9; Matthew 23:12; James 4:6.)

- 8.** According to James 1:13-15, what does God want us to know about temptation?
(See also Matthew 26:41; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 4:14-16.)

- 9.** How are verses 16-18 an encouragement to you and why?

- 10.** What does this passage teach you about God being immutable (unchanging)? What other characteristics of God did you learn? How will you apply these truths about God to your life?

LESSON 2



JAMES 1:19-27

¹⁹ Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

²⁶ If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

- 4.** What two things are we told to do in verse 21 and why?
(See also Romans 13:12; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Peter 2:1.)

- 5.** According to James 1:22-25, how is being a doer of the Word described?
(See also Deuteronomy 30:14; Joshua 1:8; Luke 6:46-49; John 15:5; Philippians 2:12-13.)

- 6.** In what ways is God's Word a mirror? What mistakes do Christ-followers sometimes make when they look into God's mirror?

- 7.** In verses 26-27 what are the characteristics of someone whose religion is pure and undefiled?
(See also Psalm 39:1; 141:3; Isaiah 1:17; Matthew 25:31-40; Romans 2:13; Titus 2:12.)

- 8.** How can you keep yourself unstained by the world? (See Psalm 51:10; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 2:14-16; Colossians 3:16; 1 John 2:15-17.)

- 9.** Reread James 1:19-27. What specific change needs to take place in your life so you are a doer of the Word and not a hearer only?

- 10.** What does this passage teach you about God being truth? What other characteristics of God did you learn? How will you apply these truths about God to your life?

LESSON 3



JAMES 2:1-13

¹ My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ² For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³ and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” ⁴ have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?

⁸ If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. ⁹ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹² So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

- 5.** According to verse 8, what is the “royal law,” why is it called royal, and how does it relate to partiality? (See also Matthew 22:34-40; John 13:34-35.)

- 6.** How is the royal law to be lived out practically? (See also Micah 6:8; Zechariah 7:9-10; Matthew 25:35-40.) What needs to change in your life?

- 7.** What do verses 9-11 reveal about sin? (See also Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8-10.) What sin do you need to bring before the Lord today?

- 8.** What do verses 12 and 13 say about judging others? (See also Matthew 7:1; John 7:24; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32.)

- 9.** What is mercy, and how does it relate to favoritism? (See also Luke 6:37-38.)

- 10.** What does this passage teach you about God being impartial? What other characteristics of God did you learn? How will you apply these truths about God to your life?

LESSON 4



JAMES 2:14-26

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! ²⁰ Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

- 5.** Describe dead faith as mentioned in this passage. What is the danger of this kind of faith? (See Matthew 7:24-27.)

- 6.** How does the Bible define justification? (See Romans 3:21-28; 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:21.) What is the proof of justification? (See also 1 John 3:16-18.)

- 7.** What did James mean when he said Abraham was justified by works in verses 21-22? (See Genesis 15:1-6; Romans 4:1-5; Galatians 3:6.)

- 8.** How did Abraham and Rahab demonstrate their faith? (See also Genesis 22:1-18; Joshua 2.) In what ways is your faith demonstrated in your daily life?

- 9.** What distinguishes a true believer from the world? (See Psalm 1:1-3; Romans 12:1-2; John 15:4-5; Galatians 5:16; Colossians 1:10; Titus 2:7-8, 11-12.)

- 10.** What distinguishes you from the world? What in your life will you begin to do differently? (See Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22; 1 Timothy 4:6-8; 1 John 2:15-17.)

- 11.** What does this passage teach you about God being faithful? What other characteristics of God did you learn? How will you apply these truths about God to your life?

LESSON 5



JAMES 3:1-18

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ²For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. ⁴Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. ⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

PSALM 19

- ¹ The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his
handiwork.
- ² Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
- ³ There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.
- ⁴ Their voice goes out through all
the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,
⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom
leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course
with joy.
- ⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.
- ⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple;
- ⁸ the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is pure,
enlightening the eyes;
- ⁹ the fear of the Lord is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the Lord are true,
and righteous altogether.
- ¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey
and drippings of the honeycomb.
- ¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant
warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
- ¹² Who can discern his errors?
Declare me innocent from hidden faults.
- ¹³ Keep back your servant also from
presumptuous sins;
let them not have dominion over me!
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.
- ¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the
meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

- 5.** What warning is given to teachers of God's Word in verse 1 and why? (See also 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 2:7-8.)

- 6.** How does James' warning about the tongue relate to James 1:19? (See also Proverbs 10:19; 17:27.)

- 7.** What does Psalm 19 say about the words of God? How does this compare to what James says about the words of man?

- 8.** What do we need to do to gain control over the tongue? (See also Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 141:3; Luke 6:45; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16, 22-24.)

- 9.** How is wisdom described in verses 13-18, and how is wisdom related to the tongue? (See also Galatians 5:22-24.)

- 10.** How do verses 13-18 relate to James 1:5-8? Where do you need to ask for God's wisdom? (See also Matthew 7:7-8; Luke 12:12; Colossians 4:5-6.)

- 11.** What does this passage teach you about God being omniscient (all-knowing)? What other characteristics of God did you learn? How will you apply these truths about God to your life?

LESSON 6



JAMES 4:1-17

¹What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. ⁴You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? ⁶But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

¹¹Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹²There is only one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

¹³Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— ¹⁴yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

- 5.** Define humility. What does James say about humility in verses 6-10? (See also Psalm 138:6; Matthew 23:12; Philippians 2:3; 1 Peter 5:6.)

- 6.** According to James 7-10, what does it mean to submit to God and resist the devil? (See also Zechariah 1:3; John 8:44; Ephesians 4:27; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 4:4.)

- 7.** How do we keep ourselves from pursuing worldliness? What does this look like in everyday life? (See Ephesians 6:10-20; 2 Timothy 2:22-26.)

- 8.** Define judging. Compare James 4:11-12 with Matthew 7:1-5. What teaching do you learn about judging others? Ask God to reveal any judgment that you have for others and then seek His forgiveness.

- 9.** From verses 13-17 what do you learn about making plans and boasting? (See also Proverbs 16:9; 19:21; 27:1; Luke 12:16-20; Acts 18:21; 1 Corinthians 16:7; Hebrews 6:3.)

- 10.** Reread James 4:17. When we know the right thing to do, why do we often choose not to do it? In what area is your heart wrestling with disobedience?

- 11.** What does this passage teach you about God being preeminent (above all)? What other characteristics of God did you learn? How will you apply these truths about God to your life?

LESSON 7



JAMES 5:1-12

¹Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. ²Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. ⁴Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

¹²But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

- 5.** What did Jesus say about riches in Matthew 6:19-21? What are biblical ways to use our riches? (See also Proverbs 28:27; 31:16; Malachi 3:10; Acts 20:35; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.) How are you using what God has given you for the good of others?

- 6.** What does James teach about patience in verses 7-11? (See also Psalm 40:1-2; Romans 12:12; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:1-2.)

- 7.** In what areas of life do you find it hard to be patient and why?

- 8.** How can Christians find patient endurance as they wait for Christ's return?

- 9.** Define steadfastness. How was Job an example of steadfastness? (See Job 1:13-22; 2:10.)

- 10.** According to verse 12, what does James say about oaths? (See also Matthew 5:33-37.)

- 11.** What does this passage teach you about God being hope? What other characteristics of God did you learn? How will you apply these truths about God to your life?

LESSON 8



JAMES 5:13-20

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸ Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

¹⁹ My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰ let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

PSALM 51

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
- ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.
- ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- ⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the
inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the
secret heart.
- ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall
be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
- ⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
- ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
- ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- ¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your
righteousness.
- ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- ¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I
would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
- ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you
will not despise.
- ¹⁸ Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
build up the walls of Jerusalem;
then will you delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

- 5.** Why is prayer essential for the Christ follower? What is essential when we pray?
(See Matthew 21:21-22; Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6-7)

- 6.** What role does a Christian play in praying for others? (See also Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:1.)

- 7.** Read Psalm 51. What do you learn from David's confession of his sins?

- 8.** Are verses 19 and 20 referring to redemption or restoration? Explain your answer.

- 9.** What does Paul say in Galatians 6:1-3 about restoring a wandering believer?
How do we practically do this? (See also Malachi 2:6; 1 Peter 4:8.)

- 10.** What does this passage teach you about God being personal? What other characteristics of God did you learn? How will you apply these truths about God to your life?

4. In what ways has your attitude and/or outlook on life changed after learning these truths?

5. How has God changed your heart as a result of this study? In what ways has this impacted your relationship with God and others?

6. How would you like the group to pray for you regarding what you have learned from the study of James?



I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

ROMANS 12:1-2



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