

Within the Word

A Study of James 1

A Note from Kathy

There are few words as sweet to hear as "I love you!" But more than merely hearing the words is the thrill of seeing them in acts of sacrifice and service. God wants to hear how we love him, but he also desires to see our love lived out each day. What will that look like for you today?

Observation

1. Please read the chapter, at least twice, before beginning this study guide. I like to read along while listening to my YouVersion Bible app. Briefly, state the theme of this chapter.
2. This book opens with a clear declaration by the author. Who wrote this epistle? What did you learn about the author?
3. Who was James' intended audience (vs. 1, 2, 16, 19)?
4. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Even though we were not stated as the original, intended audience, what do these verses tell us about all scripture?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

5. What did you learn about these people in verse 1?
6. Notice the first subject James addresses in verse 2. How are we instructed to respond? This may sound strange, but what encouraging truth does James share with the reader (vs. 3-5)?
7. Read James 1:5 and Proverbs 2:6. Where are we to go to find wisdom?

Proverbs 2:6

For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

8. Going to the right source for wisdom is the first step to becoming wise and gaining understanding. What is required of those asking for wisdom (vs. 6-8)?
9. Believers have a promise from God. According to James 1:4, 9-12, what is that promise?
10. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-25. Paul compares our walk of faith to a person running a race. The “crown of life” goes to those who persevere under trial because they _____.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25

²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

11. What is the process of sin James wants believers to be aware of, in order to avoid giving in to the temptation (vs. 13-15)?
12. What is the difference between temptation and sin?
13. James uses conception and birth as a metaphor to help us gain a greater understanding of sin. In birth, it requires the action of sperm coming in contact with the egg, in order to begin the process of creating a child. How does this illustration help us grasp the process of temptation and sin?
14. James gives believers a word of warning in verses 16-18. What is his warning?

Believers are a new creation in Christ. We have been “born again.”
Read Ephesians 1:13 and 1 Peter 1:23.

15. I love the book of James; it is concise and direct. What specific instructions are given in verses 19-22.

Verse 19

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Verse 21 “get rid of all ... “

_____ and _____

and

Verse 22 “do not merely ... ”

16. What is the word picture in verses 23-25? Read Proverbs 12:1. What might you label these two responses?

17. Our eyes can be deceived. For generations, carpenters have used tools, such as a plumb-bob or a level, to reveal the truth about the wall. According to verse 26, what does



James mention that can reveal much about our walk of faith? He will have more to say on this subject in chapter 3.



Application

1. In verses 1-8, we saw that believers are to look at their trials differently than the world. If we are to “consider it (our trials) pure joy,” we will need to view our life from an eternal perspective. God has a plan and a purpose for our life; we can trust his character. Does knowing that God has a greater purpose, help you as you go through a difficult trial? Can you honestly say you believe that God’s way is always best? How does our response to trials reflect what we believe?
2. James reminds us that we will need wisdom from God to mature in our walk of faith. In order to receive this wisdom, we need only ask, believing that God loves us and desires for us to grow spiritually. How did James describe the way God will give wisdom (v. 5)?

Do you feel God is giving you wisdom in this way?

If your answer is yes, how do you know?

If your answer is no, maybe you need to approach his word differently.

Are you asking and believing?

Do you fully trust in his steadfast character and the promises of God?

3. In verses 12-18, James speaks about purpose and reward for those who go through trials with perseverance. Where do temptations come from? (Who came to Eve in the garden tempting her (Genesis 3:1))? How might these verses help us see the truth about trials?

Trust is not complete until it has been acted upon.

I might believe a chair will hold me, but I have not fully placed my trust in the chair until I actually sit in the chair.

4. Every difficult circumstance a believer encounters becomes a crossroads. What are the two choices? Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and James 4:7 to gain a greater understanding.



1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

5. When faced with temptation, a believer has a choice to make. Read 2 Timothy 2:22, and write out the action we are to take when faced with temptation.

2 Timothy 2:22

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

6. In verse 19, James gives us three admonitions or cautions. Write in your own words what you believe each means.

Quick to listen _____

Slow to speak _____

Slow to become angry _____

How well would you say you are doing at these three admonitions?

How might you improve in these areas of obedience to God's word?

7. James 1:20-21 tells us that "man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires," and that we are to "get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent," in order that we might "humbly accept the word planted." Personalize these verses below by inserting your name. What must we identify, and how are we to deal with it?

_____ 's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

_____ should get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, in order that she might humbly accept the word planted.

8. The gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, is that word that has been planted in the heart of every believer. As believers, how are we to respond to the word of God?
9. What truth has God revealed to you this week that will require a change of mind and actions? Perhaps it was something your pastor shared or something in a conversation with a friend that you recognized as truth. Or perhaps you gleaned a new awareness as you spent time in God's word. Physical and spiritual growth and maturity are always accompanied by change. This would be an excellent time to write a prayer to God.
10. The last verse in James 1 encourages us to keep ourselves from being polluted by the world. Our worship of God is most clearly seen in our acts of service for others. In Matthew 25:40, Jesus says, "as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."

Notice the two words James chose to describe a faith that is pleasing to God: pure and undefiled. Believers are to be the salt and light. We should never minimize the effect one person can have on the world. What acts of worship are you doing today? How do you perceive the mundane tasks of the day, such as laundry or grocery shopping? How might you view them as acts of worship?

11. Have you drawn closer to God during your time studying James 1? What new insights have you gleaned from this chapter?
12. In your own words, title this chapter in one sentence. For you, what was the key verse in this chapter?