

Sermon Study Guide

Pastor: Dr. Henry Schorr

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Sermon Series: INSIDE / OUT: The Book of James

IN *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. If this is your first time together since the summer weeks, share a highlight from your summer. How did you see God at work in your life?
2. How many siblings were in your family as you were growing up?
If you were the oldest, what was your relationship like with the others?
If you were not the oldest, what was your relationship like with the oldest?

UP *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. List factual information you know about the author of the book, James.
2. The letter from James was probably written between 45-47 AD, making it one of the first writings of the NT era. What importance do you think that the hearers from the 'twelve tribes scattered' (1:1) gave to this writing. Why?
3. Review the spiritual journey that James took during his life, and identify his pivotal turning point. (Note the following chronological verses):
Luke 2:48-52; Matt 13:53-57; Mk 3:21m 31-34; John 10:30; 19:25-27;
1 Cor 15:3-7; Acts 1:13; 12:17; 15:13-21; 21:18; Gal 1:19; 2:8-10; James 1:1
4. Compare Jesus' words in Matthew 7:24-27 and James' words in James 1:22; 2:14, 17, 19. What is the focus of their words? Why was this focus crucial to both of them?

OUT *Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community*

1. Is God speaking to you about an area where you need to align your 'faith' and 'behaviour'? What step(s) can you take this week to respond to His Word to you?
2. **The Main Thing:** In two or three sentences, journal your answer to, 'What is the Lord saying to me?'

Resources:

Chuck Swindoll, Living Insights, James & 1 & 2 Peter (Living Insights Commentary, 2014)

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

Luke 2:48-52

⁴⁸ ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Matthew 13:53-57

⁵³ ⁵⁵ "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?" ⁵⁶ Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home."

Mark 3:21,31-34

²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." . . . ³¹ Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." ³³ "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. ³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!"

John 10:30

³⁰ I and the Father are one."

John 19:25-27

²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

1 Corinthians 15:3-7

. . . ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

Acts 1:13; 12:17; 15:13-21; 21:18

¹³ . . . ^{12:17} Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this," he said, and then he left for another place. . . ¹⁹ When they finished, James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me. . . ¹⁸ The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. . . Galatians 1:19; 2:8-10

Galatians 1:19; 2:8-10

¹⁹ I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. . . ⁹ James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. . .

James 1:1

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. . .

Sermon Study Summary

The book/letter of James likely was written between 45-47 AD, one of the first NT books. Many of those who heard this letter likely heard Jesus teach, saw His miracles, His death and possibly His resurrection. James was directed to the 'twelve tribes scattered among the nations,' (1:1) that is the New Israel—the Christians once part of the Jerusalem Church now scattered due to persecution.

Which James is the writer? Most Bible scholars agree it was James, Jesus' half-brother; Mary's sons, Jesus the Son of God, James, son of Joseph with their other brothers. (Mt 13:55, Mk 6:3) Joseph seems to have died before Jesus began His earthly ministry.

What was it like for James to grow up with an older brother who is God in the flesh? Chuck Swindoll said "No second-born could possibly fathom what it must have been like to suffer second-child syndrome with an older brother who never sinned. But James did." Jesus was a perfect son but James was born with a sinful nature as we are. Hard as it was to live with an older brother who always made good choices, it must have been equally hard for James NOT to like Jesus who treated him with love, respect and kindness.

This all changed when Jesus began healing the sick, driving out demons and saying "I and the Father are One." (Jn 10:30) His family believed Jesus was a lunatic or a liar. (Mk 3:21) His brothers did not believe in Him when Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and they abandoned Him. (Jn 7:5) Jesus' mother was the only family member at His crucifixion so Jesus entrusted Mary's care to His disciple John. (Jn 19:26)

Later James changed dramatically to become a key leader of the Church that Christ came to establish, a pillar of the Jerusalem Church. (Gal 2:9, Acts 15:13, 21:18) What changed him? Jesus made a special resurrection appearance to James. (1 Cor 15:7) Beth Moore says Jesus appeared to people who most needed to see Him—Mary Magdalene, Saul/Paul, Peter and James. When James saw the resurrected Christ, He knew the truth—that Jesus was the Son of God as He claimed. James was changed from the inside out; he repented of his disbelief, believed in Jesus and wholly committed to follow Him. James identified himself as a "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." (1:1) Josephus, the historian, called him 'James, the Just'. He was called 'camel knees' because his knees were calloused like a camel's from praying so much. History records that James' testimony influenced so many to follow Christ that the religious leaders threw him off the top of the temple and beat him to death in 62 AD.

When James met the real Jesus, his mind, heart and life were forever changed. This is the heartbeat of James' letter—to mature into a faith that is real on the INSIDE and OUTSIDE. James says following Jesus involves more than listening to the truth, gaining more Bible insight; it also involves doing what it says. (2:14,17,19,22) If we do not live out what we hear and learn, then our faith is dead. WHAT WE DO is determined by WHAT WE BELIEVE. True faith involves both believing the truth AND living the truth, right belief AND right behaviour. KNOWING THE TRUTH, BELIEVING THE TRUTH and LIVING THE TRUTH, begin with and are based on HEARING THE TRUTH. Neither stands alone.

Jesus said that those who ONLY HEAR His words build their house on sand—no firm footing to face life's storms. He said that those who HEAR HIS WORDS and PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE are wise and build their house on the rock. (Mt 7:24-26) The rich young ruler lacked one thing in his commitment to God. He chose to trust his wealth, a counterfeit god, rather than the great opportunity Jesus offered him. (Lk 18:18-23) Patrick Morley says many people are blind to the sin of partial surrender, believing Jesus can be Saviour without being Lord, adding Christ to a list of counterfeit gods. That is seeking the GOD WE WANT rather than knowing and pursuing the GOD WHO IS.

James' life and book show that genuine faith is evident...

1. foremost in a close and growing relationship with Jesus, trusting Him completely,
2. through walking with Jesus in obedience.

Is there anything I clutch with an iron fist that keeps me from fully trusting and obeying God?