

# The General Epistle of James

*Faith that works!*

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## OPENING WORSHIP

To begin your Bible study, read together **Psalm 36**. Sometimes it seems like Christians get the short end of the stick in life. Humility, devotion, sacrifice, obedience—all of these things are held in contempt by the world. In the end, though, the faithful will shine like the stars, while those who received their reward in this life will face an awful eternity.

## INTRODUCTION

What's the connection between Christian faith and a godly life? How do members of Jesus' family put into practice what our Savior preached and taught? How do we meet the challenges to our faith that the world throws against us—without caving in?

James is a practical book. It's about Christian faith in action. It brings the marvelous and lofty truths of grace and salvation and applies them to real living, out where the rubber meets the road.

James challenges us. He warns us. He admonishes us. He grounds us and brings us back to a solid footing on the simple truths of God's word that we are to apply to daily living. Much of what James tells us is sobering and even frightening. He calls lukewarm Christians to repent of our worldliness and spiritual apathy.

At the same time James points to the wonderful blessings that flow from a committed life of devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ. He encourages us in our daily struggles, and he holds out the promise of a better life with Christ in the world to come.

## BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK

Who was James?

James lived and worked mostly in the city of \_\_\_\_\_.

James is writing his epistle primarily to whom:

This epistle was probably written about the year \_\_\_\_\_.

What circumstances and challenges prompted James to write this epistle?

## PRACTICAL DIRECTION

**Read James 1:1-18**

Describe from your own experiences why trials are a good thing for God's people.

Are you a mature Christian (v. 4)? What characteristics describe a mature Christian?

What is true wisdom (v. 5)? Do you possess wisdom? Where can you find wisdom?

How does James urge you to seek wisdom?

What is meant by “double-minded” and “unstable” (v. 7, 8)? Are you such a person?

How does James’ assessment of poverty and wealth compare with yours (v. 9, 10)? Explain.

- What are some blessings of poverty? What problems can arise from poverty?
- What are some blessings of wealth? What problems can arise from wealth?

Explain the meaning of James’ analogy of a scorching sun (v. 11). How does this apply to you?

Is your life a trial (v. 12)? What opportunities do you have to put your faith into practice by persevering?

**For discussion:** *James describes a process (v. 13-15) through which sinful desires take root, develop and reach fulfillment as full-blown sinful actions. What practical lessons can you learn from this to apply to your daily living?*

A recurring theme in James is our dependence upon God for life, for sustenance and for salvation. What does James mean here calling Christians “firstfruits”? What fundamental truths is he emphasizing?

## LISTENING AND DOING

### Read James 1:19-27

Do you find yourself getting miffed and inclined to shoot your mouth off (v. 19, 20)? What is James’ answer to this temptation (v. 21)?

How are you, as a solid, churchgoing Christian be challenged by James’ words in verses 22-25?

We understand James’ point that some religion is a useless sham. Describe three characteristics of faithful religion.

**For discussion:** *Where in these verses do you see James warning, challenging and encouraging you?*

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## VERSE TO REMEMBER

**James 1:22** *Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

**For next time, read James chapters 1-3.**