

What Christian Living is All About

Lesson One: “A Special Man and A Special Book” James 1:1

1. What statement best describes the way most people view the Bible (Give examples)
 - a. very relevant to their lives
 - b. somewhat relevant to their lives
 - c. not relevant at all

2. Take a minute and look at some of the topics in the Epistle of James and discuss the relevance of these topics today:
 - a. Dealing with life’s problems (1:2-8)
 - b. prejudice (2:1-13)
 - c. hypocrisy (1:16-27)
 - d. faith (2:14-26)
 - e. taming the tongue (3:1-12)
 - f. true wisdom (3:13-18)
 - g. dealing with conflict (4:1-10)
 - h. the uncertainty of life (4:13-17)
 - i. materialism (5:1-16)
 - j. patience until Christ returns (5:7-11)
 - k. guidelines for prayer (5:13-18)
 - l. responsibility to your brother in Christ (5:19-20)

3. Who wrote the book of James? What do we know about the James, brother of Jesus?
 - a. probably the oldest brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55) and brother of Jude (Jude 1)
 - b. once an unbeliever (John 7:3-5)
 - c. transformed from a doubter to a disciple (1 Corinthians 15:3-7)
 - d. numbered among the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 1:13-14)
 - e. leader in the Church at Jerusalem (Galatians 2:9)

4. Read James 1:1. How does James describe himself? What does this tell you about James?

5. To whom was the Book of James written? Why were these Jewish Christians scattered?
Read Acts 8:1, 12:1-4, James 1:2.

6. What difference does Christianity make in your life? (Give examples)
 - a. All the difference
 - b. Some difference
 - c. No difference at all

7. What statement best describes the way you view the Bible? (Give examples)
 - a. Very relevant to my life
 - b. Somewhat relevant to my life
 - c. Not relevant at all

8. In one sentence or less, state your view of What Christian living is all about.

Homework: Read the Book of James all the way through twice this week

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Lesson Two: “Problems, Problems, Problems” James 1:2-8, 12-15

1. Give some examples of problems that we all struggle with in our everyday lives.
2. How do most people seem to deal with problems? In what way can our attitude toward problems affect our Christian living?
3. Read James 1:2-4. According to James, what should be our attitude toward problems and difficulties in our lives? What differences can it make in our lives if we view problems as opportunities to grow in faith?
4. Read James 1:12-15. What differences exist between what James call “trials,” and what he calls “temptations?” What does James say is the source of temptations? Discuss the progression James mentions in vss. 14 and 15.
5. Discuss the following statement: “God tests us, but he does not tempt us.”
6. What role can prayer play in our lives as we struggle with trials and temptations? Why do you think James says we should ask god for wisdom?
7. Think of some Biblical examples of individuals who struggled with trials or temptations and were victorious. How did it change their lives? (e.g., Joseph, Job, Paul and Peter)
8. Discuss some ways that we can do a better job of keeping a positive attitude toward our problems
9. Discuss some ways that we can be better at resisting the temptations placed before us.

Homework:

1. Spend some time this week visiting shut-in or someone in the hospital. Be observant of their attitude toward “problems.” Do something to encourage them.
2. Concentrate on the one greatest temptation you face. Why does this particular thing attract you? What have you done to resist it? What do you still need to do yet?

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Lesson Three: “Where All Men Are Created Equal” James 1:9-11, 2:1-13

1. What is prejudice (literally to prejudge one another)? What types of prejudice have occurred in the past? What types exist today?
2. Read Galatians 3:28. What is the one place all men are truly created equal?
3. Read James 1:9-11. Discuss the nature of equality in Christ. How is the brother in humble circumstances to take pride in his high position and the rich man to rejoice in his low position?
4. Read James 2:1-4. What does it mean to show favoritism? If you were ushering for a church assembly today, and two men came in who fit the general description of the ones mentioned in this passage, how would you react?
5. Read James 2:5-7. How is it that God honors the poor? Are the rich more likely to be hostile to the people of Christ?
6. Read James 2:8-10. What is the “royal law” we are to live by?
7. Respond to this statement. “I have no problem loving my neighbor, as long as I can choose my neighbors?”
8. How did the Jews view loving their neighbor? What did Jesus teach them about their narrow love in the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10?
9. Read James 2:10-11. How do these verses stress the importance of being impartial?
10. Read James 2:12-13. How can we expect to receive mercy if we are not merciful? How often do we judge without mercy?
11. Read Matthew 7:12. How do we learn to show the same attitude of impartiality that Jesus showed?
12. In what situations have you ever been guilty of prejudice or favoritism? Do you think you could handle the situation differently today?

Homework:

1. Think about what steps can you take to eliminate prejudice in some specific setting in your community.
2. Do at least one act of compassion this week that you do not usually do and be ready to discuss it next week with the class.

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Lesson Four: “Religion That Makes a Difference” James 1:26-27

1. Define the term hypocrite.

Give several examples of hypocritical behavior.

2. How does hypocrisy affect our lives?

What about religion?

Why is it so easy to be hypocritical in our religion?

3. Read James 1:22. What does this verse tell us about religion that makes a difference?

How are we “deceived” if we don’t do?

4. Read James 1:26-27.

From this passage identify the five areas of our lives that true religion will make a difference in.

a. 1:16-18 Our view of God. How does James describe God in these verses?

b. 1:19-20 Our temper and tongue. What are some things that make you angry? How can anger or a careless tongue cause us to be hypocrites?

c. 1:21 Our heart. What does this verse tell us about preparing ourselves to receive the Word of God?

d. 1:22-25. Our willingness to obey. Discuss the following statement as it relates to true religion: “Some people have convinced themselves that the contemplation of a food thing is the same as doing good.”

e. 1:26-27 Our concern for the needy. What are some things which often keep us from showing proper concern for those in need?

5. Discuss the following statement:

“Christians living is about translating correct doctrine into correct living.”

6. Thought question:

If you were on trial today for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

Homework:

1. Once again, read the Book of James all the way through two times this week.

2. Set up a study with or invite a non-church member to worship services with you this week.

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Lesson Five: “A Faith That Saves” James 2:14-26

1. What does it mean to “talk the talk” and “Walk the walk?” What about someone who “talks the talk” but doesn’t “walk the walk?” In the church do we tend to do more “talking” or “walking?”
2. Read James 2:14-20. How is it that faith without works is dead?
3. Read Matthew 7:21. What good is profession without performance?
4. How can you measure someone’s faith? Is obedience proof of one’s faith? Are actions necessary to validate one’s faith?
5. What good is it to see a brother in need and say, “Good luck” without taking any action to help that person? How often do we fail to act upon our good intentions?
6. What is the difference in a “dead faith” and a “living faith?” If a person is not active in sharing their faith, what does that say about their faith?
7. Is regular church attendance sufficient demonstration of one’s regular faith?
8. Read James 2:21-25. How are Abraham and Rahab examples of faith? What if Abraham had not been willing to sacrifice Isaac? What if Rahab had not helped the spies?
9. Compare Romans 3:28 and James 2:24. Explain the alleged contradiction between faith and works. Are we saved by faith alone? (One is saved by faith when that faith leads him to do what god has directed)
10. Can one be saved by doing good and keeping all the rules? IS this the attitude the Pharisees had? Is this the attitude of many today?
11. Read Hebrews 11:4, 7, 8. How is faith illustrated in these verses?
12. What are some things that you are saying but not doing in your Christian life? How can you better translate your faith into action?
13. What type of faith do you have? What difference would it make in your life if you had a living faith? If we truly have faith, what will we do? What would we not do?

Homework:

1. Make a special effort to do good deeds that show your faith is real this next week.
2. Talk with a non-church member about the differences in what they teach about how one is saved. How do their (and your) beliefs compare to the Scriptures?

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Lesson Six: "Taming the Tongue" James 3:1-12, 4:11-12, 5:12

1. Have you ever found yourself in a difficult situation because of something you said? (Have those who are brave enough give a personal example).
2. Give some reason why we should work hard at controlling our tongue. How is what we say a reflection of who we are? Read Matthew 15:18 and comment on the relevance to these ideas.
3. One improper use of our tongue is speaking evil of others. Why do we struggle with this so much? What are some underlying motives for fault finding and judging others? Notice the Rotary 4-way test of speech:
 1. Is it the truth?
 2. Is it fair to all concerned?
 3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
 4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
4. Read James 3:1-2. Why do you think James makes the connection between teaching and the tongue? What responsibilities does this connection place on those who teach?
5. Read James 3:3-6. What examples does James use to demonstrate the power of the tongue? How can a whole person be corrupted by his/her tongue?
6. Read James 3:9-11. How does improper use of the tongue relate to hypocrisy?
7. Do you think that complaining is an improper use of the tongue? In what ways?
8. Discuss some positive uses of the tongue?
 - a. prayer
 - b. thanksgiving
 - c. worship
 - d. instruction
 - e. encouragement
9. Read Colossians 4:6. What does Paul say about Christian speech?
10. What are some things we can do to become purer in our speech?
11. How can we help those around us to be purer in their speech?
12. How does our control of our tongue relate to God's control of us?

Homework:

1. Memorize the four way rotary speech test.
2. Make a special note of how often you say something negative this week. What is your motivation when you are negative in speech?

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Lesson Seven: “True Wisdom” James 3:13-18

1. We live in an era of vast knowledge (85% of all scientists who have ever lived are living today). Yet, why hasn't our great knowledge solved all of life's problems?
2. Read Romans 1:21-22. What is the result of mankind pride fully relying only on his own knowledge to guide his life? Could this be true even of Christians today? In what way?
3. Knowledge is the accumulation of facts; wisdom is the ability to use those facts responsibly. In what ways are both wisdom and knowledge necessary for the Christian?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 3:19-20. How does false wisdom of the world affect people? What situation does it create for its possessor and the people around him?
5. Read James 1:17, James 3:14-15. What is the difference of wisdom from above and the “wisdom” of the world? What are their results in the church?
6. Read James 3:17-18. Discuss how you can develop these eight characteristics of wisdom in your life.

Pure:	Matthew 5:9
Peace-loving:	Romans 12:18
Considerate:	Philippians 2:3
Submissive:	Ephesians 5:21
Merciful:	Matthew 5:7
Full of good fruit:	Galatians 5:22-23
Impartial:	Acts 10:34
Sincere:	Matthew 23:25-26
7. Read Isaiah 11:2-5. Of whom is this passage speaking? How is this wisdom also found in his followers?
8. Read Psalm 111:10. What is the key to attaining true wisdom?

Homework:

1. Read through the Book of James twice this week. What do you notice differently than when you read it after the first week?
2. Write down you goals in life. Look at them carefully in light of this lesson and be sure you are planning with wisdom.

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Lesson Eight: “The Cure For Conflict” James 4:1-10

1. Try to think of some reasons we have conflict in our lives.
2. Is conflict an inevitable part of our lives? Why or why not?
3. Which do you think Christians should focus on, avoiding conflict, or managing it properly? What should be our attitude towards conflict?
4. Read James 4:1. What does James tell us causes conflict between people (Note: the Greek word for desire in this verse is the root for our word hedonism, which is the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the highest good).
5. Read James 4:2, 3. What do these verses tell us about selfish desires? What insights do these verses give us about prayer?
6. Read James 4:4-6. How does James’ use of the word adultery relate to friendship with the world? What does the word envy mean? How can envy of the world lead us to commit spiritual adultery?
7. Read James 4:7. What does this verse offer as the cure for envy and conflict? When conflict and envy arise, what can we do to submit to God and resist the devil?
8. The dictionary defines the word resist as “to oppose, to exert force against.” What should this imply about resisting the devil?
9. Read James 4:8-10. What are some things we should do in order to submit to God, and resist the devil?
10. How does the attitude of humility relate to our dealing with conflict?
11. Discuss the following statement as it relates to conflict: “It does not matter **who** is right, but **what** is right.”

Homework:

1. Make a list of the people with whom you have the most difficulty getting along with. Pray for them each day this week.
2. When considering this list ask yourself. Have I shown the disposition which makes for peace towards them? What positive steps could you make to be at peace with them?

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Lesson Nine: “Don’t Leave God Out of Your Plans” James 4:13-17

1. What are your goals for the future? What is your primary goal in life? Do all your other plans fit with this goal?
2. When we think about the future what do we most often think about? Do we sometimes place emphasis on the wrong things when we think about the future?
3. Read Matthew 6:33. What should we desire above all else? Is this the primary goal of your life?
4. Read James 4:13-17. Is this verse a condemnation against advanced planning? If not, then what is the rebuke?
5. Are we ever guilty of leaving God out of our plans? Are we ever guilty of taking credit for God’s blessings?
6. Discuss the uncertainty of life. What does it mean to say, “Life is a gift from God?” What are the implications for Christians living in an uncertain world?
7. Discuss the type of attitude that says, “If it is the Lord’s will ...”
8. How is pride a barrier to following God?
9. What types of things do we know that we should be doing but aren’t? What is preventing us from doing what we know we ought to do?
10. Explain the providence of God. Does God intervene in the affairs of men to accomplish his purpose today? Is this care promised to everyone?
11. Read Luke 12:22-31. Discuss God’s ability and willingness to exercise his providential care over the lives of people.
12. Read Romans 8:28. Discuss the difficulty of believing in God’s providence. If God is personally interested in our lives, why is there tragedy in the world.
13. Read Ecclesiastes 12:13. Why is it a mistake to leave God out of your plans?

Homework:

1. Pray fervently and regularly for God’s will to be done in your life. Don’t fight God by refusing to do what you know is right.
2. Think of the last time in your life that pride caused you to make a mistake. How would you handle that situation differently today?

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Lesson Ten: “Does Money Buy Everything?” James 5:1-6

1. Discuss various attitudes about money and possession that we observe in our society today.
2. Is it sinful to be rich? Is it sinful to be poor? Where does sin enter the picture with regard to money?
3. What kinds of problems do we encounter when we become materialistic?
4. Read Luke 18:18-23. What good things can we say about the rich, young ruler? What was Jesus' attitude toward him? Why did he fail to follow Jesus?
5. Read James 5:1-6. What important things can we learn from this passage?
6. Read Luke 12:16-21. What did the rich fool do wrong? Do you think this passage forbids us from saving for the future?
7. Read Matthew 6:24. How can money enslave us? Who do you think struggles more with this problem, those who are rich or those who are poor?
8. What are some things we can do to help us keep “things” in perspective?
9. Read Proverbs 11:28. What role does faith play in helping us overcome materialism?
10. As Christians, what should be our attitude toward money and possessions?

Homework:

1. Do some calculating on paper about the money you have spent in the last month. How much was spent on clothes, cosmetics, sporting events, food, church, food, etc. If you saw these same figures about someone else's use of money, would you consider him materialistic?
2. Read Malachi 3:8-9. In what ways were these people robbing God? Can we rob God today?

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Lesson Eleven: “Patience Until the Lord Comes” James 5:7-11

1. Discuss the concept of “instant gratification.” Discuss areas of our everyday life where this concept is evident. What about in our spiritual lives?
2. Read James 5:7-8. What circumstances test our patience? Why is it important for a farmer to be patient? Why is it important for the Christian to be patient? Where is there about the Book of James that encourages us to be patient?
3. Read James 5:9. What is the appeal James is making? (the verb in verse 9, “to groan” means “fretfulness, impatience with others the disposition to blame others for one’s distresses”)
4. When James originally wrote this epistle, what circumstances were tempting Christians to be impatient? What circumstances in our own day subject people to the same temptation?
5. Read James 5:10-11. What is the encouragement of these verses? How were the prophets examples of patience? How was Job an example of faithfulness?
6. Read 2 Peter 3:3-4, 8-10, 14. Why might it be difficult to believe that Jesus will return? Why has God delayed in returning?
7. Read Mark 13:32-33; 1 Thessalonians 5:1, and Matthew 24:36-39. What can we learn from these verses concerning Jesus’ return?
8. Discuss the events that will accompany his return.
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 4:16
 - b. John 5:28-29
 - c. 1 Corinthians 15:51
 - d. Matthew 25:31-33
 - e. Matthew 25:33-34, 41
9. Discuss the attitude of the Lord’s church today with reference to the Lord’s second coming. How does it differ from the attitude of the first-century Christians?
10. What word best describes your attitude towards the second coming?
11. Wouldn’t it be easier if we knew exactly when Jesus would return? If you knew Jesus would return six months from today, what difference would it make? What would you do? What wouldn’t you do?

Homework:

1. This week think about how your life would change if you know Jesus was coming back next Sunday. Why all the changes?
2. As you shop, work and drive, notice all the people around you that may be lost on the Last Day. Think and pray about what you can do to encourage more people to go to heaven.

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Lesson Twelve: “A Special Man and A Special Book” James 5:13-18

1. Discuss some various attitudes toward prayer that often observe in society, and among ourselves.
2. What is prayer? Identify some outstanding Old and New Testament characters whose lives were marked by prayer. What role did prayer play in their lives?
3. What are some reasons why our prayer lives are often not what they could and should be? What types of things interfere with our prayer lives?
4. Do you know anyone who you consider to be a very prayerful person? How has their life been affected by prayer?
5. Read James 5:13-18. In what situations does this text indicate that we should pray? Are these the only times we should pray? Discuss some other situations that call for prayer.
6. Why do we often put limits on God’s power by what we do not ask for in prayer?
7. Read Luke 11:1-5, and 9, 10. What does Jesus teach the disciples in this “model prayer?” What does Jesus say about the role of persistence in prayer?
8. Read Mark 11:22-25. What does this passage tell us about the role of 1) faith, and 2) forgiveness in our prayer lives? Does this passage mean that god will always say “yes” when we ask for something in prayer?
9. Do you think our faith would be strengthened if we kept a record of things we prayed about and the answers we received?
10. What are some things we could do, starting today, to help to better our prayer lives?
11. Regarding our prayer lives, should we strive for quantity or quality, or both? Which one do you need to work on most at this stage of your life?

Homework:

1. Find out from one of the elders what people (sick, missionaries, etc.) and situations (benevolence, gospel meetings, etc.) are in need of prayer. Pray for these each morning and evening.
2. Take notice during your days next week how often you pray. Is it enough?
3. Make a list of what you have learned this quarter and give that list to your teacher next week.

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Lesson Thirteen: “You Are Your Brother’s Keeper” James 5:19-20

1. Discuss something in your life that at one time was important to you but later you lost interest in it. What caused the change of heart?
2. Is it possible for Christians to lose interest in the Church? Do you know of someone who is no longer faithful? What have you done to reach them? What can you do to help them?
3. Read 2 Peter 2:20-21. What is the fate of someone who falls away from the truth?
4. Read James 5:19-20. What are some factors involved when someone falls away from the faith?
5. How does one “wander away from the truth?” What are the implications of this phrase? (wandering implies a gradual movement, the truth implies a standard, etc.)
6. What does it mean “to bring him back?” Who is in the best position to bring someone back? What does it say about a congregation where someone wanders away and no attempt is made to bring him back? Is this an individual or corporate (church wide) responsibility?
7. What are some barriers that prevent us from restoring the erring brother?
8. What is the result of someone turning around? Whose sins will be covered by such action?
9. What must be the church’s action when an erring Christian remains impenitent? In general, how well do we practice this commandment?
10. How important is this work to the church? How concerned are we when someone falls away?
11. What responsibility do Christians have to fellow Christians who fall away? What attitude must underlie our efforts? Read Galatians 6:1-2.
12. Study Hebrews 10:24 and suggest some specific things you can do to accomplish its requirement.
13. What can we do as individuals to prevent someone from falling away?
14. What can the local church do to strengthen new converts and weak Christians?
15. Are you going backward or forward in your spiritual life? Read 1 Corinthians 10:12. Do you think you could ever fall away? Why?

Homework:

1. Make a list of people you know that are no longer faithful to Christ. What can you do to help them?
2. Once again, read through the Book of James. What do you notice differently than before?