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**Insights and Life Lessons
From Jacob:
Study on the Book of James
Pt. 1 (James 1:1-4)**

Scripture Memorization: Proverbs 9:10-11 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through wisdom your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.”

Introduction: The book of James, was written by Jesus’ half-brother, whose name was actually Jacob. He didn’t become a believer in the Lordship of Jesus until after the death and resurrection. After being in the number of those who witnessed the appearance of Jesus, James became a radical disciple who spread the gospel, wrote this letter for all to be strengthened, and was martyred for the cause of his faith and work in establishing the Kingdom of God. His letter includes a variety of themes that lay the foundation for what it truly means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. This book is considered the New Testament version of the Book of Proverbs as it contained heavenly wisdom that can be applied to our everyday practical Christian lives. His teachings on testing and trials are a beacon of hope and guidance to those of us who are experiencing hardships. He encourages the reader to understand the purpose of these testings and how they serve to deliver us into spiritual maturity. His understanding on Jesus’ teaching on Old Testament versus New Testament law will challenge believer’s perspective on our motives and heart condition. The book of James builds upon Paul’s revelation of faith and good deeds with an in-depth understanding of what real faith looks like. Finally, the theme of poverty and wealth is explored in his writings. He reminds both the

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wealthy and the poor on the definition of true riches and how the outer description of an individual doesn't always dictate where they stand in the Kingdom of God.

1. James 1:1 The greeting.

- a. He is the half-brother of Jesus and this makes his greeting all the more significant; he introduces himself as a bondservant of the God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - i. Bondservant- translates the ancient Greek word *doulos*, which is better translated as “slave”.
 1. “A slave, a bondservant, one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another... Among the Greeks, with their strong sense of personal freedom, the term carried a degrading connotation.” -Hiebert.
 2. This is how James viewed himself as it pertained to his mission, his purpose and calling. TPT says that he is a love-slave of God.
 - ii. Lord- translates in ancient Greek word *kurios*, which meant the master of a *doulos*. In this context it means that James considered Jesus *God*.
 1. “Hellenistic Jews used *Kurios* as a name for God; the non-use of the article gains in significance when it is remembered that *o Kurios*, ‘Dominus,’ was a title given to the early Roman Emperors in order to express their deity.” -Oesterley in *Expositor’s*.
- b. James writing to “the twelve tribes” was a Jewish figure of speech that referred to the Jewish people as a whole.

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- i. As this is one of the first letters written, it probably was addressed before Gentiles were brought into the church, or before their numbers became significant.
- ii. At this time, Jewish people were scattered all over the world and there was a Christian presence among most Jewish communities- Jewish customs and laws had taken root in most cities and tribes everywhere.

2. James 1:2-4 Patient endurance in trials.

- a. Trials can be translated as “signifying affliction, persecution or trial of any kind.”
- b. It should be an occasion for joy, not for disgust, exhaustion or throwing in the towel. Greet it like you are greeting a friend or an incredible day.
- c. When you fall.
 - i. Trials are unavoidable in our lives, so our perspective of when these things happen needs to be addressed.
 - ii. Trials are inescapable as you plunge into situations that surround you and engulf you. So our perspective of what they mean needs to be addressed.
- d. Patience.
 - i. it is the Greek word *hupomone*. *Hupo* (under) and *meno* (to stay, abide, remain). It means to remain under.
 - 1. Greek commentator Oesterley said this word, patience, described “the frame of mind which endures.”

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- ii. This word doesn't describe a passive waiting but an active endurance. It is the quality that helps you finish a marathon, not one that helps you sit quietly in the doctor's waiting room.
- e. Your faith is being tested through the trials. The trial is revealing what faith we have. It shows us and others where we stand in the faith department.
 - i. Trials are for testing, not production. So, then what produces faith? Romans 10:17
 - ii. Faith is tested because of its importance in our Christian walk. You cannot please God without it. Hebrews 11:6.
 - iii. Faith is tested because it is so precious which is why the enemy is constantly attacking it.
- f. When trials are received with faith, they will produce patience. When trials are received in unbelief and grumbling, they will produce bitterness and discouragement. Faith's response will count it all joy, whereas unbelief's response will count it as a bother.
 - i. "it is occasionally asserted that James asks his readers to *enjoy* their trials...He did not say that they must *feel* it all joy, or that trials *are* all joy."-Hiebert.
- g. Our patience must go the distance. It comes slowly and must be given the time to mature to full fruition.
 - i. "These expressions in their present application are by some thought to be borrowed from the Grecian games: the man was *perfect*, who in any of the athletic exercises had got the

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victory; he was *entire*, having *everything complete*, who had the victory in the *pentathlon*, in each of the *five* exercises.”
-Clarke

- ii. “Others think that the terms come from the world of sacrifice, where only a potential sacrificial animal that was judged to be perfect and complete, lacking nothing was fit to offer God. It meant that the animal had been tested and approved.”
-Henry.
- iii. “The natural tendency of trouble is not to sanctify, but to induce sin. A man is very apt to become unbelieving under affliction: that is a sin. He is apt to murmur against God under it: that is a sin. He is apt to put forth his hand to some ill way of escaping from his difficulty: and that would be sin. Hence we are taught to pray, ‘Lead us not into temptation; because trial has in itself a measure of temptation’; and if it were not neutralized by abundant grace it would bear us towards sin.”
-Spurgeon
- iv. Yet, trials can prove a wonderful work of God in us. “I have looked back to times of trial with a kind of longing, not to have them return, but to feel the strength of God as I have felt it then, to feel the power of faith, as I have felt it then, to hang upon God’s powerful arm as I hung upon it then, and to see God at work as I saw him then.” -Spurgeon

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