

— WEEKLY —  
**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
**NOTES**

**Insights and Life Lessons**  
**From Jacob:**  
**Study on the Book of James**  
**Pt. 5 (James 2)**

**Scripture Memorization:** Philippians 2:3-4 “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

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**Introduction:** in the first chapter, James begins with letting us know that he is simply nothing more than a bondservant of Christ and then teaches us on how to endure the unavoidable trials that will come in our lives. In these trials, our faith is being tested which should ultimately produce patience. The patience that the Father wants to develop in us must be given the time to mature to full fruition, which is why we should welcome the trials in our lives. As we endure these trials, we can receive generous wisdom from the Lord as to how to come through successfully. The wisdom we need must be asked in a position of humility and with the assurance that He will give us what we need. If we harbor any doubt in our asking, we will be like the waves of the sea; restless and unstable. In this double-minded position, we are mixing our human perspective with the Lord’s and this causes us to be disloyal. James urges us to seek God’s wisdom on every matter and apply His insight to our problems, trials and persecution.

— WEEKLY —  
**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
**NOTES**

Continuing, James address our equality in Christ by speaking about the poor and the rich. He speaks on this topic because the church needed to have the right perspective on money, knowing that our comforts in life are like fading grass and flowers. When our perspective on money is corrected, we then can serve God with our whole heart and our whole pocketbook. James then picks up where the Beatitude sermon, spoken by Jesus, ended. He says that we will be blessed when we endure temptation. When we learn how to resist the temptation and say yes to God, we prove our endurance and will receive the crown of life. Our steadfastness, which is motivated by our love for God, will be rewarded in the end. The difficulty of these temptations can at times cause us to blame God, who cannot be tempted or tempt anyone. He may allow the enemy to tempt, but is never the initiator. The enemy will try to tempt us, but his success can only be achieved when our fallen nature corrupts our God-given desires. Our fleshly desires will always try to plant a seed in our hearts and if we allow them to get a foothold, the desires will give birth to sin, which then give birth to death. We must always remember that the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy, so resisting the deceptions of temptations will keep us on the path of producing life and goodness.

James then pivots the focus from what the enemy is trying to do, to who God is in our lives. His goodness is manifested in good and perfect gifts which can only be measured on an eternal scale. As the Father of lights, His love and mercy has been expressed to us in the gift of salvation which is not based on what we do, but who we are to the Father. When we understand His nature, then we understand where all of our blessings are from and why He's chosen us to be display of His glory.

Lastly, the first chapter ends by James teaching us to be other's focused, by controlling our tongues and to fight against the lusts of the flesh and fight for the

— WEEKLY —  
**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
**NOTES**

word of God. This implanted word serves as a mirror in our lives. When we look into a mirror and forget what we saw, then we are only religious and our religion isn't worth anything. Naturally, when we look into a mirror, it is with the intent on doing something about what we see. As in the natural, we allow the perfect law of liberty to mirror where we need to address the inconsistencies in our lives. It means we become doers of the word.

**1. James 2:1-4** Partiality in the family of God

- a. Those of us who have put our trust in Jesus should follow the Lord of glory's example and hold no discrimination in our hearts.
- b. Calling Jesus, the Lord of glory was significant because James is regarded as one of the first letters of the N.T. This indicates the strong belief that the early Christians held in the fact that Jesus was the full manifestation of the God's presence and majesty.
- c. James was writing to a very partial age, filled with prejudice and hatred based on class, ethnicity, nationality and religious background.
  - i. Ephesians 2:14-15 Jesus' work was to break down these humanistic walls and bring forth a new race of mankind in Him.
  - ii. James, along with other apostles had to teach the early church how to fight for this type of unity that wasn't partial.
- d. The example of this concept is given in detail.
  - i. Assembly: In ancient Greek, it meant synagogue, the meeting place for Jews. Remember he is writing to a group of Jewish heritage before Gentiles were widely received into the church.

— WEEKLY —  
**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
**NOTES**

- ii. Their partiality on outward indications of wealth or lack thereof is something James was addressing.
  - 1. Partiality: indicates we are more concerned about the outward. 1 Samuel 16:7
  - 2. Partiality: indicates we are misunderstanding who is important and blessed in the sight of God.
  - 3. Partiality: indicates the selfish characteristic in ourselves.

**2. James 2:5-7** James' attack on partiality.

- a. God specially blesses the poor of this world, since riches can be an obstacle to the Kingdom of God. Matthew 19:24.
- b. God recognizes that the poor of this world have greater opportunities to trust in the Lord, which causes them to be rich in faith.
- c. "The rich man may trust Him; but the poor man must...the poor man has no fortress in which to hide, except the two strong arms of God."-Meyer
- d. Matthew 11:5. The poor receive the gospel. Church history shows that comparatively more poor people than rich have responded to the gospel.
- e. God has chosen the poor because when He sent his son down to earth, taking on humanity caused Jesus to experience poverty.

— WEEKLY —  
**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
**NOTES**

- f. 1 Corinthians 1:26. God hasn't only chosen the poor, yet Paul agrees with James that God has chosen them first, especially to beat down the pride of the rich.
  - g. Because of the love of money, the rich often sin against humanity through oppression and blasphemy. They are not worthy of partiality.
  - h. God never called us to be partial against the rich, simply because of their money. The law and the facts of a case should decide the judgement instead of the economic status of those in a disagreement.
- 3. James 2: 8-9** James' use of the scriptures to back his attack on partiality.
- a. James predicted that some readers might use the scripture on loving their neighbor as a defense of showing partiality to the rich.
    - i. The problem isn't being nice, but only being nice to one group.
  - b. The royal law has been handed down by our King Jesus that our neighbor isn't based in status.
    - i. "This commandment, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, is a *royal law*, not only because it is ordained of God, and proceeds from his *kingly* authority over men, but because it is so *useful, suitable, and necessary* to the present state of man... we give the epithet *royal* to whatever is excellent, noble, grand, or useful." (Clarke)
- 4. James 2:10-13** Obeying the whole of God's commands
- a. In this verse, James is guarding against selective obedience and showing how God cares about the whole law.

— WEEKLY —  
**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
**NOTES**

- i. “He breaks the whole law, though not the whole of the law: as he that wounds a man’s arm wounds the whole man, though not the whole of the man.” -Poole
  - b. It is a law of liberty; which has liberty and still is a law that must be obeyed and will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:10)
  - c. We should always show mercy to others by refraining from partiality so that we will be extended mercy on the day of judgment.
    - i. Matthew 7:2
    - ii. “The merciful life will triumph in the face of judgment.” “That is, the merciful man glorieth, as one that hath received mercy, and shall not come into condemnation; for God’s mercy rejoiceth against such a man’s sins, as against an adversary which he hath subdued and trampled on.” -Trapp
- 5. **James 2:14** Faith in action.
  - a. James is writing to a group who has discovered the glory of salvation by faith, and the freedom from works. But they swung too far by falsely believing that works didn’t matter at all.
  - b. We are saved by grace through faith, not by works; but saving faith will have works that accompany it.
  - c. “Faith alone saves, but he faith that saves is not alone”- unknown
  - d. Ephesians 2:10 and Titus 3:8.

— WEEKLY —  
**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
**NOTES**

**6. James 2:15-17** Example of dead faith

- a. When we fail in the basic decency needed for humanity, and offer nothing but religious words, it displays our real faith.
- b. “Your pretending to have faith, while you have no works of charity or mercy, is utterly vain: for as *faith*, which is a principle in the mind, cannot be discerned but by the *effects*, that is, *good works*; he who has no good works has, presumptively, no faith.” -Clarke
- c. This is the first time James speaks about dead faith. We can only tell if faith is alive if it’s accompanied by works.
  - i. if we really belong to Christ, we will obey his word and care for those who are naked and destitute.
  - ii. Matthew 7:21-23.

**7. James 2:18-19** No separation of faith and works

- a. Some might try to put faith and works in the category of different gifts, but James debunks this kind of thinking.
- b. You cannot “see” someone’s faith, it can only be demonstrated and seen through actions.
- c. Even demons possess a “dead” faith in God, because they believe and acknowledge that He exists. But this kind of faith does nothing for the demons as it isn’t real faith, and this is proved by the fact that it doesn’t have works along with it.

— WEEKLY —  
**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
**NOTES**

**8. James 2:20-24 Abraham**

- a. Abraham was justified by faith long before Isaac came along. But his obedience to God when he was told to sacrifice his son was the demonstration that he actually trusted in the Father.
- b. Abraham was so complete in his obedience that he counted Isaac as dead, set him on the altar, and would have finished the act if God had not sent the angel to stop him.
  - i. His faith was made perfect because if he had never believed God, he couldn't have done the good work of obedience. His obedient works made his faith complete.

**9. James 2:25-26 Rahab**

- a. James has already used an example from the father of the Jews, and now he moves onto an example from a Gentile.
- b. She demonstrated her trust in the God of Israel by hiding the spies. Her faith was living because it did something and her belief in God would not have saved her unless she had done something with that faith.
- c. Just as a body without life is a corpse so faith with no life is dead and cannot bring salvation.
  - i. We can think of an apple tree; where is the life of the tree? It is in the root, and underneath the bark of the tree in the trunk. The life is not in the apples, the fruit that is displayed in season; but if the tree is alive *it will produce apples in season.* - Guzik



— WEEKLY —  
**BIBLE  
STUDY**  
**NOTES**