# **WEEK 1 STUDY GUIDE**

James 1:1-12

September 10, 2017



The book of James: Disciple

As you start your study each day, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what God has said through James.

Several resources to help you with Bible study—such as concordances, Bible dictionaries, and commentaries—are available for your use in the Adult Resource Library, located in the Meeting Center.

## DAY 1: Read the book of James in one sitting.

- 1. What are your first impressions of the book? What words, phrases or themes stand out? What Old Testament book comes to mind as you read James?
- 2. As you go through the book of James, underline or note the use of these phrases: "my brothers" or "my brethren", "the brother", "my dear brothers", "brothers". Is there a pattern to where James says this? What does this tell you about James and the tone of his book?

*To Dig Deeper*: Compare the book of James with the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) – note the common teachings or themes.

#### DAY 2: Read James 1:2-4

1. According to James 1:2 what attitude are Christians (as disciples) to have when facing trials? How do you react to this verse? The word "joy" is the Greek word "chara" (khar-ah) meaning cheerfulness, calm, delight, gladness. The New Testament relates joy to suffering, as seen in the following verses.

Matthew 5:11-12 – suffering includes:

rejoice because:

1 Peter 1:6 – suffering includes:

rejoice because:

1 Peter 4:12-13 – suffering includes:

rejoice because:

2. James 1:2 indicates that trials are inevitable; it's a question of "whenever," not a question of "if." Is there something in your life that you would call a trial? What makes it hard to be joyful in the midst of that difficulty? Read Acts 5:41 and 2 Corinthians 12:10 for two examples of rejoicing during trials. Who were the people, what was the trial, why did they rejoice? Where does joy come from? (See Galatians 5:22 and Philippians 4:4-7 for other insights on rejoicing.)

3.	Read James 1:3. What is the result or the benefit of facing our trials and the testing of our faith? The testing of our faith is a concept throughout the Bible. Read Genesis 22:1, Deuteronomy 8:2, 16, and 1 Peter 1:7. How do these passages help you to understand the purpose of testing? Have you experienced a trial that brought benefits to you, such as maturity or deepening of your faith?
	: Read James 1:5-8 What phrase in verse 5 is linked to verse 4? (Note that James is using a literary technique of linking together clauses and sentences by repeating a word or thought.) If we need wisdom in our situation, what can we do? Why? What will God do for us?
2.	The need for wisdom is linked to verses 2-4. What connection do you see between wisdom and the process described in verses 2-4? The NIV Study Bible footnote says: "Wisdom is not just acquired information but practical insight with spiritual implications." (See Proverbs 1:2-4; 2:10-11; 4:5-9 and 9:10-12 for more about wisdom.)
3.	James 1:6 says "But when he asks, he must and not" What is the condition to receive what we ask? (see also Hebrews 11:6) In verses 6-8, what description is given about the one who doubts when praying? (See also Matthew 8:25-26.) When I am praying, why do I find it hard to believe God will give me what I am asking? Think about a time in your life when you had doubts about God. What helped you through that experience?
4.	What does James 1:8 say about someone who is double-minded? Look at Joshua 24:14-15; 1 Kings 18:20-21; 2 Kings 17:41; Matthew 6:24 and Mark 9:21-24. What do these verses indicate about being double-minded? In what situations in life do I find myself most likely to be double-minded? What is the remedy for double-mindedness?
	Dig Deeper: Start writing down what James teaches about faith and believing as we go through the book James in this study.

# **DAY 4: Read James 1:9-11**

1.	Describe the two types of people found in verses 9-10. What are their circumstances? How should each person look at themselves?
2.	In what sense does a poor person who is a Christian have a "high position"? (see Matthew 23:12, Galatians 3:28, and James 2:5) In what sense does a rich person who is a Christian have a "low position"? Consider what verses 10-11 indicate about those who are rich. How is being wealthy a trial?
3.	How do verses 9-11 relate to facing the kinds of trials presented in verses 2-3? How do trials act as an equalizer between rich and poor? If your wealth and possessions were gone, what would you have left?
DAY 5	5: Read James 1:12
put vei	Different translations place this verse in different paragraphs – some put verse 12 with verses 2-11, others as 12 with verses 13-15 or 13-16, the NIV has the verse standing alone. Remember verse numbers and as of texts into paragraphs were added years after the original texts were written.)
1.	What connection do you see between verse 12 and verses 2-11? How does this verse add to your understanding of verses 2-4?
2.	"Blessed" is the first word of this verse. What other scriptures come to mind that use this word? "Blessed" means more than happy – it refers to the "ultimate well-being and distinctive spiritual joy" of the Christian (taken from the footnote on Matthew 5:3 in the NIV Study Bible). In what ways does blessing come to those who persevere through trials? Have you experienced this kind of blessing?
wr cre 2 7 cre	Dig Deeper: The crown of life hat is meant by the crown of life? Check your study Bible footnotes or a Bible commentary and look up oss-references. Start with 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 for the idea about rewards, then see 1 Corinthians 9:25, Fimothy 2:5 and 4:6-8; 1 Peter 5:4, and Revelation 2:10. Some questions to think about: Who receives the own? What is the condition for receiving the crown? How is the crown the Christian receives different om the crowns of royalty or the crowns that athletes achieve?

### DAY 6: Reread James 1:1-12

- 1. Throughout this study we will focus on what James teaches about how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. As you read James 1: 1-12, write down two or three things you learn about discipleship. For example, how does a disciple face trials, grow into maturity, pray, and deal with poverty or riches? How can you use this wisdom from James to be a disciple of Christ?
- 2. Identify a verse in James 1:1-12 that is particularly meaningful, write it down, and memorize it (perhaps James 1:12).
- 3. As you think about trials, remember the words of the song "It Is Well With My Soul"

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, Let this blessed assurance control; That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And has shed his own blood for my soul.

or this verse from "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

And though the world with devils filled should threaten to undo us, We will not fear for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, for lo his doom is sure, One little word shall fell him.