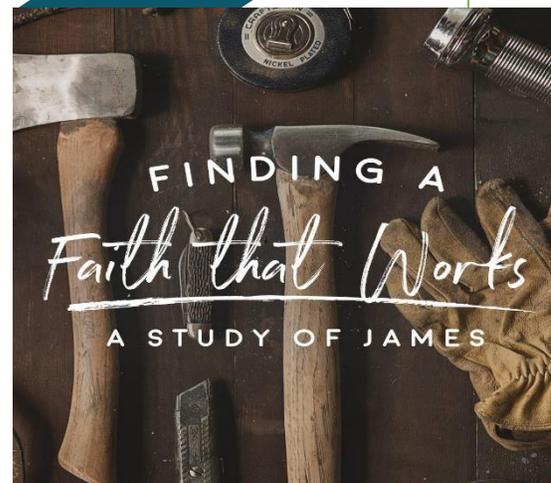


JAMES: FINDING A FAITH THAT WORKS

Lesson 1 - Introduction and The Author

BACKGROUND

- *James* was written by the half-brother of Jesus named James.
- James was a leader of the early church in Jerusalem, but his book (which was a letter) was written to a broad group of Jewish believers living throughout Rome.
- James did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah at first. (John 7:5)
- **Recipients of the letter were experiencing a variety trials and oppression.** (1:2) There were problems arising from lack of self-control (1:13-17), foolish speaking (1:19-27), false teaching (2:1-4, 3:1-8), prejudice against the poor (2:1-13), and selfishness (4:1-12).
- James tries to instruct and help the readers by pointing them to wisdom. Wisdom that could only come from the "Father of Lights" (1:17). When we seek wisdom from our Father, He gives it to us.



MAJOR THEMES OF JAMES

- This wisdom is from God through our saving faith. **James emphasizes that true faith produces works in our lives.** We do not do works to be saved, but a true Christian will do works because they are saved. There are three main themes that run through the book:
 - **Trials, persecution, and trouble can be expected.** They do not surprise God and He uses them to work in our lives.
 - **The work that God does in us is measured by progress not perfection.** Sometimes we find frustration in our lack of perfection, but God in His mercy works in us day-by-day.
 - **True faith leads to faithful works.**

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE BOOK

How did James describe Himself in his introduction in verse 1?

Why is this significant for James a Jew and the brother of Jesus?

What does the word *servant* here insinuate?

What does this suggest about the mindset of his letter?

How would the mindset of a servant change our perspective of living Christian lives?

Jesus came to give us abundant lives of joy (John 10:10). Yet, this joy is not found in pleasing self. It is found in finding satisfaction in God. God is first concerned with our mind and hearts. **A joyless Christian life is one with mindless, heartless obedience.** What ways could you live life obediently but without joy or satisfaction in God?

What are some common struggles you face that seem to kill your joy and satisfaction in Christ?

Finish your lesson this week by reading the whole book of James one time through. It will take 15-20 minutes.

FAMILY DISCUSSION

The Book of James teaches us that true faith reveals itself by works. What we do in our Christian life is fueled by what we believe.

Take time together as a family in God's Word. *Think* throughout the day to reinforce the main truth of the week. *Remember* significant ways God has worked in your lives.

TAKE TIME

- Read Psalm 139:13-16. Encourage children to read parts of the Scripture if they're able. Take turns reading the verses aloud. Explain that God created us and knows every detail about us. Help children see that because God made us, He knows what's best for us. This is why we love and trust the Bible—because it's God's Word.

THINK

- Look for opportunities through the day to point out amazing wonders God has made, especially tiny details in nature. Emphasize the joy of God's design.

REMEMBER

- Take time to look back at milestones of your family's life (births, moves, blessings, changes, etc) and discuss how God was working in every detail.