

# The Book of James for Kids

(to be taught along with Grace Bible Church's  
Adult Inductive Bible study on James or on its own)

## **Introductory notes:**

- *In each lesson there are several topics for interpretation and application. If you are teaching a group during your home church meeting, you will want to choose one, or at most, two topics to emphasize. If you are doing this with your kids at home, you could spread the lesson out over a week and hit every topic.*
- *These lessons assume school-age children. If you have a mixed-age audience, the younger ones will need help with the reading/making observations part. The examples and activities included in these lessons are intended as a catalyst for your thinking. You know your children and will need to think of examples, illustrations and activities that are age-appropriate and that will be meaningful to your children.*

## **James 1:17**

***Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.***

Assembled by Nancy Simpson  
and Jeanne Coyle, Fall 2010

Resource used in the study: [Boy, Have I Got Problems](#), an inductive Bible study for kids by Kay Arthur and Janna Arndt, published in 2000 by Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR.

# Lesson 1

## **Why study the Bible?**

Before jumping in to the study, take time to talk about this question. Read and discuss Proverbs 4: 20 – 22 and Hebrews 4:12.

Framework for studying the Bible: **Observe, Interpret, Apply**

**Observe:** What do you notice? What are the verbs? What words or phrases are repeated? What are the main ideas?

**Interpret:** What does it mean? Are there words I need to look up? What are my questions?

**Apply:** What does this mean for my life? Are there commands I should obey? What does this passage tell me about who I am and who God is? What does this passage tell me about how I should think, speak, feel, act?

Here is an illustration that shows the distinction between observation and interpretation:

*Close your eyes and imagine this scene: There is a group of children huddled together, whispering; a single child is walking toward the group; the children in the group stop whispering and turn to look at child.*

Have kids make as many observations as they can about the scene they are picturing. If they make observations such as "the children are gossiping about that single child," identify the statement as an interpretation, not an observation. Their observations would have to be things like "the single child is wearing ..." or "the children are giggling while they whisper" or other things that would be observable, not interpreted.

*Shift to interpretive questions:*

- What were they whispering?
- Why were they whispering?
- Is the single child a friend of the children in the group?
- What is that child thinking? Feeling?

## **Discuss the importance of context.**

In order to answer our interpretive questions, we would have to know who the children are, what has gone before and what comes after.

- It could be the children were planning a surprise party
- It could be they were gossiping about the lone child
- It could be they were planning some mischief and did not want the other child to know about it

- It could be that the lone child is new in school and this is the first time they have seen this child.

Knowing something about the children, where this scene took place and what came before or after this scene would help us answer these questions.

**Transition to James. Read James 1:1**

In order to accurately interpret James, we need to know the **context**.

- Who is James?
- When did he live and write?
- To whom did he write?

Help children answer these questions from the text of 1:1 and use the background information found in lesson one of the adult study.

- James is most likely the half-brother of Jesus (Galatians 1:19)
- James did not become a believer until after the resurrection (John 7:5, 1 Cor. 15:7)
- Paul lists James among the "pillars" of the Church (Galatians 2:9)
- James was martyred 62 A.D, so the book would have been written prior to that date.
- The phrase "the 12 tribes scattered among the nations" and the word "brethren" in verse 2 indicate that James is writing to Jewish believers.

Read James straight through if you have time. If not, read selected passages such as: James 1:2-4; 1:19–27; 2:1-4; 2:14–16; 3:13–14; 4:1-3; 5:13–16.

**Talk about the overall tone of the book.** James is full of exhortations. Look up “exhortation” in a dictionary or Bible dictionary and talk about why James might be exhorting his audience. If the children you are teaching are old enough, you might contrast James and Paul: \*

	<b>Paul</b>	<b>James</b>
<b>Concern</b>	legalists	Libertines
<b>Emphasis</b>	Justification with God by faith	Justification before men by works
<b>Perspective</b>	faith as a gift	faith as genuine
<b>Result</b>	Justified as an eternal position by believing in Christ	Justified in daily proof by behaving like Christ

\* *Table info comes from Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Published by Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996. Page 457.*

Finally, note that James has 108 verses and 54 commands. Challenge the children to keep track of the commands as you go through the study—see if they can find all 54.

# Lesson 2

James 1: 2 – 12

## **Observe:**

Look for commands: underline in green if it is a command to do something; underline in red if it is a command to stop doing something.

Look for the word *trial*. Draw an orange squiggly box (like fire) around the word, each time you see it.

Explain what figurative language is. In this passage, look for phrases with "like" and underline in purple.

## **Interpret:**

Cross-references are a tool for interpretation. Explain what cross references are, and how to find them.

*Key word: trial*

- Re-read the verses containing the word *trial*. Look up the word trial in a dictionary and/or Bible dictionary. The Greek word is *peirasmos*, and means "put to the test."
- Why does God allow trials? What do other NT writers tell us about trials? Cross-references: Matthew 5:12; Romans 5: 3, 4; 1 Peter 1: 6, 7
- What does God promise to those who persevere through trials? Look up the word persevere in a dictionary or Bible dictionary. The word persevere is the Greek word *hupomeno*, and means to remain under a load or pressure. Use the analogy of weight-lifting competition: the person who holds the weight over their head (stands under it) for the longest wins the contest. That person is persevering in order to win the prize. Read Romans 8:28ff. God promises that all things work together for good and that good is us being conformed to the image of His son. In other words, God intends all things—even trials—to result in our becoming more and more like Jesus. In order for that to happen, we have to persevere (stand under, remain where He puts us). Cross references: 1 Cor 9:25; 1 Thes 2: 19, 1 Peter 5:4, Rev 2: 10

*Figurative language: What do the phrases that you underlined in purple mean?*

### Wave on the sea

Have you ever been to the beach and ridden the waves? Or watched the ocean? We cannot literally be waves of the sea, but how do we sometimes act that looks like that? A wave shifts direction frequently. When you are watching a wave, it is not easy to keep track of it and to know where it is or where it will go next. (An alternate metaphor for children who have never seen the ocean: tumbleweeds in west TX.)

Have children think about decisions they make:

- His/her friends are making fun of another child. Should he/she join in? Just listen without laughing? Walk away? Speak up to defend the other child?
- A good friend is beginning to make bad decisions; he/she is hanging around kids who get in trouble a lot, and being influenced by them. Should the child confront his/her friend? Go along in order to try to keep their friend out of trouble? Talk to their parents or a teacher?
- Make up other age-appropriate scenarios.

Some other words to define and explain to children:

*(Depending on age of the children, you would simply tell them what these words mean, or get them to tell you and coach them as needed.)*

**Wisdom:** more than intelligence; has connotation of thinking that is grounded in the Word of God and applied to practical, daily living; a person who shows wisdom will know what to do and will make the right choice in all kinds of situations.

**Doubting:** being unsure; in this context, doubting implies not believing that the Word of God is active and alive in you.

**Double-minded:** You decide one thing, then you change your mind and decide something else. You flip back and forth, unable to make up your mind.

Cross references:

**Matthew 7: 24 – 29.** A wave on the sea is not connected to anything solid. Jesus talked about the importance of having a solid foundation—our foundation is Who God is and What He.

**Psalms 1: 1-3.** A tumbleweed does not have roots, so it is blown around by the wind. By contrast, a tall, strong tree has deep roots. Being like that strong tree comes from studying, believing and applying God's Word.

James says we can ask for wisdom and believe--without doubting--that God will give it to us so that we know what to do and how to think in difficult situations. Thus, when we choose to believe that God will give us wisdom and we act on that belief by asking Him for it (beliefs → behavior), our lives will not look like the wave on the sea or the tumbleweed.

Flowering grass

How are we like flowering grass? Circumstances can change quickly. One day you might be most popular person in class and the next day you might not. One game you might score all the goals and be the hero and next game do nothing right.

Talk about eternal perspective. How do things look from God's viewpoint? We want to "glory in" the things that last: the Word of God and human souls.

Tying it together:

Having our eye on the prize (crown of life) helps us to endure trials and to live a life that is pleasing and glorifying to God, no matter our circumstances. This is called living our life with eternal perspective.

**Apply:**

- What are some of the trials the children you are teaching experience? (Have them name as many as possible.)
- How does James tell us to respond to trials? What would that look like?
- Give children time to think about one thing they will do this week to apply this passage to their lives.

**NOTES:**

# Lesson 3

James 1: 13 – 18

## **Observe:**

Look for commands: underline in green if it is a command to do something; underline in red if it is a command to stop doing something. (Add to your list—how many commands have you counted so far?)

When a word or phrase is repeated, it is important! What word do you see repeated several times in the first part of this passage? Put a yellow diamond around the word each time you see it.

## **Interpret:**

How is the word “temptation” (in verses 13-18) related to the word trial from the last lesson? What temptations might arise from a trial?

## Examples:

1. You and your best friend try out for the school play. Your friend is chosen for the part she wants and you are given only a tiny part. What’s worse is you have to wear a costume that everyone makes fun of. This would be trial. What might you be tempted to think? To say? To do?
2. You come down with a virus that makes you feel terrible. What might you be tempted to think? To do?
3. You might also use other examples from list of trials generated in lesson 2.

What does James say about the source of temptations? Who is NOT the source of temptations? (Note the second half of verse 17 and what this teaches us about God's character--holiness and immutability.) Why does this matter? How does it help us when we are tempted?

Explain what lust is. Cross references 1 Jn 2: 16, 17 lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life. Mark 4:19--desire for other things

## In above examples—

Wanting that school play part so badly that happiness depends on it is lust. Wanting the applause of others so badly that the approval of God is secondary is lust—the boastful pride of life. Temptation to sin comes from lust. How do the commands found in lesson 2 (James 1: 2 – 12—count it all joy, and persevere) help us to stop temptation from becoming sin?

Read 1 Thes 5: 16 – 19, for concrete way of "counting it all joy."

**Example:**

Help children think through the scenario of the school play. The temptation would be to be jealous of the person who got the part, and to feel sorry for yourself about the costume you have to wear. Letting that temptation become sin would probably involve a lot of sulking, speaking angry words to people around you or even outright rebellion and refusal to be in the play at all. However, God's Word tell us to give thanks in all circumstances. So, there is a choice to be made.

Instead of letting thoughts stay stuck on "it's not fair, I wanted that part," you can pray "Father, thank you that You are in charge of everything, even this play. Thank you that Your plan is for my good and that You can use this disappointment to make me more like Your son. Please help me to be genuinely happy for my friend, and to work hard to make the play a success."

Make the progression from temptation to "death" that James describes real for your children.

For young children: Lyle and the Birthday Party is a book that illustrates progression from temptation to sin to more sin, and to being cut off from the fellowship of people who love you.

For older children: Use a different scenario that involves striving for success in some endeavor. The temptation would be to focus on self and on the applause of people.

**Example:**

A Science Fair competition. Suppose each student in your class is to design and carry out a science experiment and to present the results at a Science Fair. There will be prizes for the top three. You love science and are excited about this assignment. Your best friend says "You will win for sure," and this appeals to that lust for approval and applause.

What would "being carried away by that lust" look like? You imagine winning, the congratulations of teachers, parents and friends; you picture yourself accepting the prize; your mind wanders during class as you daydream, imagining this wonderful scene where you are receiving the accolades; even better, that person in your class that you really don't like very much and who always beats you on tests—in your daydreams, that person does not win, and you imagine being able to taunt that person.

Lust (in this case, insatiable desire for applause and approval), has conceived sin (mental attitude sins of pride and inner boastfulness). Left unchecked, this would probably lead to more sin: doing whatever it takes to win, even if it means cutting corners or being dishonest—because you would have convinced yourself that you deserve that first place prize, no matter what. The "death" in this case is separation from the power of the Holy Spirit. You have quenched the Spirit, and are operating on your own power.

Death—what does James mean that sin leads to death?

Use the example above to explain that death, in general, means separation. In order to interpret accurately, we always have to ask "separation from what?" In this case, it is separation from fellowship with God and from the power of the Holy Spirit.

Use the analogy of a lamp. The lamp has all of the parts needed to create light (light bulb, wiring, etc.). However, if the lamp is unplugged, there will be no light because the lamp is separated from its power source. Sin separates us from our power source (the Holy Spirit).

**Apply:**

What could you do this week when you are tempted to be jealous or to feel sorry for yourself?

**NOTES:**

# Lesson 4

## James 1:19 – 27

### **Observe:**

Look for commands: underline in green if it is a command to do something; underline in red if it is a command to stop doing something. (Add to your list—how many commands have you counted so far?)

### Key words:

- Circle in blue all the words and word phrases that have to do with hearers and doers. (Examples: "quick to hear" in vs. 19; "not merely hearers" in vs. 22; "hearer and not a doer" in vs. 23; "forgetful hearer" in vs. 25)
- Circle in pink all the words and word phrases that have to do with "word."
- Put a purple question mark above any word or word phrase that you don't know the meaning of.

### Another observation skill: main ideas.

Have kids give one sentence "main idea" for 19 – 20, 21 – 25, 26 – 27.

### **Interpret:**

First, talk about the question mark words—help kids understand them. (Keep a dictionary handy.)

Second, look at all the blue. Tell the children that when something is repeated, it is important! Spend most of the lesson working on this idea of hearing/doing.

### **Game:**

Show the kids a picture from magazine with lots of detail for five seconds. Then ask them some questions about the details they remember. Show them another picture for five seconds, but this time tell them that the child who remembers the most details will get a piece of candy. Just as they looked with the intent to really remember the second time, we can also listen to hear and really learn.

### **A different exercise, for older kids:**

Create a list of about 20 words (nouns). Divide the kids into two groups. Give each group a different set of instructions, but do not let them see the other group's instructions.

*Group 1 instructions:* As you listen to this list of words, think about whether or not each item would be useful to you if you were stranded on a desert island.

*Group 2 instructions:* As you listen to this list of words, try to count the total number of syllables in the list. Now read the list slowly to the kids; neither group is allowed to take notes. Now give each child a piece of paper and pencil and ask them to write down as

many words as they can remember. Of course, those in group 1 will be able to remember, on average, more than those in group 2.

Now tell the whole group why this happened. Group 1 was listening to the words with meaning attached. Group 2 was distracted from the words by trying to count syllables. When we listen to (or study) the Word of God with the intention of understanding its meaning and applying it to our lives, we will remember much more and we will be able to be "doers of the Word." When we listen or study, but are distracted-- by other thoughts, things we need to do, what someone else is doing--we will not learn much, and will therefore not be able to be "doers of the Word."

Talk about the phrase "word implanted" that they circled. What could this mean? What happens to something that is implanted? Use seed analogy; read parable of the sower in Matthew 13. The seed that falls on the good soil is "implanted." The seed that falls in shallow soil or rocky soil is not. A seed that is planted in good soil grows and produces fruit.

What does James say about how we should receive the "word implanted"? Notice the phrase "in humility" that comes right before the command "receive." What is humility? In this context, humility implies teachability. Use the passage plus the parable of the sower to contrast the teachable with the not teachable:

Teachable: listens carefully, with intent to hear

Not teachable: is distracted by everything else around

Teachable: desires to learn, to get better

Not teachable: thinks he/she knows enough, is good enough already

Teachable: hears and then does

Not teachable: hears and then forgets

Ask children to recall last lesson, and remind them of the parable of the wise man who built his house on the rock from Mt. 7:24-27. He is the one who heard the truth-- believed it, and thus built his house wisely (let his belief direct his behavior), and became an effectual doer.

The law of liberty--how can any law bring freedom--aren't those opposite?

Read I Peter 2:16 and talk about what a bondservant is. Remind them that James called himself a bondservant in 1:1. At the time that James wrote, a slave that had served enough time would, under Jewish law, be set free. But the slave had an option. The slave could go to his/her master and say "Even though the law says you have to set me free, I would rather live in your house than live on my own." The master would then mark the slave (similar to piercing the ear), and that mark would signify to everyone who saw that this slave had such a wonderful master that the slave would rather live as a slave than be set free. A bondservant is one who has chosen to be a slave even after being given freedom. Use this as an opportunity to help kids understand the WHY (because we love the Lord Jesus Christ) and HOW (power of Holy Spirit, like the lamp) of obedience.

Widows and orphans:

Have kids recall the importance of "context" from lesson 1. Why would James have specifically mentioned widows and orphans? Talk about what life would have been like for widows and orphans at that time.

Why is it important for us to treat these people kindly, or to obey any exhortations like these found in the Bible? James said that when we do, we prevent our religion from being worthless. Read Mt. 5:13-16 and talk about salt and light being worthless if they lose all their flavor or are covered up. If others around us do not see us being different from the world, then our religion is worthless in its testimony to them.

**Apply:**

- Who are the vulnerable and needy people in your lives?
- What is one thing you could do this week to obey this exhortation?

**NOTES:**

# Lesson 5

James 2: 1 – 13

Possible openings:

Option 1:

Tell the story of Ghandi, described in "Why does this matter?" from the adult study. Discuss discrimination—what is it? (Look it up in a dictionary.) Have they seen examples of it in their own experience?

Option 2:

If the children in your group have the maturity to handle it, arbitrarily pick a color and tell the child who is wearing that color that he/she cannot sit with the group. ("We don't allow that color in this group.") Have a different place for that child to sit, some distance away and completely ignore him/her. Meanwhile, make a big deal about the other kids, compliment them on the colors they are wearing, offer refreshments, etc.. Let this go on long enough for there to be some discomfort, then bring the child back into the group. Discuss the experience (how did you feel, what did you think, would you want to become part of this group?) Then tell the story of Ghandi and define/discuss discrimination.

Transition to this week's passage...What does God have to tell us about discrimination?

**Observe:**

- Underline commands, red/green as before.
- Circle the phrases "personal favoritism," "special attention," "made distinctions," and "show partiality" in brown.

**Interpret:**

Recall the importance of **context** from lesson 1.

- Ask: What do we need to know about James' audience in order to understand this passage?
- We attach meanings to the words rich/poor associated with rich/poor based on our own experience. Are these the same meanings that James and his audience would have had?
- Use information from the background article in the adult study to paint a picture of life for the rich and poor in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
- Read Cross-references: Deuteronomy 10:17 – 19; 1 Cor 1: 26 – 29

**Apply:**

Are you ever tempted to pay more attention to the beautiful people in your class than you do to those who are not attractive? To those who dress according to the latest fashion? How about to those who are the most athletic or popular? What does this

passage tell you about this? What will you do this week to reflect the love of Jesus to someone you might ordinarily ignore?

**NOTES:**

# **Lesson 6**

**James 2:14 – 26**

## **Observe**

Have children underline commands to stop or refrain from doing something in red, commands to do something in green. Give them time to add these to their list of commands found in James.

Have children circle the words "faith" (blue) and "works" (orange), every time they see them. Have them count how many times James repeats these words in this passage. Have them notice that they almost always occur close together. Ask them why they think this is. Or simply point out that the Holy Spirit must be telling us, through James, that there is a relationship between these two words, and that by the time we finish studying this passage we will have a better idea of what that relationship is.

Underline verse 26 in purple.

Put a box around the question "Can that faith save him?" (vs 14).

## **Interpret**

*Saved from what?*

Read this paragraph to the children:

*Jenny ran into the house and flopped down on the couch. "Oh, thank goodness," she said to her mom. "You saved me."*

Ask: What do you think Jenny's mom saved Jenny from? Have them think of all of the possibilities. (Maybe Jenny's mom had called her inside just as it was about her turn to be "it" in a game of hide and seek, or just as Jenny's friend had started to gossip, and Jenny was tempted to listen, or just as a boy that had been paying Jenny a lot of attention was headed down the street toward Jenny's house. Or maybe Jenny's mom had said "no" to Jenny's attendance at a party the weekend before, and Jenny had just learned from her friends at school some of the things that had gone on at that party.)

*What would we have to know in order to answer the question, "saved from what?"* Context! For example, we'd need to know what Jenny was doing before she ran into the house, and what Jenny's mom says next.

Now read verse 14, with special attention to the question that the children drew a box around. Explain that whenever we see the words "save" or "saved" in the Bible, we always ask "saved from what?" Explain that context often helps us answer this question.

Have the children recall that in lesson one, we discussed the historical setting as well as the characteristics of James' audience as part of context. Another important part of context in the Bible is what comes before and after the verses we are studying. With this

in mind, have them read James 2: 12-13 and James 3:1. What is James talking about in these verses?

Tell the children that these verses we just read help us to interpret James' question in 2:14. Help them conclude that James is talking about being saved from some kind of judgment. Since we know that James is writing to believers, he must be talking about a judgment that will happen to believers. What judgment is that? Look up and discuss the following passages that describe the Judgment Seat of Christ:

1 Cor 3: 10 – 15

2 Cor 5: 9-10

### ***Faith and works***

Have children look again at the passage they have marked up. Re-read all of the verses in which they circled the words faith and works. Ask the question, "what is James saying about the relationship between faith and works?" Note all of their answers. (If your setting allows, and if the children you are teaching are older, write their answers on a whiteboard, and explain that one approach to answering tough interpretive questions is to think of all of the possible answers and then explore those answers.)

What do we mean by "faith"? Read and discuss Hebrews 11:1. Then read selected sections of that entire chapter, focusing on the people who are familiar to them: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab.

Play "let's suppose": Suppose Noah had believed God, but had not built the ark? Suppose Abraham had believed God, but had not left his home to travel to the land God promised? Suppose Moses had believed God, but had not gone to the Pharaoh to say "let my people go." Suppose Rahab had believed God, but had not hidden the spies and hung the scarlet cord out of her window. (This story may be less familiar, but since James mentions Rahab it would be a good idea to tell the story or read it from Joshua 2.)

Conclusion: We wouldn't be reading about these people in the Bible, if they had not acted on their faith! Noah and his family would have drowned in the flood. Abraham would not have been the father of the Israelites. Moses would not have had the privilege of leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Rahab and her whole family would have been killed. These people and their families would have suffered severe and significant consequences. Their faith would have been useless, from the perspective of history. James is warning us about useless faith.

Look at the verse that you underlined in purple. James is using figurative language again—this time he uses the analogy of the body. If we see someone lying down and not breathing, what might we conclude? James' point is that if we cannot see actions based on faith, we might conclude that faith is dead. Our works make our faith visible to those around us. Note that if faith is dead, it must once have been alive. James is

talking about believers—people who have believed in Jesus Christ, who will be in heaven. James is exhorting these believers (and us!) to keep our faith alive and useful.

**Apply**

In verses 15 and 16, James tells us one very specific way to make our faith useful. Read these verses again together. Help the children think about people in their own lives who are in need. Talk about concrete ways they can put their faith into action.

**Notes:**

# Lesson 7

James 3:1-12

## Observe

Have children underline commands to stop or refrain from doing something in red, commands to do something in green. Give them time to add these to their list of commands found in James.

This passage is full of figurative language. Have the children get out their purple pencil and underline every phrase that contains imagery or analogy. (bits in the horses mouth; ship's rudder; forest set aflame; taming the tongue; fountain with fresh and bitter water; fig tree and olive vine; salt water)

Have children write down one word or phrase that captures the big idea in this passage. (Ask, "What is this passage about? What is James' main point?" They may come up with a variety of words or phrases; help them to see that James is writing about our speech.)

## Interpret

Remember context! Have the children recall that the previous passage was about keeping our faith alive and useful. The focus in that passage was about the things that we do, such as helping our fellow believers. The focus in this passage is about the things that we say. So, it is not only the things that we do, but also the things that we say, that make our faith useful and visible to people around us.

Look at all of the phrases underlined in purple! Work through each analogy that James uses for the tongue.

**Bridle and bit:** For children with no frame of reference for this analogy, you might try to find a picture to explain what the bridle and bit is. Help them to understand that riders use pressure in the mouth of the horse to direct it. The horse is a big and powerful animal, and the rider is much weaker—yet the rider can control the horse by small pressure on the horse's tongue.

**Ship and rudder:** Again, a picture will help. The ship is huge, the rudder is tiny; the ship's captain is much less powerful than the winds that drive the ship. Yet, with small movements on the rudder, the captain can control the direction of the ship.

Now read verse 2 again. James is using bridle and bit, ship and rudder analogies to help us understand how important it is to gain control over our tongue. He says that though the tongue is a very tiny part of our body, if we can learn to control it we can learn to control our actions as well.

What does James mean by controlling our tongue? Is he talking about what we eat? No...how can we tell? If we look down at verses 9 and 10, we can tell that he is

talking about the words that we say. We want the words that we say to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, not by our sinful self.

Read and discuss Ephesians 4:29. Help children create a table, similar to the one below, that contrasts speech controlled by the Spirit with speech controlled by our sinful self:

Sinful Self	Spirit
speaks lies	speaks truth
gossips—spreads discord, destroys reputations	speaks words that build community and individual reputation
whines and complains	gives thanks
brags about self	praises the Lord
sarcastic tone—makes others feel small and foolish	encourages
speaks words that are like throwing cold water on a fire—destroys light and warmth	speaks words that give hope and joy

### **Fire**

Show the children a match: such a small thing, but the whole house could be set on fire with just one match. Acres and acres of forests have been burned by one match used carelessly. So it is with our words. When used in the wrong way, even the smallest comments can be just like that small spark that grows into a forest fire.

For older school age children: Taken out of context and repeated, words can ruin a friendship and even destroy a person's reputation. Suppose you say to one friend, "Did you see her/his haircut? Doesn't it look weird?" Before you know it, someone will be repeating those words to your friend. You might say "I was just kidding, it is not a big deal." But your friend's feelings have been hurt, and the trust between you has been damaged. Or suppose someone tells you, "Jordan was cheating on the test today." You don't have any idea whether or not this is true, but you repeat those words to someone else, who repeats them to someone else, and eventually Jordan's reputation for honesty is destroyed.

For younger school age children: Suppose the teacher praises one of your friends. You feel a little jealous. You want to be noticed too; you want to feel like you are better than your friend in something. You are a faster runner than your friend, so on the playground you suggest a game of tag. You make fun of your friend for always getting tagged because he/she is so slow. Your friend's feelings are hurt, and he/she doesn't talk to you for the rest of the day. You say "I was just kidding, don't be such a baby." Pretty soon the fun the two of you used to have together disappears. You never meant for your words to do this.

Carelessly spoken words can have effects that we do not intend. James is warning us about this when he compares the tongue to a flame of fire.

James may have been influenced by the teachings found in Proverbs. Read and discuss Proverbs 16: 27 -28 and/or Proverbs 26: 18-22

### **Defilement**

Ask the children if they have ever been warned about drinking from a glass that someone else has been drinking from? Why is this? Germs! If we are sick, we leave those sick germs on everything we touch with our tongue. And we pick up germs with our tongue. Just as the tongue shows the "defilement" (sickness) of the body, the words spoken by our tongue make known the thoughts of the heart. When James tells us that the tongue is set on fire by hell, he is telling us that one of Satan's primary ways of tempting us is tempting us to say something mean or sarcastic or unkind to someone else. When we give in to this temptation, our tongue becomes his weapon in the lives of other people. James uses the analogy of deadly poison for the words that we say. Why? Once said, words cannot be unsaid. Even after we apologize and try to make amends, the sting of carelessly spoken words can remain.

Remind the children that James heard much of Jesus' teaching while Jesus was on earth. He might have been recalling Jesus' words when he wrote this passage about defilement. Read and discuss Matthew 15: 17 - 20.

### **Fountains and fig trees**

Have the children read more purple-underlined verses: verses 11 and 12. What is James talking about here? What do fountains and fig trees have to do with our speech? Remind them that context is important for interpretation, and here they do not have to look far. Have them back up to verses 8, 9 and 10 for help in understanding. Refer back to the table of opposites you created earlier. We are capable of producing opposites, and James is telling us that we need to think carefully about the words that we say and how we say them so that we will not be like the fountain that gives both good fresh water and bitter salt water. Ask if they'd like to drink out of that kind of a fountain. Of course not...because they'd never know what kind of water they'd get. Just so, if we are one moment a person who speaks kindness and the next a person who whines and complains or says mean things, who would want to be around us? How could we be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ?

If your children are fans of Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House books, here is something you might have them recall: After Laura had gotten herself in trouble with her tongue, Ma wrote in Laura's autograph book: "If wisdom's ways you wisely seek, five things observe with care, of whom you speak, to whom you speak and how and when and where."

### **Apply**

How will you bless people with your words? Encourage. Focus on positive. Help the children think of specific people, specific ways they can encourage.

Some of us need help in thinking before we speak. Others of us need help in speaking at all. Ask the children: What do you need to ask the Lord to help you do? Think before you speak? Speak up when you are shy? Remind them that the Holy Spirit is within them, and will enable them to do/say all that God desires them to do/say.

**Notes:**

# **Lesson 8**

**James 3:13 – 4:3**

## Why does this matter?

Envy went to school today.

He sat at every desk.

Envy looked longingly at the new sweaters and latest-style jeans.

He walked up and down rows and drooled over iPads, iPhones, and the latest video games.

Envy poked the quiet ones standing on the edge of the circles of laughing girls.

Envy jabbed the ones who got Bs instead of As on the test.

Envy ran to the playground and elbowed the boys who did not throw as far or jump as high as the stars.

Envy lit many invisible fires inside blue jean jackets.

Envy scored lots of points today, but not all the points he attempted.

Some of those he tried to get had taken a multiple vitamin called Grace.

*Adapted from Elva McAllaster's poem found in the adult study; adapt for your own audience.*

Point out that no matter your age, there are always going to be things out there that we don't have, that we are going to be tempted to be jealous about.

## **Observe**

Have children underline commands to stop or refrain from doing something in red, commands to do something in green. Tell them that there are only two: one red, one green. Give them time to add these to their list of commands found in James.

Have children use their blue pencil to circle the word wisdom, each time it appears.

Have children put an orange box around any words they do not understand.

Have children underline in purple words or phrases that James has used before. (e.g., unwavering found before in 1:14, 2:18, 2:11)

## **Interpret**

Start by using a dictionary or Bible dictionary to look up words the children boxed in orange.

## ***Wisdom***

Have the children look more closely at the places they circled the word wisdom in blue.

Remind them of the definition of wisdom that they learned in lesson 2 question 5 (fear of the Lord, discernment to understand truth and justice, to hear and receive instruction.)

Is James talking about just one kind of wisdom?

Use a whiteboard or flip chart to list the descriptors of "wisdom from above" and "earthly wisdom."

Look up and discuss these cross references, to help explain "earthly wisdom":  
1 Corinthians 2:14, Ephesians 2: 1 – 3

In a way appropriate for the children in your audience, help them understand that they live in a world that values "earthly wisdom" and will often be in situations where people will be speaking/teaching "wisdom" as they know it, but that it will not be wisdom from above—in fact, it will be contradictory. It is important that they remember that the wise person builds his/her life on the Rock of Jesus Christ. (Mt. 7:24-27)

James says that our actions show whether we are operating with wisdom from above or with earthly wisdom.

### ***Soul searching***

At the beginning of chapter 4, James seems to switch topics. He was talking about the tongue, and about showing wisdom in our behavior. Now he asks "what is the source?" Ask the children why they think James does this. Help them see that James has been giving instructions about speech and about behavior, and that now he wants them to see the source of their speech and behavior.

Have the children go back to the passage and see what James lists as the source of quarrels and conflicts. (envy, lust, selfishness)

What promotes peace within the Body of Christ: (vs 18) Seed whose fruit is righteousness. Read cross-reference Galatians 5: 22-23 and describe the fruit the Holy Spirit produces in us.

What causes conflict within the body of Christ: our acting out of the flesh—i.e., letting our sinful nature control the way we think or speak or act.

To make this more real:

For young children, have pictures representing quarreling, envy, selfishness, peacefulness, gentleness, mercy, etc. (One way to find images: google-image, using "children quarrel" as search term; or, use illustrations from children's books.) They can then put the pictures under the appropriate heading on the chart.

For older children, describe situations with what the person is thinking and what the person is doing/saying. For example: students working on a group project. Joan is thinking "Jill always gets her way on these projects. She thinks she's so artistic and everyone always wants her to do the lettering." Joan says: "I think we should each take a part of the project home and work on it. I'll volunteer to do the

lettering." This leads to an argument about who does the lettering for the project. Joan was motivated by envy, and her words planted the seeds of a quarrel.

Sum up this section of James:

Show yourself wise: stop fighting and arguing.

Show yourself wise: Be salt and light (*i.e.*, Represent the Lord Jesus Christ to the people around you—speak words that plant seeds of joy or peace.)

### **Apply**

Discuss: Have children think about recent arguments. Ask them to try to remember what they were thinking or feeling as they started or continued the argument. (Just let them think quietly, not necessarily answering the question out loud.) Then ask: The next time you "hear" yourself being envious of a sibling or friend, what will you do? The next time you are tempted to argue with a sibling or friend, what will you do?

**Notes:**

# **Lesson 9**

**James 4: 4 – 17**

*Experiment:*

Take a piece of colored fabric and dip half of it in bleach. (~When we believe in Jesus Christ, He cleanses us from sin and makes us new creation.)

Now drip some white candle wax on another piece of dry fabric that you had bleached earlier; alternatively, color on the fabric with white fabric crayon. Then immerse the fabric in different color dye. The part "protected" by the wax, will not be stained by the dye. Use this to illustrate that the Holy Spirit's filling (control) of our life keeps us from being stained by the world, while we live in the world. When we are not controlled by the Spirit, our lives look little different than the lives of people who have not been "bleached" (made new in Christ) in the first place.

Note: This is, of course, not a perfect metaphor. The Filling of the Holy Spirit is not true for some sections of our lives and not all sections. Rather, over time we are sometimes controlled by HS, but not always. When we sin (quench or grieve the Spirit), we are like the parts of the cloth without the wax.

Tell the children that in this passage, James talks about the dangers of being a friend of the world.

## **Observe**

Have children underline commands to stop or refrain from doing something in red, commands to do something in green. Give them time to add these to their list of commands found in James.

Have children underline the word "judge" (or variations) in brown.

Read each of these sections, and help children come up with a big idea for each section.

1. vs 4-10
2. vs 11-12
3. vs 13-17

## **Interpret**

Ask...

- "What does James mean when he tells us we should not be a friend of the world?"
- What would it look like to be a friend of the world?
- Is James telling us to never have a friend who is an unbeliever?"

Let children discuss these questions for a bit. Then, remind them that we can use other scripture to help us understand. Look up these cross references:

- James 1:27 (relate this to the bleach/dye experiment)

- John 17: 14 – 20 (Jesus is praying for his disciples--and for us! Does it sound like Jesus is expecting us to separate ourselves from all unbelievers?)
- 1 John 2: 15 – 17 (John tells us not to love the world, because if we love the world we cannot love God. How does this help explain what James means when he says that if we are a friend of the world we are an enemy of God?)
- Matthew 5: 13 – 16 (Jesus wants us to be His witnesses in the world. If we look just like the world—quarreling with each other, being jealous of each other—we will not be able to be His witnesses.)

*Conclusion:* Jesus asks us to live among unbelievers, but to allow Him, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to make us different. It is "normal" to argue, to insist on one's own way, to gossip and to speak in an ugly way...for unbelievers (the world). Jesus calls us to be different, and gives us the Helper (the Holy Spirit) to make this possible. In his letter, James is telling his audience that being just like the world (a "friend of the world") is to be an enemy of God.

A friend of the world is self-centered: focused on self, on one's own wants; on one's own feelings. God calls us to be God-centered—focused on Him, His Word, His purpose, His power, His character. In vs 6, James quotes from the Old Testament, and gives us another way of saying self-centered vs God-centered: PROUD vs HUMBLE. When we insist on our own way, God Himself will oppose us. This is serious stuff...who wants to have God on the opposing team?! When we choose God's way, God will give us all that we need to obey His commands.

James then goes on to give lots of specific instruction about what to do if we want to be God-centered. Direct the children to look at all of the commands that they underlined; list them on a white board, and discuss what they mean:

- **Vs 7:** Submit to God (Place ourselves under His authority.)
  - Note: This could be a good time to talk about authority, how it is part of God's plan for us as believers; why choosing to obey authority is wise.
- **Vs 7:** Resist the devil (Say no to temptation; use Shield of Faith to quench the fiery darts of the evil one—Ephesians 6)
- **Vs 8:** Draw near to God (Come to His throne of grace, seeking His help (Hebrews 12))
- **Vs 8:** Cleanse your hands (Confess sin; 1 John 1:9)
- **Vs 8:** Purify your hearts (Don't try to keep both love for the world and love for God in your heart)
- **Vs 9:** Be miserable, mourn, weep (This is how we should think/feel about our sin. Sometimes when we are in the middle of something we should not be, (imagine mischief making at school, or making fun of another person), we are laughing loudly. James is saying that we should turn that laughter into sorrow for our sins.)
- **Vs 10:** Humble yourself (James tells us to trust God to promote or prosper us in His way—not to grab it ourselves, but to wait for His timing. Best example: Jesus in the wilderness, saying no to Satan's temptation to be exalted ahead of God's timing.)

- **Vs 11:** Do not speak against one another because this is judging them and only God has the right to be The Judge (Again, this behavior is prideful and will look just like the world's behavior. As believers, we are to be different.)
- **Vs 13 – 16:** Do not boast. (Bragging is one of the verbal sins that results from the mental attitude sin of pride. Bragging means talking about how great we are, and about all the great things we're going to do: "We're going to tromp the other team next game" or "I'm going to get the highest grade on the exam" or "I'm going to be 1<sup>st</sup> chair in the violin section." Instead, James says that we should act and speak as those who know that the Lord's plan is what will happen; that He prospers or promotes us in His own time.
- **Vs 17:** When we know the right thing to do: do it! Examples: Suppose you notice someone struggling to carry a big load of something (boxes, books, groceries, etc.) The Holy Spirit nudges you to stop and offer to help, but you are in a hurry and so you ignore that nudge. James says this is sin. Suppose you notice the new girl in your class sitting all by herself in the lunchroom. The Holy Spirit nudges you to go sit with her, but you really want to sit with your friends, so you ignore that nudge. James says this is sin. These are examples of sins of omission--things we don't do but should have done, instead of sins of commission, doing things we shouldn't do, like lying or hitting.

### Apply

Give the children time to think (by themselves, quietly) about the instructions in this passage. Ask them to ask the Lord to search their heart and show them sin that needs confessing.

Challenge the children to make "not my will but Your will be done" choices during the coming week.

### **Notes:**

# Lesson 10

## James 5: 1-12

### Observe

Ask the children to:

- Underline commands to stop or refrain from doing something in red, commands to do something in green. Give them time to add these to their list of commands found in James. (Help them first to see that James is not speaking to believers until vs 7. The word "brethren" in that verse indicates believers.)
- Put a green dollar sign over words that have anything to do with riches
- Put a purple cloud around "last days" and "coming of the Lord"
- Put a pink circle around "patient"
- Put a brown box around "judge, judged, judgment"

### Interpret

Ask the children to list all of the things James says about or to the rich. (He tells them to weep and howl; that their gold and silver have rusted; that judgment for mistreatment of the poor is coming.)

*Why does James use such harsh language to speak to/about the rich?*

Have them recall from earlier lessons that wealthy landowners often took their tenant farmers to court to demand payment, even after a bad year for crops. Remind them that being wealthy is not in and of itself a sin; James is writing to believers who may have been mistreated by wealthy people, or who may be tempted to think that becoming wealthy will solve their problems.

*How does James encourage his readers, starting in verse 7?*

Look at the verses containing the word patient (circled in pink). What did James' readers need to be patient about? They need to be patient to endure the suffering and trial of being poor and oppressed by the rich. Just because they had become believers, it did not mean that their social status had changed or that it would. Their culture was not going to be reformed overnight either. Thus, they needed to be patient, knowing that real justice would come at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Reread vv 1:2 and 9-12 with them. What did James say would come to those who persevered under trial? The Crown of Life. When do we get our crowns?

Read **Psalm 37** together for added encouragement on this same theme.

Main idea: We might become discouraged when we see (or receive) unjust treatment: when classmates who are not believers seem to be the most popular kids; when someone who cheats gets the best grade on a project; when someone who has a lot of money for the best clothes or newest video games makes fun of those who either don't have as much money or who do not choose to spend it in that way. James is reminding

us that the riches of this world do not last, and that we should keep our eyes on the One we really want to please, Jesus Christ, the righteous judge.

*Have the children look at the words they put a purple cloud around.*

What is James talking about when he mentions "last days" and "the coming of the Lord"--how does this relate to patience?

One way to respond to mistreatment is to wish for riches for ourselves, or to complain. James says this is not the way we should respond. He tells his readers to be patient and endure the trial of persecution at the hand of the rich, because when they/we endure trials, there are crowns in heaven awaiting us. Read **Mt 16:24-27**. Jesus said that when He returned that He would repay every person according to deeds--there **will** be justice someday. We **will** get our rewards at the Bema--Judgment Seat of Christ. The hope of heaven is the light and the end of the tunnel for all believers! How are we to live until then? Read Mt. 16:24 again. We are to take up our cross (endure with patience) and follow Him.

*Have the children look at the words they put a brown box around.*

Ask them what command is found in verse 9. Discuss: How does this command fit into the context of patience and judgment? And who is this Job that James mentions in verse 11? Briefly tell the story of Job.

Just like James rebukes the rich for their sin of persecution and misdeeds against the poor, James is warning the believers here to not fall into another type of sin--a sinful attitude of complaint. We might think that they would be justified in complaining based on the hardships they were enduring, and most of us would have said Job had every right to complain after losing all his possessions, his whole family and his health. Job does eventually complain (Job 10: 1-2). But, God answers Job with four chapters of "where were you when..." Read Job 42:1-6 --Job repents of his sinful attitude.

James warns that when we complain, we may open ourselves up to be judged by God about the attitude of our heart just like the rich who have mistreated the poor will some day be judged for their actions. If we believe He is who He says He is--that He is sovereign--then we can trust Him. We can trust Him to be just, and to bring about His justice in His perfect timing.

### **Apply**

The Judge is standing at the door! Knowing that the Lord Jesus Christ knows our thoughts, words, deeds...how will we choose to live?

Read Psalm 139: 23-24 together.

*Suggest the following questions for reflection, then give children time to think and write quietly.*

**Attitudes:**

Is there someone of whom you feel jealous? Is there someone you wish would receive justice right now? Ask God to give you His attitude toward that person, and to help you to be content with what you have.

**Words:**

Do you have a habit of complaining? Ask God to help you turn your complaints to praise.

**Deeds:**

How do you use your money? Is money itself evil? Are all those who have been blessed with wealth evil? Read I Tim. 6:6-10

Do you know any people that seem to have a lot of money, yet use what they have to honor God. What if you have lots of money someday--what are some ways that you can use whatever the Lord blesses you with to honor Him?

You can ask yourself these questions:

Are you a good , wise and generous steward of your money?

Are you being a blessing to others?

Are you loving your neighbors as yourself?

Many of you probably receive an allowance--it is not too early to apply these questions to the money you have now.

**Notes:**

# Lesson 11

James 5:13 – 20

## Observe

Have children underline commands to stop or refrain from doing something in red, commands to do something in green. Give them time to add these to their list of commands found in James.

Have children underline in blue the words prayer, pray, prayed.

Have children underline the word faith in orange.

Have children put a question mark over any words or phrases they do not understand.

## Interpret

Begin by explaining the question mark words. Have a dictionary and/or a Bible dictionary handy.

### *Sickness and sin*

Next, turn to the question of sickness. It sounds like James is making a connection between sin and sickness, and the children may ask questions such as these: Is sickness always a result of sin? And when we pray for healing and the sickness does not go away, does that mean we are not praying in faith? Remind the children that we often turn to other passages of scripture to help us accurately interpret scripture. Help them discover answers to these questions by turning to these cross references:

John 9: 1 – 3 What does Jesus tell His disciples about the man who was born blind?

1 Corinthians 11: 27 – 30 Here, Paul is telling believers that unconfessed sin can lead to physical illness and eventually to death.

Conclusion: Sometimes physical illness is result of unconfessed sin. It is one way for the Lord to get our attention. So, if we become sick, it is wise to examine ourselves (1 Cor 11:31—"judge ourselves rightly") to see if we have committed any thinking, saying, or doing sins that we have not confessed to the Lord. If our answer is "no," then we can simply ask that the Lord's purposes be accomplished; that is, that He will be glorified. We can ask Him to help us to think, speak and behave during our illness in a way that brings Him honor. And we can trust Him to bring healing when and how He deems best.

## **Prayer**

Have children go back to all of the words underlined in blue (prayer, pray, prayed) and notice the phrases associated with these words:

*Must pray*  
*Pray over him ... in the name of the Lord*  
*Prayer offered in faith*  
*Pray for one another*  
*Effective prayer of a righteous man*  
*Prayed earnestly*  
*Prayed again*

Have a discussion about prayer:

Note that prayer is not optional. We are exhorted to pray, not only in this passage but in many other places in scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6; Luke 18:1. We also have examples of Jesus praying, Paul praying, Peter praying, Elijah and many other OT believers praying.

From this passage in James, we see that we are to pray in faith and to pray earnestly. The word "faith" only appears once in this passage, but James has talked about faith before, and reminds us here that faith is important in prayer. This means that we approach God from a position of "believing that He exists and is a rewarder of those who seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6). The children in your study may not be aware that people approach God in any other way. It may be worth talking with them about what it could look like to pray *without* faith: Living life without acknowledging God's existence, and then praying a sort of mindless "oh God, help" in a crisis. The important thing to know is that God knows hearts; He and He alone knows whether we are praying in faith and earnestly—we are not called to judge others in this area, only ourselves.

These passages will help explain why we do not always receive exactly what we ask for:

Matthew 7:7-11: A wise earthly father gives good gifts to his children; he knows that what his children ask for and what is good for them are not always the same thing. Our Heavenly Father is wiser than any earthly Father, and we can trust Him to give us only good gifts.

2 Cor 12:7-10: When Paul asked the Lord (three times!) to take away a specific difficulty ("thorn in the flesh"), the Lord's response was "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Paul says that this difficult was given to him to keep him from exalting himself, and his response to God's "no" was to boast about God's greatness. We can conclude that God sometimes allows difficulties (including illness) in our lives, to teach us to completely depend on His power and not on our own.

Ephesians 3:20: God is able to do far more abundantly than all that we can even think to ask. Sometimes He says "no" to a request so that He can do something even greater than what we are asking.

## **Conclusion to James**

Read verses 19 and 20. Does it seem like James has changed the subject? This seems a very abrupt ending, doesn't it? Help children interpret these verses.

"My brethren" . . . Who is James speaking to? (answer: believers)

"If any among you wanders from the truth" . . . Recall James 1: 12 – 13, and progression from temptation to sin to death. Believers who wander from the truth quench and grieve the Holy Spirit; they cut themselves off from the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives (like pulling the plug on a lamp).

"...and one turns him back...will save his soul from death..."

What kind of death is James talking about? Have children think about possible options:

- separated from power of Holy Spirit (useless life here on earth)
- separation of soul from body (physical death)
- eternal separation from God (spiritual death)

Since James is speaking to believers, we know that we can eliminate the third option. A recurring theme from our study of James is that as believers we are to be salt and light, representing Jesus to the world. If we quench the power of the Spirit in our lives by sinning, and do not confess that sin, we cannot be salt and light. The result of this is useless life here on earth (Matthew 5: 13 – 16) and could lead to untimely physical death (I Corinthians 11 passage, from earlier in this lesson).

So, James has concluded his letter of exhortation—all those commands about how to live as believers in this world—with encouragement to watch out for each other. Read Hebrews 10:24, 25. One important purpose of fellowship with other believers is that as we gather together to worship, pray, and study God's Word, we remind each other to *not* wander from the truth but instead to be salt and light in this world.

## **Apply**

Much of this passage was about prayer. Give children time to share prayer requests, and spend some time praying for each other.

## **Notes:**

# The Book of James

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## Lesson 2: 1:1-12

1:1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position;

10 and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away.

11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

### **Lesson #3: 1:13-18**

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

## **Lesson #4: 1:19-27**

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.

27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

## **Lesson#5: 2:1-13**

**2:1** My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,

3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,"

4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?

7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF," you are doing well.

9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

11 For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

## **Lesson #6: 2:14-26**

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

### **Lesson #7: 3:1-12**

**3:1** Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

3 Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.

4 Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires.

5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things.

See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!

6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.

7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race.

8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.

9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water?

12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

## **Lesson #8: 3:13-4:3**

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

**4:1** What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?

2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

## **Lesson #9: 4:4-17**

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?

6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

## **Lesson #10: 5:1-12**

**5:1** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you.

2 Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabbath.

5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

6 You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you.

7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

10 As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

### **Lesson #11: 5:13-20**

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

14 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

19 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back,

20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.