THIS
CHANGES
EVERYTHING
PASSION CITY CHURCH

A JOURNEY THROUGH
THE BOOK OF JAMES
Christians today also can seek wisdom from the Lord and find guidance for faithful living (1:5–7). God provides wisdom to his people through his Spirit and his Word, and believers honor God when they listen to the voice of God and obey what he says (1:19–27). James connects one’s faith in God with their obedience to his commands. He wrote that one who professes faith in Christ but lives in rebellion to his commands is a liar (2:14–26). The connection between faith and obedience, according to James, should be seen in the way a Christian loves and serves others (2:1–13), guards their speech from sin (3:1–12) and rejects worldly forms of wickedness and rebellion from God (4:1–10). James bookends his letter with another reminder of patient suffering in light of the coming return of Christ (5:7–11). Endurance under this kind of intense suffering requires Christian community — other believers who are given by God to pray, love and serve one another, as they together seek to obey God.

Jesus transforms every aspect of life. All of the New Testament letters describe the transformation that the good news brings to those who embrace it by faith. The book of James is unique in its singular focus on this theme. James, the half brother of Jesus, is thought to be the author of this book bearing his name. He wrote to the believers scattered abroad who were undoubtedly facing persecution for their faith in Christ (1:1).

James begins his letter by challenging believers to find joy in the midst of their suffering. They can find comfort in the knowledge that God is using these trials to make his people holy (1:2–4). Though they were a scattered, persecuted minority living among idolatrous nations, believers could have hope that God was at work.

**Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.**

**JAMES 1:2**

Though James does not speak at great length about Jesus, it is clear that the principles he outlines in his letter follow the model set forth by Jesus during his earthly ministry. As the perfect Son of God, he patiently suffered with an awareness that he was fulfilling the Father’s perfect plan. All the while, he modeled virtues that James calls the church to embody. By fixing their gaze and affections on Christ, they could be doers of the Word and not merely hearers only.
SOAP is a Bible study method that we believe will help you grow in your walk with Jesus. It stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. We have provided a Scripture reading from the book of James for each day of our journey. Follow the steps below to journey along with us through the book of James.

**SCRIPTURE**
Get to a place where you can focus and read the daily scripture several times. Rewrite portions that stuck out to you; consider rewriting the verse(s) in your own words.

**OBSERVATION**
Make a basic observation about the scripture you have just read. What stood out? Was something repeated? What is the author trying to communicate? What does this teach you about God? What does it teach you about humanity?

**APPLICATION**
Ask, “What does this verse mean for my life?” How might this verse affect your heart - what you feel? How does this verse challenge your thinking? How does it affect your will, asking, “What changes do I need to make in my life as a result of this passage of Scripture?”

**PRAYER**
Write out a prayer to God. Scripture is God speaking to you, take this moment to speak back. Take a moment to say, “Thank you,” or confess to Him what needs to change.

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**JAMES 1:1-6**

**S** James 1:2-4 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

**O** Hard things can accomplish God things in us... if we let them. This passage says that our trials can actually produce maturity in us.

**A** Often when I am in trial, I just look for a way out. I just look for the EJECT button. One simple application is to list all the ways that I am growing through the trials I am in. To continue asking God to calm the storm, but to also praise God for the ways I’m growing in the storm.

**P** Jesus, thank you that you can use even the hard things for our good. I pray that you would not let me miss what you are trying to teach me in this hard season.
Love is beautiful in-print.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”
JAMES 1:22

WEEK 1

MONDAY, OCT 28  
James 1:1–8

TUESDAY, OCT 29  
James 1:9–18

WEDNESDAY, OCT 30  
James 1:19–21

THURSDAY, OCT 31  
James 1:22–25

FRIDAY, NOV 1  
James 1:26–27

LIVING FOR JESUS

The book of James is filled with practical commands for authentic Christian living. In his letter, James, the brother of Jesus, instructed Christians to control their tongues, be slow to anger and fight selfish ambition. But James was not interested in simply sharing a list of things Christians should not do — he also included a number of positive commands for believers.

Just as Jesus spent much of his ministry among those neglected by society, followers of Jesus are commanded to care for and show concern for people who are orphans and widows, the underprivileged, and for sinning brothers and sisters. James placed a specific emphasis on believers emulating the everyday ministry of Jesus within their own lives by showing compassion toward the broken-hearted and poor and by avoiding sin.

The disciples of Jesus should not merely listen to the words of Jesus; they should actively seek opportunities to engage the world with his life changing message. Just as with Jesus, a believer’s relationships with others — be it family, friends, co-workers or a person who is begging on the street — should be defined by love, mercy, patience and grace.

It’s even better in-person.

“”
At first glance, James's statements concerning justification seem to contradict the message of the apostle Paul. In 2:24, James declared that “a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.” But in Romans 3:28, Paul wrote that “a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.” This raises a critical question: Are Christians saved by faith in Jesus alone or by faith combined with their own efforts? It is important to note that these men were not as far apart as the above quotes seem. James and Paul knew each other. They were both major contributors at the first church council in Jerusalem, which assembled specifically to address the relationship between faith and works. As recorded in Acts 15, they arrived at a consensus.

Paul preached that a person is declared to be in a right relationship with God by grace alone, through faith alone in the finished work of Jesus, with no basis whatsoever in works (Ro 3:28; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8 – 9). At the moment of conversion, God sends his Spirit into the new believer (Gal 3:26; 4:6). Paul describes this as a new birth. The Spirit then works within the Christian to manifest good works. Paul said that true saving faith expresses itself through love (Gal 5:6). Loving deeds display outwardly the inward change that has occurred by grace through faith.

“Worship and justice are two sides of the same coin.”

JAMES 2:26

You can’t have one without the other.
James also declared that a person enters a right relationship with God by the grace of God alone. Like Jesus (Jn 3:3 – 8), James used birth imagery to describe conversion. James stated that God “chose to give us birth through the word of truth” and then planted that word in the souls of believers (Jas 1:18,21). James then went to great lengths to explain that this kind of faith manifests itself in loving acts toward those in need (Jas 1:27). According to James, acts of love toward God and others display the inward faith of the believer. This stands in complete agreement with Paul.

Tensions in the verses quoted at the outset are resolved when one understands that Paul and James used the word “justification” in different ways. The word can mean “declared to be in right standing” or “displayed to be right standing.” Paul used the first sense. God declares an individual to be in right standing with him upon the basis of faith alone, as occurred with Abraham in Genesis 15:6. James used the second sense. A person’s faith is shown to be legitimate when their outward works display the inward change that has taken place as a result of their conversion. Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is never alone.
James demanded that believers display a changed life. His letter seems to pack more commands per square inch than any other book in the Bible. Yet James does not call Christians to alter their behavior in order to earn God’s approval. Rather, he calls for consistency.

According to James, God “chose to give us birth through the word of truth” (1:18). An individual becomes a child of God entirely by the grace of God. But when the gospel of Jesus Christ renovates a person’s heart, changes in activity should naturally result. New identity results in new activity. James called his audience to evaluate the way they deal with hardship, handle money, use words and plan for the future in light of their allegiance to the Lord. James confronted the inconsistency of claiming to belong to Jesus, yet making decisions that are incompatible with that confession — in other words, saying one thing and doing another. James did not advocate throwing a garment of religious activity over an unconverted heart. Rather, he called for the Christian to live a consistent life. Everything in the world produces something according to its own nature. Fig trees produce figs. Grapevines produce grapes. In the same way, James asserted that Christian people should naturally produce Christ-honoring activity.

In doing so, he simply restated Jesus’ illustration from Matthew 7:15 – 20: As a good tree produces good fruit, so a Christian produces a life that honors Christ.
“Don’t settle for a counterfeit.”

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?
JAMES 4:1

GOD’S WILL

The will of God has two meanings in the Bible — first, God’s law, or the way he wants us to live; second, the events God allows in history, including pain and suffering. It appears James used both meanings in his instruction on how Christians should view and approach their lives. James was not encouraging an apathetic attitude toward events that may appear outside of humanity’s control. To the contrary, James was actually pointing Christians toward the example set by Jesus.

Jesus is the only person in history who perfectly fulfilled the will of God. Not only did Jesus live a perfect life by following God’s law, but he also accepted God’s will for his life — the unimaginable suffering of crucifixion and separation from God that paid for human sin. It is because of Jesus’ example that the Christian can joyfully submit to God’s will in this life.

The Son of God is not a far-off deity who sits idly and toys with humanity’s fate. He is intimately present as his people struggle to obey his commands, and he walks with believers through the painful suffering of life’s darkest valleys. This is the Lord who guides a Christian’s future — a God who empathizes with, relates to and loves his people. Accepting the will of God is not a burden. Instead, it should be regarded with all the reverence and joy that comes with following in the footsteps of God himself.

JAMES 4:13 – 17

“Don’t settle for a counterfeit.”

Only Jesus can fully satisfy the longing in our lives.

JAMES 4:1 – 17

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?
JAMES 4:1

“Don’t settle for a counterfeit.”
Jesus isn’t expecting an audacious promise from you.

Do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple “Yes” or “No.”

James 5:12

He just wants to hear you say, ‘Yes.’

WEEK 5

MONDAY, NOV 25
James 5:1–6

TUESDAY, NOV 26
James 5:7–9

WEDNESDAY, NOV 27
James 5:10–12

THURSDAY, NOV 28
James 5:13–18

FRIDAY, NOV 29
James 5:19–20
Jesus: Our Perfect Example

The Book of James is merely one of sixty-six books that encompass the Word of God. Each unveils the same incredible story through a unique lens, yet ultimately pointing to one name...Jesus! *The Jesus Bible* was developed to help you see that the entire narrative of Scripture is indeed the story of Jesus. You see, Jesus is as present in Genesis as He is in Revelation.

*The Jesus Bible* features over 1,000 full-page and sidebar articles, as well as helpful introductions to each book, and essays by Louie Giglio, Max Lucado, Ravi Zacharias, John Piper and Randy Alcorn. Our prayer is *The Jesus Bible* will shift the way you read and interact with God’s Word forever.

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