



A JOURNEY
through **JAMES**

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE



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Riversiders,

James, the half brother of Jesus, surely has a unique perspective on living a life that honors the Lord. Having lived with Jesus growing up, he had ample opportunity to see how Jesus approached life and people. He knew and experienced how He loved, how He served, and how He weathered many trials. Later in James' life he was the pastor of the church in Jerusalem, which gave him many opportunities to impact people's daily living.

We've been living through such an incredibly unique time with the closings and quarantines related to COVID-19. It's been cool to see the ways that our body has "been the body" for each other. I'm sure we all have stories of how the Lord has brought us around each other during this time.

At the time of writing this, we are not gathering corporately. My prayer is that we would be able to gather soon. While we are not gathering physically together, it gives me such incredible joy to realize that we can gather around the word together each day. I am excited to unpack this book of the Bible together over the next eight weeks!

Love you all!

Keith

Pastor/elder



WEEK 1

EASTER SUNDAY (4/12/20) SERMON NOTES

MONDAY (4/13/20)

This week, we start our journey through the book of James! We will take our time through this book to think on and absorb the rich teachings held within.

Today, listen to the Bible Project to get started:

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn-hLHWwRYY>



TUESDAY (4/14/20)

Read James 1:1-8

Remember to *pause and pray each day* before you read. *Ask the Holy Spirit to guide* your thoughts as you study each passage.

The Greek word translated as **various** (NASB/ESV) in verse 2 is *poikilos*. A teacher that I listen to once said that *poikilos* has a meaning similar to the English word *polka-dotted*. That is such a strong visual for me: all kinds of different-colored dotted trials appear in each of our lives.

- ② Think of a recent trial in your life. How did it test your faith?

- ② Do you feel like you grew in perseverance? Why or why not?

- ② How do you think it works that perseverance makes us mature and complete?

- ② Where are you boldly asking the Lord for wisdom at this time? Stop and pray right now for that. Also ask for faith to believe that He is generous in His giving.

WEDNESDAY (4/15/20)

 Read James 1:9-12

② Why do you think the Lord reverses the natural order of things as explained in these verses?

② What is the main point of verses 9-11?

② Compared to the rest of the world, we have more resources than most. However, there is still a large disparity here in our country and community. What is James' warning in these verses?



THURSDAY (4/16/20)

 **Read James 1:13-15**


② What sin are you most drawn to? Where are you most tempted?

② How do you see this progression working out in your own life? Can you trace it out?

② How do you see the ways that you are tempted ultimately leading to death?

Sometimes our desires also come from legitimate needs we are created to have. Needs like the one to be loved, to be valued, or to be protected. But we can try to meet those needs on our own, outside of the ways that God would have us meet them.

② How can you see this same principle at work in your own life?

 Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you normal needs that you have that you can be meeting in ways that lead to sin.

FRIDAY (4/17/20)


 Read James 1:16-18

② How are we deceived as described in these verses?

② What are some gifts in your life that it is easy to see coming directly from the Father?

② What do you think it means that you/we are a first fruit of what He created?

② How is it encouraging that the Father does not change like shifting shadows?

 Pray and thank the Father for being an unchanging presence in your life.

SATURDAY (4/18/20)

 **Read James 1:19-21**

② Is it harder for you to be “quick to listen,” “slow to speak,” or “slow to become angry?”

② Why do you think this one in particular is hard for you?

② Why does our anger not bring about God’s righteousness in our life?

② Explain how verse 21 actually works?

② How can the word planted in you “save you?”

② What are some ways that you can plant the word inside of you besides doing these devotions? What are some other ways?

SUNDAY (4/19/20)

Today, as has become our normal “routine,” we are going to spend some time just sitting with the Lord. Enjoy His presence and reflect on how He delights in your being there with Him.



WEEK 2

SUNDAY (4/19/20) - SERMON NOTES

MONDAY (4/20/20)


 Read James 1:22-25

② What is the main point here?

② How can just listening to the word deceive us?

② Like yesterday's command to plant the word inside of us, what do you think it looks like to look intently into the perfect law?

② How does the law give freedom?

 Pray and ask the Lord to show you areas where you are listening but not doing what it says.



TUESDAY (4/21/20)

 Read James 1:26-27

② What is the warning here?

② How “tightly reigned” would you say that your tongue is?

② Why do you think this is so connected to our religion - the outward expression of our faithfulness?

② How can you, in practical ways, care for the orphaned and the widows?

② What does it look like in your own life to be unpolluted by the world?

WEDNESDAY (4/22/20)

Today and tomorrow we are going to do some global review of Chapter 1 using the *Know, Be, Do* system of study.

 **Read James 1:1-18**

KNOW (What does the text say about God?)

BE (What does the text say about us?)

DO (What is the text calling me/us to do?)

Take time today to think through those questions from this passage.

 KNOW:

 BE:

 DO:

 Is anything in particular being laid on your heart from this passage?

THURSDAY (4/23/20)

 Read James 1:19-27

KNOW (What does the text say about God?)

BE (What does the text say about us?)

DO (What is the text calling me/us to do?)

Take time today to think through those questions from this passage.

 KNOW:

 BE:

 DO:

 Do you sense the Holy Spirit speaking in any one particular area?

FRIDAY (4/24/20)

💡 Remember to pray before you begin each time. The Holy Spirit wants to teach you and show you more of the Father's character.


📣 **Read James Chapter 1 aloud** as if you are reading a letter to someone. Use inflections, add some drama as you read. You may want to find a quiet place alone!


❓ What stands out to you?

❓ Is there a verse that pops out?




SATURDAY (4/25/20)

 This morning we are going to write out **James 1:22-25** below. Writing the verses out really helps them to sink into me a little bit deeper.

 Is the Holy Spirit bringing anything to mind that you have seen in the word, but failed to make a part of your life and actions?

SUNDAY (4/26/20)

 Spend some time this morning praying for the service this morning. Pray for members of our body, pray for local business, and people impacted by closings these past months. Pray for students and teachers that you know. Whether we are gathered together in person, meeting virtually for prayer, or watching the sermon... pray.



WEEK 3

SUNDAY (4/26/20) - SERMON NOTES

MONDAY (4/27/20)

Read James 2:1-13

- ② Why do you think the Lord has such strong feelings about favoritism? What is the underlying root sin in this?

- ② Can you see ways that you have personally, or we corporately, have insulted the poor?

- ② Again, like in 1:22, James describes the law as giving us freedom. How does experiencing this freedom allow us to extend mercy to others? How are they connected?

- ② Ask the Lord to show you situations or areas of favoritism in our body, during our service, or in other areas of ministry. Are there areas of favoritism in your life that the Lord has shown you?



TUESDAY (4/28/20)

✚ Read James 2:12-13 & Matthew 9:10-13 (a quote of Hosea 6:6)

② What is Jesus trying to explain and teach to them in these verses?

② Who has been someone who has shown you mercy? What was the situation and how did you feel receiving this mercy?


② Who is someone that the Lord would have you show mercy to? How have they wronged you?

② How have you, up to this point, responded without mercy?

② Why do you think the Father cares so much that we are merciful? What's His point?

WEDNESDAY (4/29/20)

 Read James 2:14-26

 Check out this old song :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmhN5X4dxYM>




- ② Why is faith useless without works?


- ② What do you think is the answer to the question James poses in verse 14?

- ② How do you see these two at play in your own life?

- ② Ask the Father to show you areas where Your actions do not line up with the faith that you profess.

THURSDAY (4/30/20)


 We are going to write out a couple verses and specifically focus on letting them dwell deeply in us. **Write out James 2:8 and James 2:15-17.**


 As you sit in these verses, is the Holy Spirit saying anything that you want to heed?


FRIDAY (5/1/20)

We will have a chance to read about Rahab this summer as we work through the characters highlighted in Hebrews 11. But we are going to preview that today to add insight into what James is sharing here.

 **Read Joshua 2 & 6:22-23**

 What strikes you about Rahab's faith?

 How does her faith impact her actions?

 I love that she is credited with righteousness in God's sight, but also preserved and provided for by the Lord as well.

 How does this witness impact you today?



SATURDAY (5/2/20)

Reread James 2

KNOW (what does the text say about God?)

BE (What does the text say about us?)


DO (what is the text calling me to do?)

Take time today to think through those questions from this passage.

 KNOW:

 BE:

 DO:

 Are there ways that you have been convicted by this chapter?

SUNDAY (5/3/20)

📣 Find another quiet spot, pray, and ask for wisdom and begin reading **James 2** aloud.

Again, read as if you are reading a letter out loud to someone you care about. Read with passion and conviction.

❓ Is there a verse or idea that pops out to you?

❓ What do you sense that the Holy Spirit is speaking to you today?



WEEK 4

SUNDAY (5/3/20) - SERMON NOTES

MONDAY (5/4/20)

 Read James 3:1-5

- ② How do you see yourself fall in the area of the tongue? Your speech? Sarcasm? Gossip? Snide comments? Thoughtless remarks?

- ② How does verse 1 tie into the admonishment about the tongue?

- ② In what settings or places are you a teacher or leader?

In so many ways, we lead people around us all the time. I recently heard someone remark that they had 300+ followers on some social media site. This person continued on to say that it suddenly occurred to them that if these people were *followers* then they were a *leader* to them in some sense.

- ② How can being more aware of your leading or teaching opportunities grow the ways that you influence people?



TUESDAY (5/5/20)

 Read James 3:6-8

② How do you see the tongue corrupt in situations around you? Give some specific examples.


② When have you felt that your tongue was “a restless evil”? “Full of deadly poison?”

② Think through your last 24 hours. When was your tongue used to corrupt? When did you bless?

WEDNESDAY (5/6/20)


 Read James 3:9-12

② How have you seen verse 9 to be true in your own life ? How does this happen for you?

 Have you ever had someone “cursing” you or treating you poorly, when at the same time they were praising or professing to love and serve Jesus? Share this story:


② What are some practical ways that you can guard your tongue from damaging another?

② What is the lesson taught in verse 11-12?

 Sit quietly and ask the holy Spirit to bring to mind things that have come “out of you,” ask Him to reveal what’s inside of you fueling this.

THURSDAY (5/7/20)


 **Read James 3:13-18**


 If you had to answer the question from verse 13, who is it in your life?

Verse 14 seems to be saying (in my reading):

1. Assess yourself and your actions / heart.
2. Beware of boasting or being proud of sin in your heart.
3. Be honest with the Lord about what is going on inside of your heart.

Look at the list of words below.

 Which of these words do you see growing well in your life? Underline these words.

 Which of these words do you not see as much of in your life? Circle these words and ask yourself, what are some reasons why?

Pure

Peace Loving

Considerate


Submissive

Full of Mercy

Full of Good Fruit

Impartial

Sincere

 Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to grow you into a person who raises a harvest of righteousness.

FRIDAY (5/8/20)

Reread James 3

KNOW (what does the text say about God?)

BE (What does the text say about us?)


DO (what is the text calling me to do?)

Take time today to think through those questions from this passage.

 KNOW:

 BE:


 DO:

 Is there anything that stands out to you today as something the Holy Spirit is wanting to impress on your heart? Stop and pray for that.

SATURDAY (5/9/20)

I don't know about you, but I am loving the practical daily advice that James offers. I'm loving James' words because he was Jesus' brother, he saw Jesus in His daily comings and goings. He saw how he treated his parents, he saw how Jesus resolved conflict, and he saw how he loved the people around Him without favoritism. That makes me appreciate the counsel that James gives us! Today we are going to write out a few verses.

 **Write out James 3:9-12**

 Is there anything that you sense the Holy Spirit is saying as you write and meditate on these verses.

SUNDAY (5/10/20)

Today is a day to relax, pray, enjoy the grace showered on us, and reflect on God's delight in you and His desire to spend time with you.

 Perhaps write a prayer expressing thanks for the above.



WEEK 5

SUNDAY (5/10/20) - SERMON NOTES

MONDAY (5/11/20)

📢 Today, let's read (out-loud) the first 3 chapters of James. Just like you were reading a letter. Let's take this large chunk and sit with it.

📱 Or have an app read it aloud to you - I love that option!

James changes topics so often, so I think it is good to see the small chunks inside a large whole.

❓ What pops out to you?

🗣️ What do you hear the Holy Spirit speaking to you?



TUESDAY (5/12/20)


 **Read James 4:1-3**

② Woah, James does not pull any punches. He is constantly pointing at us to look at ourselves.

② How do you see this principle at work in yourself?

② Where do you see wrong motives in your asking?

② Are there any fights or quarrels right now that you need to work through?

 Spend some time praying about any situations in your life where peace is not reigning.

WEDNESDAY (5/13/20)

 Read James 4:4-6

② What exactly is “friendship with the world?”

② And why does this automatically put us at odds with God?

② When you think of God being envious, what comes to mind? Why does He get envious? What does He get envious about?

When we were going through the book of Ephesians, Keith defined humility as “positioning myself under another person on purpose in accordance with their needs.”

② Where do you see humility in the character of Jesus?

② How is humility at work in your life?



THURSDAY (5/14/20)

Read James 4:7-10

Again, James has a very practical list of qualities for us to imitate and make a part of our lives. We are going to just go phrase by phrase and write out:

- What comes to mind?
- How this works out in each of us?
- What we can practically do to see this grow in us?

“Submit yourself to God”

“Resist the devil”


“Come near to God”

“Wash your hands” (because we sin)

“Purify your heart” (because we are double minded)

“Grieve, mourn, and wail” (changing our laughter to mourning)


“Humble yourself before the Lord” (there is that humility again)

 As you worked through this list, did anything pierce your heart? What is the Lord saying to you?

FRIDAY (5/15/20)

 Read James 4:11-12

Over and over it seems that James is concerned with what's going on in my heart, and how I'm living out my faith in my relationships.

 How would you define what it means to slander someone:

② And what does this have to do with the law?


② Why is it such a blessing that we only have one Lawgiver and Judge?



SATURDAY (5/16/20)

 **Read James 4:13-17**

Living through this season with the virus and all the changes it has brought to daily life makes the reality of life being a mist very clear.

 Spend some time this morning sitting and pondering: what is the good that I know that I should do? Journal anything that comes to mind!

SUNDAY (5/17/20)

🎵 Let's spend this morning praying, listening to some worship music, and spending time in the Father's arms.



WEEK 6

SUNDAY (5/17/20) - SERMON NOTES


MONDAY (5/18/20)

 **Reread James 4 aloud to yourself.**

Remember to pause and pray and ask the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you.

② What do you hear the Holy Spirit saying to you today?

② Is there anything new to God's character that stands out?

 Write out James 4:1-3



TUESDAY (5/19/20)

 **Read all of James 4**

KNOW (what does the text say about God?)

BE (What does the text say about us?)

DO (what is the text calling me to do?)

Take time today to think through those questions from this passage.

 **KNOW:**

 **BE:**

 **DO:**

 Is there anything pressing on your heart today to take to the Father?

WEDNESDAY (5/20/20)

Yeah! James Chapter 5 😊

 **Read James 5: 1-6**

② Who are the rich people that are being judged here in these verses?

② What have they done?

② How does the anger of the Lord show how He feels about the “workers?”

② Are there situations around you that you see this injustice at play?

🔍 Spend some time asking the Holy Spirit to show you areas of luxury in your life that He may want you to change.



THURSDAY (5/21/20)

 Read James 5:7-9, Matthew 5:23-24, & 18:15-16

- ② What are we being patient for or about?

- ② What does this grumbling against each other look like in your mind?

- ② What are the principles that you learn from Matthew 5 about relationships and conflict?

- ② Same with Matthew 18. What is taught here about relationships and conflict?

It's clear that peace in relationships is highly valued by the Lord. And I don't think this means a fake peace saying "all is well" where it is not. I think it means doing the hard work, over and over if necessary, of bringing peace through the work of the Holy Spirit. But you can only do what you can do.

Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there are things that you need to do in any specific relationships. Or perhaps ask Him to give you peace and comfort if you have done your part and peace is not available to you with someone. Pray for that person.

FRIDAY (5/22/20)

 **Read James 5:10-12**

② When have you seen an example of someone living patiently in the face of suffering in their lives?

② How have you felt the mercy and compassion of the Lord recently in your own life?

② What does verse 12 have to do with anything?

② Are you someone who honors your word?



SATURDAY (5/23/20)

Read Job 1,2 & 42

② James says that the prophets who were patient were considered blessed. How do you see this at work in Job's life?

② What encourages or challenges you through Job's story?

I cannot imagine living through Job's story. If you read the whole book, he is surrounded by friends who speak poorly of him, his faith, and his actions. He doesn't understand God or what is happening and has a lot of feelings in the midst (as I would). Perhaps in your life right now, there is a situation that you don't understand and has brought genuine suffering.

② How can you be patient right now? How does this work out in practical ways in your life?

SUNDAY (5/24/20)

Yes! Another Sunday to slow down, sit in the Lord's presence, catch up in James if you are behind. Take time to relax and enjoy the morning.



WEEK 7

SUNDAY (5/24/20) - SERMON NOTES

MONDAY (5/25/20)

 Read James 5:13-16

In every situation, pray.

All throughout the New Testament we are commanded to be in prayer:
Romans 12:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Philippians 4:6,
Ephesians 6:18, Colossians 4:2, John 15:7, Luke 18: 1-8, & Matthew 7:7.

The list could go one and on!

Trouble?

Happy?

Sick?

Sin?


Spend some time praying this morning about whatever or whoever the Spirit brings to mind.



TUESDAY (5/26/20)

Read James 5:16-18

Amy Houghtaling preached a bit ago about how we were all actually priests once we are saved and sealed with the Holy Spirit. And a large duty of the priests was to pray for the flock.

 Do you see yourself as someone who is righteous, who can be effective in praying for others? Why or why not?

Read 1 Peter 2:5, 9

⁵ You also are like living stones. As you come to Christ, you are being built into a house for worship. There you will be holy priests. You will offer spiritual sacrifices. God will accept them because of what Jesus Christ has done... ⁹ But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are God's special treasure. You are all these things so that you can give him praise. God brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

 Who is God asking you to pray for today, list them out:

 Pray

WEDNESDAY (5/27/20)

🔍 Read 1 Kings 17

❓ What strikes you about Elijah from this chapter?

❓ What do you learn about the Lord and His character from this chapter?

❓ How are you encouraged by this today?



THURSDAY (5/28/20)

 **Read 1 Kings 18 & 19**

- ② How is Elijah just like you? Where do you see similarities?

- ② What new information do you learn about Elijah from these 2 chapters?

- ② How about the Lord, what do you discover about Him?

- ② How does this encourage you to pray on the behalf of others? To be a priest for those around you?

FRIDAY (5/29/20)

 Read James 5:19-20

A funny end to this letter, don't you think?

② Have you ever seen this at work in your own life or in our church body? Someone brought back when he was living in sin?

② Think of someone in your life right now that is not living how the Lord would want them to live. What does it look like for you to be the one that points the way back to the Father? What do you need to do?

 Pray about this situation.

SATURDAY (5/30/20)

 Reread all of James 5

KNOW (what does the text say about God?)

BE (What does the text say about us?)


DO (what is the text calling me to do?)

Take time today to think through those questions from this passage.

 KNOW:

 BE:

 DO:

 What is one “take home” from this chapter for you?

SUNDAY (5/31/20)

If it is warm enough and you are able, take a walk outside today and stare at the creation around you. Praise the Lord for the variety and beauty in what has been created. Pray for your neighbors and neighborhood as you walk along.




WEEK 8

SUNDAY (5/31/20) - SERMON NOTES

MONDAY (6/1/20)

 Write out James 5:16-20


 Has you felt the Spirit highlight any of what you've written?


 What are you praying for today?



TUESDAY (6/2/20)


 **Reread James 1**


 Look through your thoughts from those lessons.

 What is one “take home” from that chapter uniquely for you? Write it out here:

WEDNESDAY (6/3/20)

 Reread James 2


 Look through your thoughts from those lessons.


 What is one “take home” from that chapter uniquely for you? Write it out here:



THURSDAY (6/4/20)


 **Reread James 3**


 Look through your thoughts from those lessons.

 What is one “take home” from that chapter uniquely for you? Write it out here:

FRIDAY (6/5/20)



 Reread James 4

 Look through your thoughts from those lessons.

 What is one “take home” from that chapter uniquely for you? Write it out here:



SATURDAY (6/6/20)

-  Take this morning to just read the 5 chapters of James aloud. It will probably take you about a half hour.
-  Jot down anything that pops out, or ideas you feel that the Spirit plants as you read.

SUNDAY (6/7/20)

Wow, we finished James together!

Without even glancing back through the book, think about these couple things:

② Who is James on the inside? What does he care about? What is he living for?

💡 What are you going to remember from the book of James?

♡ Pray for the morning: either gathered or scattered. Listen and pray for your heart to be soft and teachable.





Know. Be. Do... *Together*

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