

A photograph of a deep canyon with a river at the bottom. The canyon walls are made of layered rock. On the right side, a dirt trail winds up a steep, rocky slope. A person in a blue shirt is walking on the trail. The sky is clear and blue. The overall scene is rugged and natural.

God Gives More Grace

**A Thirteen Lesson Bible Study
by Jeff S. Smith**

Introduction

The ministry of Jesus Christ shows clearly that Christianity is an intensely practical religion. The philosophies of men tend toward abstractions and subjectivity, but the teachings of our Lord make distinctions between right and wrong objectively and direct human beings into a life more abundant.

The short epistle of James renews this commitment to practical and godly living, inserting the power of true faith into everyday events so that discipleship is a lifestyle.

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Lesson 1: *Introduction (1:1)*

1. James was a common name in the first century as it is today. Although two apostles were named John, the early death of one and relative obscurity of the other make them unlikely candidates for authoring this great epistle. How did the apostle James die (Acts 12:1-4)? Who was the other John (Matthew 10:3)?

2. The writer of this epistle is generally identified as one of the bishops of the Jerusalem church. How does Paul identify him in Galatians 1:19?

3. Jesus said, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house” (Matthew 13:57). Did his brother James instantly believe Jesus was the Messiah (John 7:1-6, Acts 1:14)?

4. Historians suggest that James was martyred about A.D. 63 and that this epistle was probably written between A.D. 45-50. How does James describe himself in the first verse? Define this.

5. This introduction prefaces the theme of the epistle very well, for service to God is the main message. Consider Philippians 2:5-11. In what ways does Christ exemplify bond service?

6. When bondservants are noted figuratively in scripture, the service of Christians to God is under consideration. What do the following passages indicate about our role as bondservants?

- Second Corinthians 4:5:
- First Peter 2:16:
- Romans 6:15-23:

7. The book is addressed to “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.” This has reference to Hebrew Christians who had been scattered out of Jerusalem by the initial persecutions exemplified in the martyrdom of Stephen. Whom does James identify as the persecutors in 2:5-7 and 5:1-6? Beyond them, whom does James seem to identify as the worst at injuring brethren (cf. Galatians 5:15)?

8. Martin Luther wrote, “In sum: the gospel and the first epistle of St. John, St. Paul's epistles, especially those to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians; and St. Peter's first epistles are the books which show Christ to you. They teach you everything you need to know for your salvation, even if you were never to see or hear any other book or hear any other teaching. In comparison with these, the epistle of James is an epistle full of straw, because it contains nothing evangelical.” Find something evangelical in the epistle.

9. Luther also wrote, “In sum: the author of James wished to guard against those who depended on faith without going on to works, but he had neither the spirit nor the thought nor the eloquence equal to the task. He does violence to Scripture, and so contradicts Paul and all Scripture ... I therefore refuse him a place among the writers of the true canon of my Bible.” With whom is Luther's real problem?

Lesson 2: *The Testing of Your Faith (1:2-18)*

1. Consider James 1:2-3. What is the “silver lining” inside every dark cloud of trial? In your own words, how do trials bring joy?

2. What trial did Paul face according to Second Corinthians 12:7-10? What joy did it bring him?

3. Peter also addressed the issue of Christian suffering. In what can the saints rejoice during their suffering (First Peter 1:1-10)?

4. James adds that wisdom is important in times of trials. How can wisdom help the sufferer to persevere (1:5)?

5. Why can't we afford to be skeptical about God's character and intentions during times of trial (1:5-8)?

6. Money is a great test of faith, not only for those who have little of it, but also for those who have much. How does James reassure the poor brother and warn the rich (1:9-11)? What wisdom does Proverbs 30:8-9 add to this trial?

7. Beyond the strengthening that comes from enduring trials, another reward is noted by James (1:12). What is it and how is it conditionally given?

8. What was God's role in the temptation of Adam and Eve in Eden? What was his role in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart before the exodus? What was his role in the trial of Job? What was his role when Paul suffered a thorn in the flesh? Consider James 1:13, First Peter 5:6-10 and First Corinthians 10:12-13.

9. Study James 1:14-15. Where does temptation originate? Where does it conclude? What is the key then to overcoming temptation?

10. How does James define the character of God as it touches on temptation and trial (1:16-18)? Consider also First Timothy 2:3-4, James 5:11 and Second Peter 3:9.

Lesson 3: *Doers of the Word (1:19-27)*

1. Why should Christians be slow to wrath? How will swiftness to hear and slowness to speak help (Proverbs 10:19, 17:27)?

2. Is anger always wrong? What prevents anger from turning into sin (Ephesians 4:26-37, 31-32)?

3. If the word of God is like an implanted seed, what are anger, filthiness and wickedness like? Colossians 3:8-10 describes this process. List six habits that must be replaced by meekness.

4. Have you ever planted a seed and watched for months as nothing came up out of the ground? That is what happens when the gospel is heard, but not obeyed. Explain how this contributes to self-deception (verse 22). What is the result of self-deception in matters of the faith (Second Thessalonians 2:9-12)?

5. To what does Jesus like a man who hears his word and does it? To what does he like a man who hears but disobeys (Luke 6:46-49)?
6. Why didn't doing the word satisfy Jesus in Matthew 7:21-23 (cf. Titus 1:16)?
7. Which one "will be blessed in what he does" (verse 25)?
8. This notion of replacing self-centeredness and wrath with meekness and selflessness is illustrated well by Jesus in John 13:12-17. What was the Lord trying to teach there? Compare that event to what he taught in John 8:31-32. How does one abide in his word?
9. How much is the faith of the wrathful Christian worth?
10. What makes for pure religion (Galatians 6:10, First John 1:9)?

Lesson 4: *Mercy Over Judgment (2:1-13)*

1. Besides wealth, what other considerations might tempt us to exercise sinful partiality within the faith?
2. Is there such partiality with God? How does he make his distinctions among people (Romans 2:1-11, Galatians 3:26-29)?
3. Getting beyond vague generalizations, how can we practically make certain that we are not showing partiality to certain preferred people?
4. What kind of richness should we be commending instead of material wealth? How did the church at Smyrna have this less tangible wealth (Revelation 2:8-11)? How did the church at Laodicea lack it (Revelation 3:14-22)?
5. What are we revealing about ourselves when we show partiality based upon such temporal, fleshly considerations (Romans 8:5-8)?
6. The hypocrisy and folly of preferring certain people in the faith is emphasized again in First Corinthians 1:26-31. From what three groups are not many chosen? Why is that so?

7. Not all rich people are bound for Hell, but Jesus clearly recognizes great wealth as an impediment to faith. What do the following passages warn about richness?

- Mark 10:21-25:
- First Timothy 6:9-10:
- First Timothy 6:17-19:
- First John 3:16-18:

8. Who is my neighbor (cf. Luke 10:27-37)? How do you *really* fulfill the royal law then, considering this context?

9. What is the definition of sin (First John 3:4)? How heinous must a transgression be for it to be a sin that can lead to Hell?

10. By what law are we judged? How should that acknowledgment affect the way that we assess others (Matthew 18:21-35)?

Lesson 5: *Faith Without Works (2:14-26)*

1. A practical area in which we show mercy involves benevolent acts toward brethren in need. James uses that situation to illustrate a much broader doctrine, however—the relationship of faith to works. Why is it impossible to be justified by works alone (Romans 3:19-23)?

One cannot be justified by works alone because all sin and fall short of God's perfection. A single sin makes personal justification impossible and grace necessary.

2. How does James illustrate the futility of faith without works?

James argues that faith without works is as fulfilling as wishing the hungry well without giving them any food.

3. The apostle John was on the same page with James. Consider First John 3:17-18. What fault involving law does John recognize in idle faith?

John asks how the love of God abides in someone whose faith is all talk and no action.

4. How does James decide to show his faith (verses 18-19)? How did Jesus issue the same challenge (Luke 6:46-49, John 15:14)?

James challenges the faith-only adherent to show faith without works, but he will show faith by his works. Jesus asked how people could call him Lord without doing his will and taught that his friends obey his commands.

5. Do demons have *faith*?

Demons have faith only in the sense that they believe without submitting. Calvinistic faith-only is little better than demonic belief, for it eschews the concept of submission.

6. A rhetorical question was issued back in verse 14. What was it? What would the answer be?

Can faith [only; without works] save him? No!

7. Two Old Testament characters are reintroduced here to prove the answer to that rhetorical question. Who are they? In what book and chapter would you find the record of these particular events?

Abraham offered Isaac in Genesis 22:1-19.

Rahab hid the spies and was saved in Joshua 2, 5:15-25.

8. Was Abraham justified by faith only? Was he justified by works only? Was he justified by sinless living? How was he justified?

Abraham was neither justified by faith only, nor by works only. He did sin so he could not be personally just. Abraham was justified by faith when his belief was made perfect as he obeyed God.

9. When was Abraham justified by faith?

Abraham was justified by faith when his belief motivated obedience and offered Isaac on the altar. He had not earned justification, for he was still a flawed sinner, however.

10. Was Rahab saved by faith only when Jericho fell? How was she saved by faith?

Rahab was saved by faith when her heart melted before God, but she was not saved by faith only. Her faith led her to hide the spies and heed their orders to stay at home during the battle with a scarlet cord tied in her window.

11. Overall, how does James characterize faith only?

James calls faith only dead and shows it to be futile.

Lesson 6: *The Tongue Is A Fire (3:1-12)*

1. Why does it seem that James discourages Christians from becoming teachers of their faith? Would it be better if no one became a teacher? What is he trying to communicate?

James explains that teachers will receive a stricter judgment, and for this reason, all should be think soberly before they decide to teach and as they are teaching.

2. Why should teachers receive a stricter judgment than others (Luke 12:47-49, Matthew 15:14, 18:6-7)?

Two reasons come to mind. First, to whom much is given, much is required; teachers are afforded enough knowledge to instruct others and are required to use that knowledge properly. Second, teachers influence others and God always holds people responsible for their effect on others.

3. False doctrine is just one improper use of the tongue. How does Paul suggest handling that kind of fire (Titus 1:9-14)?

The mouths of such teachers must be stopped by sharp rebuke and sound doctrine.

4. James illustrates the dangers involving the tongue three ways. We learn that big, bad things can result from small causes. List them.

- Verse 3: bits in horses' mouths to render them obedient
- Verse 4: rudders on ships to turn by the pilot
- Verse 5: forest fires are kindles by small sparks

5. James engages in a bit of hyperbole in verse 2 to show how susceptible we are to speech sins. What is his point here?

James is saying that speech sins are so common and powerful that they may be the hardest of all to beat. If you are strong enough to bridle your tongue, you can probably do anything!

6. What kind of speech is condemned in the following passages?

- Proverbs 11:13: Gossip
- Matthew 12:36-37: idle words
- Ephesians 4:25: lying
- Ephesians 4:29: corrupt words
- Ephesians 4:31: evil speaking (bitter, angry, wrathful, clamorous)

7. James's gifts for hyperbole and illustration take off again in verses 6-8. Who can tame the tongue? Is it hopeless, then? How can Christians take control of their language (Ephesians 4:29-32, First Corinthians 9:24-27)? Consider Isaiah 6:5-7. With what "live coal" shall we cleanse our lips?

James says that no one can tame the tongue, but he means only to emphasize the difficulty of overcoming speech temptations. With God's help, the Christian can learn self-control. The New Testament of Jesus Christ is the coal to cleanse our lips.

8. What arrangement ought not to be so? Why (First John 4:20-21)?

Christians should not be able to use the same mouth to bless God and curse men. How can we say that we love God whom we have not seen if we are incapable of loving men whom we have seen? Speech sin is evidence of hatred.

9. James's final tongue illustration is found in verses 11-12. As he earlier found speech sins rooted in hell, he again references their source from which they spring. What "spring" did Jesus acknowledge for such defilements (Matthew 15:17-20)?

The heart is the spring.

10. How do we identify different trees? What has that to do with distinguishing saints from sinners (Matthew 7:16-20)?

We tell the difference in both trees and people by their fruits. If a disciple is producing the wrong fruits, it is that his character has changed for the worse.

Lesson 7: *Meekness of Wisdom (3:13-18)*

1. In this section, James returns to the theme of chapter in which faith is proven and completed by works. Actually, chapter one touched on the same theme at its end. Let's summarize:

- 1:22-25: Be doers of the word and not hearers only.
- 2:17, 26: Faith without works is dead.
- 3:13: Show wisdom and understanding by good conduct.

2. Although this passage is not exclusively addressed to teachers, the beginning of the chapter places them in its scope. If any Christian would teach others by doctrine or example, it become vital that his character be consistent with his teaching. In what ways did Paul counsel Timothy to be an example (First Timothy 4:12)?

Word, conduct, love, spirit, faith, purity.

3. Define “meekness.”

Meekness is a humble patience that puts other ahead of oneself and practices moderation and self-control, especially when dealing with other people.

4. How did Jesus set the example for meekness (Philippians 2:5-11, First Peter 2:19-23)?

He left the glory of Heaven to suffer quietly on Earth so that the sins of others might be forgiven. He endured harm for doing good.

5. Which Old Testament book is specifically written to supply information about wisdom and understanding? Since it is in the Old Testament, is that book still valid today or should it be ignored?

The Proverbs should be studied diligently today, for their promise remains the same, even if the covenant has changed.

6. In your own words of experience and study, define “bitter envy.”

Bitter envy is the mentality that others possess what you really deserve and the only fair thing is for them to lose it and you to gain it.

7. Consider Philippians 2:1-4. How on Earth can one possibly overcome self-seeking and selfish ambition and esteem others better than himself?

One must look out for the interests of others and stop pondering how everything affects himself first. He must apply the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12) and prefer his brethren.

8. In what seven ways does James describe the wisdom from above?

- *pure*
- *peaceable*
- *gentle*
- *willing to yield*
- *full of mercy*
- *full of good fruits*
- *without partiality*

9. The teaching here closely predicts that of Paul in Romans 8:5-8. What two minds did Paul acknowledge there? What distinguishes between the two?

Paul recognized a carnal mind and a spiritual mind, distinguished by subjection to God or rebellion against his laws.

10. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9). What pursuit did the Hebrew writer couple with peace (12:14)? Why is it sometimes impossible to have both with certain people simultaneously (Matthew 10:34-39, Romans 12:17, Galatians 4:16)?

While we pursue peace, we cannot sacrifice holiness, for some will be intent on evil no matter our intentions.

Lesson 8: *Humble Yourself (4:1-12)*

1. James begins this section of his book with two questions that will solve the riddle of why the world at large and lives individually are often burdened with conflict. Where do wars and fights come from?

James says that they come from our desire for pleasure that wars in our members.

2. Paul studied the same issue in his Roman letter (7:5-23). What are the two sides in this epic struggle?

The two sides are the desire to do good and wait for justification and the yearning to do evil and get instant gratification.

3. How did Paul find victory (Romans 7:24-8:5)?

He found victory through Jesus Christ, by believing in him and setting his mind on living according to the will of the Holy Spirit.

4. What are the five sinful actions listed in verse 3 that result from conceding defeat in this struggle?

They are lust, murder, coveting, fighting and warring.

5. Two reasons are given why such people do not have or receive the objects of their desire. What are the two reasons?

First, some fail to ask God for their desires. Second, some do ask but because their requests are selfish and carnal, God denies them.

6. Why did God divorce Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 3:6-9)?

God put his bride away for spiritual adultery, specifically, playing the religious harlot with every heathen idol in Canaan.

7. With what agents of the devil could we commit spiritual adultery today? How far will God go to share our hearts with our idols (Matthew 6:24, Mark 12:29-31)?

We could become the prostitutes of money, popularity, possessions, prestige, etc. God simply will not share the adoration of our hearts with anyone or anything.

8. Every harlotry fits into one of three categories (First John 2:15-17). What are they?

They are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

9. How can God be jealous if jealousy is a sin?

It is not a sin to be jealous over that which exclusively belongs to you. A husband must be jealous over the romantic affections of his wife so that sharing them would be the sin. God must be jealous over our worship because to share it would be idolatry.

10. The proud will either reject the concept of needing God and his mercy or they will attempt to approach God on their own terms. How will God respond to the proud and the humble?

God resists the proud gives more grace to the humble.

11. How does the sinner show by his works that he is humble (verses 7-10, Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 1:16-20, Second Corinthians 7:10-11)?

The sinner must lament his sin and cleanse his heart by true repentance that works salvation.

Lesson 9: *Your Life Is a Vapor (4:11-17)*

1. How does James say that we sometimes set ourselves up as judge, jury and executioner?

When we speak evil of brethren rather than loving them, we cross that line.

2. Some might interpret this passage to condemn all judgments about the behavior of others. What kind of judging did Jesus condemn (Matthew 7:1-5)? What kind did he validate (John 7:24)?

Jesus condemned hypocritical judging, but upheld righteous judgment after one has first assessed himself and then wanted to help others.

3. Consider First Thessalonians 5:14. How would obey without making a judgment (cf. Jude 22-23)? Consider 1 Corinthians 5. Was Paul speaking evil of this brother and this church, or requiring the church to speak evil of him? What is the difference?

It would be impossible to make distinctions between those in spiritual need without judging them. Rebuke, correction and withdrawal of fellowship are not examples of evil speaking—setting oneself up as eternal judge. Our speech must always be with the person's restoration in mind.

4. Consider Romans 14:1-13. In what category of choices are we forbidden to judge one another at all? What is the closing resolution of the passage?

These are matters about which God is indifferent when it comes to participation or abstinence, for neither choice is more commendable than another. Instead of judging each other's opinions and liberties, we should resolve not to cause them to stumble.

5. James is not condemning all planning in verse thirteen anymore than Jesus was teaching a lesson on combustible fuels in the parable of the ten virgins. What is the attitude that James is criticizing here?

James is critical of those who ignore the brevity of life and stake themselves to an earthly future that is not promised to us.

6. The great poet William Wordsworth wrote,

*“The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!”*

Jesus was making this observation in Luke 12:13-21. Harmonize and summarize his teaching and that of James.

Life must be about more than getting and spending, but if that is all that concerns us, we will miss the point and major in minors. The relative brevity of life demands that we emphasize eternal matters over temporal ones.

7. Which things are eternal and which things are temporal (Second Corinthians 4:16-18)? What’s the point (cf. Matthew 7:24-27)?

The things that are seen are temporal while the things that are not seen are eternal. We ought to build on something that lasts instead of something built to be used and destroyed.

8. To what does James compare life? What did the psalmist say about this life (90:10)? What did Paul recommend (Ephesians 5:15-16)?

Life is a vapor that soon vanishes; it is soon cut off and we fly away. We should redeem the time and walk circumspectly.

9. What is implied by prefacing plans with “If the Lord wills ...”?

We recognize the frailty of life and sovereignty of God.

10. What kind of sin is described in verse 17?

It is a sin of omission.

Lesson 10: *Come Now You Rich (5:1-6)*

1. Is it wrong just to be rich? What does James have in mind here?

While it is not wrong to be rich, James is recognizing that ungodly rich people were using their means to persecute the poor and some of the poor were Christians.

2. What “great gain” is the ungodly rich lacking (First Timothy 6:6)? How did Paul obtain that (Philippians 4:10-13)?

They are lacking godliness with contentment. Paul learned contentment in spite of his circumstances by receiving the strength of Christ to get him through all things.

3. Riches themselves are not the problem. What is the problem, according to these verses?

- First Timothy 6:9: a desire to be rich
- First Timothy 6:10: a love of money
- Second Timothy 3:2: a love of money
- First John 2:15: a love of the things in the world
- Mark 10:24-25: a trust in riches

4. James reveals the problem with investing too much in the things of this world. What is it (Colossians 2:22)?

The things of this world are only temporary and perish with the using.

5. A lust for this life makes other pursuits futile. What did Jesus advise instead of materialism (Matthew 6:19-21, 31-33)?

Jesus taught that we should lay up treasure in heaven where moth, rust and thieves are powerless. We accomplish this investment by putting the kingdom first instead of subjecting it to other earthly priorities.

6. Consider First Peter 1:1-9. What is more precious than gold? What is the true wealth of the righteous?

Genuine faith is more precious than gold that perishes, for after it is tested, that faith leads to an incorruptible inheritance of eternal salvation in heaven.

7. James touches on the relationship of employers and employees. According to Paul, what does each owe the other (Colossians 3:22-4:1)?

- Employees owe employers ... sincere obedience and diligent effort in exchange for their compensation.
- Employers owe employees ... what is a just and fair compensation for the work accomplished.

8. Study Proverbs 30:7-9. Why did the writer fear both riches and poverty? What condition did he request instead of these?

He feared that riches would make him arrogant so that he would no longer recognize God's provision. He feared that poverty might induce him to steal. He moderately hoped only to be securely in between the two states.

9. What comfort has the person who is oppressed by the ungodly rich or is struggling with envy and covetousness (Luke 16:19-25)?

He is comforted in knowing that this life is so short and eternity is so long that spiritual wealth is ultimately of far greater value. He is also reminded that God will sort out these issues then.

10. What does Paul command the wealthy Christian (First Timothy 6:17-19)?

He must not be haughty or trust in his riches, but do good, be rich in good deeds, give, share and store up a good foundation in eternity.

Lesson 11: *Therefore Be Patient (5:7-12)*

1. What's the "therefore" there for?

This paragraph is there because of the one that precedes it. The coming admonition is based in the preceding fact—that the ungodly rich sin when they persecute the poor.

2. List the three models of patience revealed in this passage.

- Verse 7: the farmer
- Verse 10: the prophets
- Verse 11: Job

3. The "coming of the Lord" is not necessarily Christ's second coming, for that event was not all that near when James wrote nearly 2,000 years ago. What else could the "coming of the Lord" mean?

The coming of the Lord can simply mean a visitation of temporal justice.

4. One who is impatient under persecution can become like the farmer whose field is not yielding, so he reaches into the soil to yank up the crops. What do the following passages instruct about suffering persecution?

- First Peter 1:20-23: We should suffer patiently as Christ did.
- First Peter 4:16: Suffering as a Christian is not shameful.
- First Peter 5:9-10: Suffering by Christians is universal.
- Second Timothy 2:12: If we endure, we shall reign with him.
- Second Timothy 3:12: All who desire to live godly suffer persecution.

5. Rather than hating the hateful, how should the Christian respond to the persecutor (Matthew 5:38-49)?

The Christian should love his enemy by blessing those who curse him and doing good to those who abuse him.

6. What does Paul mean when instructs us to “give place to wrath” (Romans 12:17-21)? What is an added danger in rejoicing over a persecutor’s downfall (Proverbs 24:17-18)?

Giving place to wrath means refusing the temptation to avenge oneself because vengeance belongs to God. Gloating, however, can cause God to turn away his wrath.

7. James warns that under the stress of persecution, there is the potential for Christians turning on one another. Why is that? How is it preventable (Hebrews 13:3)?

The stress of persecution can lead to blame, insensitivity, lack of compassion and unholy judgments. We guard against that by seeing ourselves as one body.

8. What did Job suffer? Who caused his suffering? What was the objective of God throughout the ordeal?

Job suffered the loss of his wealth and children because the devil believed they were a hedge around his faith. God’s goal was always to show compassion and mercy.

9. What benefits are derived when we endure suffering, tribulation, hardship and persecution (Second Corinthians 12:7-10, First Peter 1:6-10)?

When our faith is tested, it can be proved in endurance and strengthened to survive even greater tests as it is made ready for eternity.

10. How does God express mercy in temptation (First Corinthians 10:13)?

God does not allow anyone to be tempted beyond what is bearable and he makes a way of escape to go with every temptation offered by Satan.

11. What is the danger of swearing casual oaths in conversation?

The danger is falling into hypocrisy.

Lesson 12: *Effective, Fervent Prayer (5:13-20)*

1. Paul taught that Christians should pray everywhere and without ceasing. Of course, he did not mean that literally. In your own words, what did he mean?

Paul meant that there should be no period of our lives in which we have forsaken prayer or lost faith in it as an avenue of communication.

2. What should happen in the following situations?

- Suffering: Prayer
- Cheerfulness: Singing of psalms
- Sickness: Call for the elders of the church

3. What is the important benefit of gratefulness (Philippians 4:6-7)?

The peace of God that surpasses human comprehension fills the heart of the thankful person and conquers anxiety.

4. Does this passage imply that elders today can work miracles with sick people? What does it teach?

Anointing with oil was a common medical practice in first century Palestine and this passage gives elders a spiritual and physical duty to those who are sick. The sick should summon the elders to pray with them and to see that they are visited with proper medical attention.

5. Did all sick first century Christians get better simply through prayer (First Timothy 5:23)? What is the qualification to this passage (Matthew 26:39)?

No, for Timothy had frequent infirmities that were not cured by prayer and Christians continued to die. The passage includes the condition of God's will.

6. If those seeking help through prayer for their illnesses are also involved in sin, they should be even more concerned about their spiritual malady. What is necessary for the Christian to obtain God's mercy when he sins again (Acts 8:22, First John 1:9)?

Sincere repentance is required.

7. What is the necessity or benefit in confessing our sins to others (Matthew 18:15-17, Acts 8:24)?

If we have wronged anyone, we need their forgiveness. When we make others aware of our weaknesses, they can help us by praying for us and watching out for us as well.

8. What makes a prayer fervent?

Prayer is fervent when we sincerely and passionately care about the answer. We must pray in spirit and in truth.

9. How do we go about turning a sinner back to the truth (Galatians 6:1, First Thessalonians 5:14, Second Timothy 4:2)?

The spiritual turn sinners back by rebuke, reproof, correction and admonition.

10. Whose multitude of sins is covered by restoration? Is it possible to sin so as to lose one's salvation (Second Peter 2:20-22, Hebrews 10:24-39)?

The one who is restored, not the restorer, is preserved from being lost in sin all over again.

Lesson 13: *Review*

1. Historians suggest that James was martyred about A.D. 63 and that this epistle was probably written between A.D. 45-50. How does James describe himself in the first verse? Consider Philippians 2:5-11. In what ways does Christ exemplify bond service?

James describes himself as “a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” A bondservant is a slave. In humility and selflessness, Jesus sacrificed his own interests for those of others.

2. Consider James 1:2-3. What is the “silver lining” inside every dark cloud of trial? In your own words, how do trials bring joy?

The testing of faith through various trials produces the spiritual muscle of perseverance and patience. Trial is like training in that its pain is temporary and its benefit is lasting.

3. James contrasts hearers of the word with doers. To what does Jesus like a man who hears his word and does it? To what does he like a man who hears but disobeys (Luke 6:46-49)?

The wise man that hears and does the word is like one who builds his house on a rock of obedient faith. The foolish man that hears but chooses to go his own way is like one who builds upon the shifting sand of his own opinions.

4. James speaks out against showing partiality to the rich and ignoring the poor. Who is my neighbor, according to Jesus (cf. Luke 10:27-37)? How do you *really* fulfill the royal law then?

My neighbor is everyone with whom I have contact. I really fulfill the royal law by treating everyone equally within the faith, without partiality rooted in carnal considerations.

5. How does James illustrate the futility of faith without works?

James argues that faith without works is as fulfilling as wishing the hungry well without giving them any food.

6. What ought not to be so (3:1-12)? Why (First John 4:20-21)?

Christians should not be able to use the same mouth to bless God and curse men. How can we say that we love God whom we have not seen if we are incapable of loving men whom we have seen? Speech sin is evidence of hatred.

7. How does James describe the wisdom from above (3:13-18)?

It is pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy, full of good fruits and without partiality.

8. How does the sinner show by his works that he is humble (4:7-10, Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 1:16-20, Second Corinthians 7:10-11)?

The sinner must lament his sin and cleanse his heart by true repentance that works salvation.

9. To what does James compare life? What did the psalmist say about this life (90:10)? What did Paul recommend (Ephesians 5:15-16)?

Life is a vapor that soon vanishes; it is soon cut off and we fly away. We should redeem the time and walk circumspectly.

10. James reveals the problem with investing too much in the things of this world (5:1-6). What is it (Colossians 2:22)?

The things of this world are only temporary and perish with the using.

11. Rather than hating the hateful, how should the Christian respond to the persecutor (5:7-12, Matthew 5:38-49)?

The Christian should love his enemy by blessing those who curse him and doing good to those who abuse him.

12. What makes a prayer fervent (5:16-20)?

Prayer is fervent when we sincerely and passionately care about the answer. We must pray in spirit and in truth.

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