



# **JAMES 1-2**

## **Faith in Action**

**Jesus' wisdom for everyday life**

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**Flourish Women Tuesday**

**March-April 2024**

**This Study Booklet belongs to .....**

**Welcome to Flourish Women Tuesday at Tea Tree Gully Anglican Church.**

**We are thrilled that you are with us to study, hear and learn from God's Word together.**

**Please wear your name tag to help us get to know each other.**

#### **MORNING PROGRAM**

9am                      Creche opens

9.15-10.15            Small Group Studies

10.15-10.45           Morning Tea

10.45-11.25           Talk

11.30                    Close (please collect your children immediately)

## **The letter of James**

James, the half-brother of Jesus, became a believer when the risen Lord appeared to him! He served as a much-loved and respected leader for the struggling Jerusalem church until his martyrdom in AD62. James' life was transformed by his faith, and in his letter he applies the wisdom of Jesus to everyday situations in the life of the church.

For James, living wisely means putting our faith in Jesus into action. We're saved by faith alone, through Jesus alone, BUT genuine faith never remains alone – it always produces good works. In fact, faith without deeds is dead and useless.

True saving faith can be seen in how we value God's word, handle trials and temptations, control our tongues, care for the vulnerable, and show mercy instead of judging others by worldly standards.

My prayer is that our belief in the glorious Lord Jesus will show itself in our transformed behaviour as we put our faith into action through these studies.

Danielle Maude

## **Digging Deeper:**

Further reading suggestions:

*James For You*, Sam Allberry (Good Book Company, 2015)

*James: the wisdom of the brother of Jesus*, John Dickson (Aquila, 2006)

## Bible Study 1 - Wisdom: Faith in Action (Overview of James)

1. How would you describe a 'wise' person?
2. How are wisdom and knowledge different? How are they related?
3. Read Proverbs 9:10. What motivates us to live wisely? How does this work in practice?
4. How can we tell if someone is wise (James 3:13-18)? What is 'heavenly wisdom' like?
5. What did those who knew James mention about him? (1Cor 15:7, Gal 2:8-10, Acts 12:17, Acts 15:12-21)
6. How does James describe himself (James 1:1)? Whose attitude does he imitate here? (Phil 2:5-11)
7. Note down the similar messages of Jesus and James in the verses below:

Jesus	James	Similarities
Matt 5:10, Rev 2:10	James 1:12	
Matt 7:24-27	James 1:25	
Matt 7:1-5	James 2:12-13	
Matt 15:18-19	James 4:1-3	
Luke 12:16-21	James 4:13-17	

8. Where does James' wisdom come from? (see James 1:5 and Col 2:2-3)

9. In your own words, what is 'faith'?

10. How does the Bible define faith? (see Heb 11:1, Eph 2:8-10, 1Thess 1:3, James 2:17)

11. How can people tell I have faith in God:

a. by the way I handle troubles?

b. by the way I treat my family?

c. by my attitude to money?

d. by my words?

12. It's so comforting to know that God is merciful, and generous with his help and wisdom! (James 1:5) In what area of my life do I need to trust God more? What's one way I can do that *in practice* this week?

## **TALK 1 – James’ Jesus Story (James 1:1)**

**Wisdom is... Faith in Action.**

Faithful God:

Life-changing faith:

*Our ongoing Jesus story*

*Why faith transforms us*

### **\*James and Jesus (James 1:1)**

‘James the Just’:

Just a Servant:

**\*James’ people**

## **\*James' Letter of Wisdom**

Why write?

The wisdom of *Jesus*:

- *Wisdom is...*

- *Jesus: perfect Wisdom...*

- *James: a wise guide...*

- *James for us: wisdom or folly*

## **\* Living Wisely: Faith in Action**

Is your faith showing?

Faith and Fear

## **Bible Study 2 – Faith Under Fire (James 1:1-18)**

1. How has a difficult time in your life increased your perseverance and maturity?
  
2. How is joy different from happiness?
  
3. How does James 1:2-4 differ from how we often view suffering? What underlying assumptions might influence our view of suffering?
  
4. Read Rom 5:1-11. What gifts has God given us through Jesus' death and resurrection? How does this help us persevere with joy now?
  
5. Read James 1:5-8. How might trials expose our need for God's wisdom? When are you most tempted to be double-minded, to place your confidence in something other than God?
  
6. a. What particular temptations might we face when we feel we are:
  - Under great trial?
  
  - Poor?
  
  - Rich?



b. How might we act wisely in each situation above?

7. Read James 1:9-12. How does the gospel encourage the poor, and humble the rich?

8. Why is it impossible for God to tempt us? (1:13)

9. How does knowing God's character help us in facing trials and temptations? (1:5, 1:16-18)

10. What is the word of truth (v18), and what role does it play in a Christian's new birth?

11. What practical things can you do this week:

- to flee temptation?

- to persevere in your faith?

## **TALK 2 – Faith Under Fire (James 1:1-18)**

**God's wisdom transforms our troubles.**

*I feel happy!?*

### **A. James 1:1-12 Trials grow our faithfulness**

\*Joy in trials (1:1-4):

*Consider it pure joy (v2)?*

*Because... (v3-4)*

*Choose to remember:*

*1. Who's in control*

*2. What's the end goal*

\*Wisdom in trials (1:5-12)

*Relying on our good, wise God (v5)*

*Doubts or divided loyalties? (v6-8)*

*Wealth: whose wisdom works? (v9-12)*

**\* B. James 1:13-15 Temptations turn us to God's truth**

*Lies in action*

*A monstrous birth*

*A better option*

**\* C. James 1:16-18 A firm foundation for faith under fire**

*Who God is: our always gracious Father*

*Who we are: reborn through Jesus*

**\* Living Wisely: Faith in Action**

*My picture of God*

*My hope in life*

*My faith under fire*

### **Bible Study 3 – Hear and Heed God’s Life-transforming Word (James 1:18-27)**

1. Are you a listener or a doer? Which is better?

2. Read James 1:19. When do you find it difficult to:

- listen well to God’s word?

- be slow to speak?

- curb your anger?

3. What is the difference between sinful anger and righteous anger (James 1:20; also Mark 3:1-6)? How can we deal well with our anger (James 1:19; also Eph 4:26-27 and 31-32)?

4. How does *humbly* accepting God’s gospel word help us get rid of anger (and other evil) in our lives? (James 1:21; also 1Pet 5:5-7)

5. Why do we sometimes listen to God’s word, but not follow it (James 1:22-24)?

6. What is the connection between our beliefs about God (our 'theology') and our practical obedience to God (James 1:22, 25)?

7. Why does James call God's word 'the perfect law that brings freedom'? Is this how you think of God's law?

8. Religion is the outward expression of our faith. Read what James says about God-honouring religion in verses 26-27. Why are these particular things so important in a Christian's life?

9. Reread James 1:18-27. In which areas do you personally struggle to put God's word into practice?

10. Share a situation in which you heard and obeyed God's word, and experienced God's blessing as a result. How does this encourage you to obey God today?

11. Share together some practical ways you can make sure to soak in God's word this week.

### **TALK 3 – Hear and Heed God’s Life-transforming Word (James 1:19-27)**

**Wise women soak in God’s word and delight in obeying it.**

*A good soak*

**\*God’s life-transforming word (James 1:18, 21)**

*The gospel word (v18)*

*The implanted word (v21)*

**\*Hear and Heed! (James 1:19-21)**

*Words nurture or destroy*

*How to hear*

*Anger and righteousness*

*Filth!*

**\*Forget or remember? (James 1:22-25)**

*Mirror, mirror*

*A means to an end*

*Freedom*

*Delighting in God's law*

**\* Living Wisely: Faith in action (James 1:26-27)**

*Worthless religion*

*Wise religion*

*Jesus says... (Matt 7:24-27)*

#### **Bible Study 4 – Judgment or Mercy (James 2:1-13)**

1. Have you ever experienced favouritism or discrimination? How did it make you feel?
  
2. Read James 2:1-4. What motivates favouritism? How might we show unequal treatment in the church today?
  
3. What are some results of showing favouritism? See James 2, verses 4, 6, 9 and 13.
  
4. Read James 2:5. How does this truth both encourage and humble you? Read 2 Corinthians 8:9. How do God's riches become available to us?
  
5. Read James 2:5-7. Is faith easier when we're rich, or when we're poor? Why?
  
6. Are Christians obligated to care for the poor? See 1John 3:17-18 and Acts 20:33-35. Discuss practical ways in which we could be better at caring for the poor and vulnerable.



7. How can the 'royal law' (the King's law in his kingdom) guide our treatment of both poor and rich (James 2:8)? See also Romans 13:8-10.

7. Read James 2:9-11. Why does James class favouritism with adultery and murder? See also Galatians 5:13-21.

8. Read James 2:12-13. How did God show mercy? Why is treating people unequally such a big deal?

9. Read Matthew 18:21-35. How does this motivate you to show mercy?

10. Reflect on God's mercy to you in Christ (James 2:12). How might you humbly show mercy to someone this week?

11. Pray and consider carefully: Which Christians do you tend to avoid or look down on? How might the gospel change your heart in this area?

## **TALK 4 – Favouritism or Favour? (James 2:1-13)**

**God's gospel of mercy overturns worldly favouritism.**

*'You're so judgy!'*

**\*True faith produces love (James 1:26-27)**

*Worldly favouritism*

*God's loving favour*

### **James 2:1-4 The Partiality Problem**

*Favouritism then...*

*...and now*

*Equality*

*Silly or sinful?*

### **James 2:5-7 Favouritism goes against God's choice**

*Choosing the poor*

*Harder for the rich*

## **James 2:8-11 Favouritism goes against God's law**

*Why so serious?*

*The 'royal' law and the Good Samaritan*

*Lawbreaking is lawbreaking*

## **James 2:12-13 Favouritism goes against God's gospel**

*Understanding the gospel of mercy*

*Be merciful as God is merciful*

*Warning!*

## **Living Wisely: Faith in Action**

*Caring for the poor and vulnerable*

*Micah 6:8 Heart-check: judgment or mercy?*

## **Bible Study 5 – Faith and ‘faith’ (James 2:14-26)**

1. How do you react when someone’s beliefs vary widely from their actions? Why?
  
2. Read James 2:14-16. How can saying ‘I’ll pray for you’ be a copout sometimes? How might we align our actions with our words in the situation James describes?
  
3. In your own words, describe the version of ‘faith’ James criticises in 2:14-19. What is the difference between this ‘faith’ and true faith?
  
4. Read James 2:18. What is the false assumption in this reported claim? How does James solve the issue?
  
5. What does James 2:19-20 tell us about real belief in God? Is it possible to believe in God and not be saved?
  
6. Notice James never says that works without faith can save. What does this tell you about faith?

7. Sketch a quick diagram of how you understand faith and good works to be related.

8. Read Paul's words in Gal 2:15-16 and Rom 3:28. Then read James 2:24 carefully. Does James contradict Paul? Why/why not?

9. Read James 2:20-26. How was Abraham's faith evident? How does Paul convey the same ideas in Eph 2:8-10 and Phil 2:12-13?

10. In what way was Abraham's faith 'made complete' by what he did' (James 2:22)? See also 1John 4:11-12; Philippians 1:6.

11. Pray and reflect: In what specific area is God prompting me to bring my actions into line with my Christian beliefs this week?

## TALK 5 – The ‘Proof’ of Saving Faith (James 2:14-26)

Faith shows itself in good deeds - without works, faith is dead.

*Christians are hypocrites*

*‘Faith’ vs faith*

### **\*Fake ‘Faith’: Workless faith (2:14-19)**

Mere ‘sentimental feelings’ faith (v16)

Mere ‘true beliefs’ faith (v18)

Dead faith (v17)

### **\*A salvation issue**

Heresy!

James and Paul - contradictory?

- *Key 1: Audience*

- *Key 2: Word meanings*

- *Key 3: Order*

Jesus: Saving faith can be *seen*

**\*True Faith: Working faith (2:20-25)**

*1. The Patriarch: Abraham (2:20-24)*

*2. The prostitute: Rahab (2:25)*

*Seeing God truly*

**\*Conclusion: Faith without deeds is dead (2:26)**

**\*Living Wisely: Faith in action**

*Response*

*Reflection*