



BIBLE

STUDENT BOOK

▶ **9th Grade | Unit 5**

BIBLE 905

The General Epistles

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The General Epistles

Introduction

The Epistles, or letters, written by James, Peter, John, and Jude, along with the Epistle to the Hebrews, are called the General Epistles. They are general in nature in that they were not written to a particular church. Except for 2 and 3 John, which were written to individuals, the General Epistles were addressed to large groups of people. Studying this LIFEPAK® will acquaint you with these Epistles of the New Testament. You will learn how God called men of different backgrounds and used them through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit to reveal His Word.

The writers of the General Epistles probably never dreamed that their Epistles would still be read by people today and that they would be used by the Holy Spirit to lead these people to faith in Jesus Christ. The person who gives his life completely to the Lord never knows the great extent to which He may use him. As you study this LIFEPAK, you will become familiar with the unique way in which each writer wrote his Epistle. The Holy Spirit used the differences in each of these authors to give the world a Bible that would be delightful to read and to study. The more you become acquainted with each Epistle, the more you will be able to read and to understand what God wants to say to you through them.

Objectives

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIFEPAK. When you have finished this LIFEPAK, you should be able to:

1. Describe the origin and occupation of James, Peter, John, and Jude.
2. Describe aspects of character and personality of James, Peter, John, and Jude.
3. Tell how James, Peter, John, and Jude acted both before and after believing in Jesus.
4. Describe how James, Peter, John, and Jude influenced others.
5. State the theme of the Epistles written by James, Peter, John, and Jude.
6. Describe the style and to summarize the content of the letters.
7. Give details regarding the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Survey the LIFEPAC. Ask yourself some questions about this study and write your questions here.

1. JAMES

In this section you will study James, one of the writers of the General Epistles. You will begin with a look at the man, then you will see him as a disciple, and finally you will examine the unique way in which he wrote his Epistle.

Four different people are referred to in the New Testament by the name of James. These men include James, the son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21); James, the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 10:3); another James who was the father of the good disciple named Judas (Luke 6:16); and finally, James, the Lord's half brother (Matthew 13:55). Many scholars have come to believe that the last one mentioned is the writer of the Epistle called by his name; however, some students of the Word believe the author to be another James. All agree that the writer of James had to be a man whose origin and discipleship would not be questioned by

those who received his Epistle. If the author was the half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, his letters would be not only readily accepted but also eagerly read because of his relationship to Jesus. In this LIFEPAK James, the brother of the Lord, is assumed to be the author of this Epistle.

The Epistle appears to have been written from Jerusalem about AD 45, making this Epistle the earliest of the New Testament writings. The letter was sent mainly to Jewish believers who had been scattered abroad because of persecution for their faith in Christ. James was one of the *pillars* of the early church (Galatians 2:9) and had great influence among the believers of his day. Tradition tells us that he lived to the age of ninety-four. He was stoned or beaten to death in AD 62 because of his refusal to deny Jesus as his Lord.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Review these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able to:

1. Describe the origin and occupation of James.
2. Describe aspects of character and personality of James.
3. Tell how James acted both before and after believing in Jesus.
4. Describe how James influenced others.
5. State the theme of the Epistles written by James.
6. Describe the style and to summarize the content of the letter.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

authoritative (u thô' u tã' tiv). Having official authority; giving orders.

contradict (kon'tru dikt'). To speak in denial; to oppose with words.

customary (kus' tu mer ē). According to habit or to common practice.

inanimate (in an' u mit). Not living or alive.

infer (in fêr'). To decide from something known or from reason.

spokesman (spōks' mun). One who speaks for, or in behalf of, others.

subjection (sub' jek' shun). Being brought under the control or authority of another.

Note: All vocabulary words in this LIFEPAK appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given.

Pronunciation Key: hat, āge, cāre, fār; let, ēqual, tērm; it, īce; hot, ōpen, ôrder; oil; out; cup, pūt, rüle; child; long; thin; /ʒh/ for then; /zh/ for measure; /u/ represents /a/ in about, /e/ in taken, /i/ in pencil, /o/ in lemon, and /u/ in circus.

THE MAN

To gain some appreciation for James, the writer of the Epistle, we shall first trace his origin, then look at his trade, and finally, study his temperament.

Origin. When the parents of Jesus returned from Egypt to the Land of Israel, they journeyed north and made their home in Nazareth in the province of Galilee (Matthew 2:13-23). After Jesus began His public ministry at the age of thirty, He returned to His hometown of Nazareth. Both Matthew and Mark (Matthew 13:55-57 and Mark 6:1-6) recorded that Christ's ministry was not readily received in His hometown. The people of Nazareth knew His whole family, and, as a result, did not want to accept Him as the Son of God. They recognized James, Joses, Simon, and Judas as brothers of Jesus (Matthew 13:55).

Read Matthew 13:55-58;
Mark 6:1-6; and Galatians
1:1 and 15-19.



James, along with his brothers and sisters, was still in Nazareth during Jesus' ministry. Paul recorded, in Galatians 1:19, that when he went to Jerusalem, prior to beginning his missionary journeys, he met only the Apostle Peter and the Lord's brother, James. James may have moved to Jerusalem after the Resurrection.

Trade. Matthew and Mark record the same event regarding Jesus' rejection in His own hometown. Slight differences exist that we should note. Matthew states that people called Jesus *the carpenter's son*, relating Him to Joseph, the town carpenter's son. Mark's account mentions that some of the townspeople spoke of Jesus as *the carpenter*, referring to His former trade. The **customary** training was for the sons to learn their father's trade that they might



| Epistle Being Read



| James' Home Area

have an occupation when they grew up. Tradition states that Joseph died early in Jesus' life, and that the family business fell on the shoulders of Jesus, the eldest son. Jesus left the home in Nazareth when He began His ministry at the age of thirty, leaving the carpentry business to his half brothers.

Biblical writers, by custom, place the names of families according to birth or to importance. Both Matthew and Mark listed James first in the record regarding the family of Jesus. This mention would indicate that James was probably the next oldest son in the family, who took over family matters when Jesus left. James may have continued in his father's trade and assumed responsibility for the welfare of the family.

Temperament. Not much is mentioned directly about James as a person, but we may **infer** several things from the information that



| James in the Carpenter's Shop

is given. We know that James was raised in a godly Jewish home, for God the Father would not have sent His Son, Jesus, to be cared for and trained by those who would not give Him a spiritual upbringing. We know from Mary's song, in Luke 1:46-55, that she was well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures. The responsibility of the father of the family was to teach the Word of God to his children (Deuteronomy 6:5-9). Joseph must have been faithful in doing this teaching because Acts 15:13-18 states that James was able to quote readily from the Old Testament. We also know from Luke 2:39-41, that both Mary and Joseph sought to "...perform all things according to the law of the Lord..." and that they "...went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover." James would have been well acquainted with God's ways and God's Word, as is evident from the content of his Epistle. James was probably a very practical person; the emphasis in his Epistle is practical.

This James also displayed leadership qualities. Both Peter and Paul looked to James as a leader (Acts 12:17 and Galatians 2:9, 12). His family also saw in James a leader after Jesus left to begin His public ministry and after Joseph died. We may conclude that James was a student of the Scriptures who showed leadership qualities in his early life as well as some very practical characteristics.



Write the letter and the correct answer on each line.

- 1.1** In the New Testament _____ different people named James can be found.
 a. three b. five c. four
 d. six e. seven
- 1.2** The assumption of this LIFEPAAC is that the writer of the Epistle of James was _____ .
 a. James, the son of Zebedee b. James, the father of Judas the Apostle
 c. James, the son of Alphaeus d. James, the Lord's brother
 e. James, the son of Levi
- 1.3** The Epistle of James was probably written from _____ .
 a. Nazareth b. Jerusalem c. Rome
 d. Capernaum e. Cana
- 1.4** James addressed his Epistle to _____ .
 a. Samaritans b. Jews in Jerusalem c. Gentiles
 d. Galatians e. Jews who were scattered abroad
- 1.5** Tradition tells us that James was age _____ when he was martyred.
 a. ninety-four b. sixty-eight c. fifty-seven
 d. eighty-nine e. seventy-five

Complete these statements.

- 1.6** Paul mentions that he first saw James at _____ .
- 1.7** James was born in the province of _____ .
- 1.8** Jewish young men who had grown up and left home could support themselves by the trade they learned from their _____ .

Match these items.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1.9 _____ Matthew | a. mentions Jesus <i>as the carpenter</i> |
| 1.10 _____ carpentry | b. second oldest son in Joseph's family |
| 1.11 _____ James | c. town carpenter and husband of Mary |
| 1.12 _____ Mark | d. mentions Jesus as the carpenter's son |
| 1.13 _____ Joseph | e. trade of Matthew |
| | f. youngest son of Joseph and Mary |
| | g. trade of Joseph and his sons |

**Write true or false.**

- 1.14 _____ James was raised in a godly Jewish home.
- 1.15 _____ James was never taught the Old Testament Scriptures.
- 1.16 _____ Joseph and Mary attended the Passover feast every year.
- 1.17 _____ James was not a very practical person.
- 1.18 _____ James showed leadership qualities in his life.
- 1.19 _____ Both Peter and Paul looked to James as a leader in the church.

THE DISCIPLE

James, the half brother of the Lord, did not believe that Jesus was the Christ until after the Resurrection. Only then did James become a disciple of Jesus and have great influence among the believers in the early church. We shall study James as an unbeliever, then see his transformation to a disciple, and finally look at his influence among believers.

Unbelief. James had grown up with Jesus. They had played together and worked together in Joseph's carpentry shop. James knew that Jesus was a special brother. The Scriptures state that Jesus learned obedience by the things that He suffered (Hebrews 5:8) and by **subjection** to Mary and Joseph. Jesus' actual goodness was produced in Him because of His relationship with His real Father in heaven.

When Jesus began to denounce the religious leaders of the day for their unbelief, even His family wanted to discourage Him (Mark 3:31-35). Jesus explained that those who obeyed God were more His brothers, sisters, and mother than His own earthly family. James, as well as the Lord's mother and brethren, could not yet fully understand that Jesus (Luke 2:49) was finally "...about His Father's business." In John 6:41-42 and 66, the writer recorded that many of Jesus' disciples turned and went away

**Read Matthew 12:14-50;
John 7:1-31; Acts 1:1-14;
and Galatians 2:1-10.**



because they could not understand His teachings. We read, in John 7:5, that His brothers did not believe in Him and wanted Jesus to display miracles in order to become popular. Christ endured His own family's unbelief, knowing that after His death and Resurrection they would finally believe in Him.

Transformation. Jesus' family must have wept sorrowfully as they saw their oldest brother falsely accused by the Jewish religious rulers and finally crucified by the Romans. Paul wrote that more than five hundred brethren at once saw Jesus alive after His Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6). He also stated specifically that the Lord appeared to James as living proof that He was the Son of God (1 Corinthians 15:7). James knew that his brother had been dead and that He was alive now, just as He said He would be. All doubt vanished and great joy filled the hearts of Jesus' own family and disciples.

Luke tells us that Jesus told the believers to wait in Jerusalem until they received the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5). The mother of Jesus and His family, including James, were in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost (Acts 1:14). James then knew the power of the kingdom which Jesus had taught.

In his Epistle, James referred to himself as a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (James 1:1). The word *servant* is a Greek term for a *willing slave*, or for someone who has become a slave by his own choice. James was now transformed as a believer and was willing to be a slave both to God and to Jesus Christ, his Lord and Savior. The word *Christ* means the *Anointed One or Messiah*.

Influence. After Pentecost about three thousand new believers were added to the church at one time. With such an immediate increase in new disciples, new problems arose for the Apostles and leaders. To care for the new converts in practical matters, seven deacons were appointed (Acts 6:3-4). The Apostles gave themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. In the church at Jerusalem, James emerged as one of the most important leaders, probably an overseer. Although he was not one of the original twelve disciples, he eventually became the **spokesman** for the believers (Acts 15:13).

James' influence must have grown rapidly in the church, since he is called *the Lord's brother* and also a *pillar* of the early church by Paul (Galatians 2:9). Paul stated (Galatians 1:18-19) that he saw only Peter and James when he first went to Jerusalem about AD 37. James probably settled in Jerusalem after Christ's Ascension. About AD 44, when Peter was miraculously released from prison by an angel, Peter told those in the house he visited to inform James of his freedom (Acts 12:17). When Paul came to Jerusalem later to settle a dispute about the Gentiles and the Law, he mentioned James first, before Peter and John. Paul seemed to imply, by recognition, that James was a prominent leader in the church at Jerusalem (Galatians 1:19). James appeared to have led the Jerusalem council and gave the closing remarks (Acts 15:13). On Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, he reported about his missionary journeys to James and to all the elders present (Acts 21:18).



Complete these statements.

- 1.20 James would know that Jesus was different because He was _____ .
- 1.21 Jesus learned a. _____ by the things that He
b. _____ .
- 1.22 The goodness that James saw in Jesus was due to His a. _____
with His heavenly b. _____ .
- 1.23 Jesus explained that those who a. _____ God were the same as his
b. _____ and c. _____ and
d. _____ .



Match these items.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1.24 _____ Jewish religious rulers | a. place where Holy Spirit descended |
| 1.25 _____ five hundred | b. half brother of Jesus |
| 1.26 _____ Paul | c. time when the Holy Spirit came |
| 1.27 _____ Jerusalem | d. Jesus appeared to them together |
| 1.28 _____ Pentecost | e. the meaning of servant in Greek |
| 1.29 _____ <i>Christ</i> | f. number in the upper room at Pentecost |
| 1.30 _____ <i>willing slave</i> | g. falsely accused Jesus |
| | h. same as <i>Anointed One</i> or <i>Messiah</i> |
| | i. states that Jesus appeared to James after His Resurrection |

Complete this activity.

- 1.31 Imagine that you are a half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ. On separate paper write a 200-word report of your attitude toward Jesus both before and after you became a believer.

TEACHER CHECK



_____ initials

_____ date

Complete these sentences.

- 1.32 At Pentecost, _____ believers were added to the church in one day.
- 1.33 James was probably an _____ of the church in Jerusalem.
- 1.34 James eventually became the _____ for the group of disciples.
- 1.35 Paul called James a _____ of the early church.
- 1.36 Peter and _____ were the only ones Paul met on his first visit to Jerusalem.
- 1.37 The Apostle _____ asked that James be notified when he was miraculously delivered from prison.
- 1.38 The Jerusalem council which discussed the question of Gentiles and the Law was led by _____.
- 1.39 Paul reported to _____ and to all the elders on his last visit to Jerusalem.

THE WRITER

We have only one book by James which bears his name. He is called “the just,” and his Epistle reflects the just attitude James wanted his readers to develop. The content and presentation in his Epistle are for the purpose of getting his theme across to the readers, “the balance between faith and works.” persecution.

Theme. The theme of the Epistle James is given in James 2:17, which states that “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” James, as well as Peter, wrote Epistles that are mainly ethical or practical in character. James was probably very familiar with the words of Jesus (Matthew 5:20), “...That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

To James, works were a very practical expression of a person’s faith. Some scholars have argued that the Apostle Paul’s emphasis on faith **contradicts** James’ teaching on works. Nothing could be further from the truth. Both Paul and James knew what Jesus Christ had done for them in freeing them from the curse of the Law. The Christian law of liberty is based on deliverance from within sin and its guilt, as well as deliverance from without. A Christian is truly free to do good works. Paul even said, in Ephesians 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

James was writing to the Jewish Christians who were scattered throughout the surrounding areas. Because of their new faith, they experienced various outward persecutions. Some persecution came from their own countrymen, some came from the rich, and some came in the form of physical afflictions. This persecution produced a spiritually low state and a wrong attitude toward God and the truth of good works. Believers had begun to think that faith was sufficient without works and that doing

anything, besides believing, was wrong. This position might have eased their persecution, but it was an error that produced wrong talk, strife, division, and a worldly attitude. James wrote his brethren to show them that the only proof man has of a genuine faith is the outward expression to others.

Style. James wrote in a style of Greek that is better than most of the other Epistles. He did not deal in general ideas, but wrote of particular matter. Because James wanted his readers to clearly understand his point, he wrote in a straightforward manner, using simple sentence structure. He wrote in plain speech, talking to his readers as a lawyer might, questioning them (James 2:4-7, 14, and 16; 3:11-12; 4:1, 4, 5, 12, and 14).

James used words like a poet, comparing things with nature. In James 1:6 the doubting man is likened to waves of the sea, driven and tossed. The rich man (James 1:10-11) is compared with grass and flowers that soon wither and perish. James said the tongue is like a forest fire that destroys everything in its path (James 3:1-12). Those businessmen who boast of their own ability are compared with a vapor of smoke that exists only for a moment (James 4:13-16). In James 5:1-6, the rich are likened to well-fed cattle, who are to be led later to the slaughter. Other images include those of a ship’s rudder (James 3:4, 5), of sweet and salty water springs (James 3:11), of seed-sowing and fruit-bearing (James 3:18), and of the early and late rains related to harvest (James 5:7).

This writer spoke of **inanimate** things that have no life, describing them as living things. He spoke of sin (James 1:15) as lust, producing death as its offspring. Friendship with the world was described as adultery (James 4:4). James even used the image of the mirror to show, by comparison, how a man can look into the Word of God to see his sinful condition and then can turn away and forget what he saw (James

1:23-24). James used his colorful style to show his readers the necessity of backing up their profession of faith with the expression of good works of the Lord Jesus Christ. James' Epistle became a code for attitudes and for conduct

concerning the problems faced by Christians. The letter is a practical guide for Christians living today. The principle of God's Word are eternal.



Write true or false.

- 1.40 _____ The theme of James is "only believe."
- 1.41 _____ James and John wrote Epistles that are both ethical and practical.
- 1.42 _____ James taught that works were a practical expression of faith.
- 1.43 _____ Paul's emphasis on faith contradicts James' teaching on works.
- 1.44 _____ A Christian is truly free to do good works.

Complete these sentences.

- 1.45 The recipients of the Epistle of James were persecuted by their own a. _____, by the b. _____, and by c. _____.
- 1.46 The believers to whom James wrote had begun to think that a. _____ without b. _____ was sufficient.
- 1.47 The error of their thinking produced a. _____, b. _____, c. _____, and a d. _____ life style.

Complete this activity.

- 1.48 Write James 2:17 from memory. _____

Write true or false.

- 1.49 _____ James used very poor Greek when writing his Epistle.
- 1.50 _____ James did not deal with general ideas, only particular things.
- 1.51 _____ James' writing was straightforward, and he used simple sentences.
- 1.52 _____ James used difficult speech and mysterious words.



Match these items.

1.53 _____ doubting man

1.54 _____ rich man

1.55 _____ tongue

1.56 _____ businessmen

1.57 _____ sin

1.58 _____ Jewish Christians

1.59 _____ friendship with world

1.60 _____ mirror

a. grass and flowers

b. the Word of God

c. forest fire

d. the sun

e. waves of the sea

f. vapor of smoke

g. lust that produces death

h. animals

i. scattered because of persecution

j. adultery

THE MESSAGE

The Book of James is called a General Epistle because of the wide appeal it had to the entire body of Christ. James addressed the letter to the twelve tribes of Israel. These addresses included Jewish Christians who had been scattered abroad because of the persecution against believers (Acts 8:1). The Epistle was probably written about AD 45, and is **authoritative** in tone and practical in nature. James wanted his readers to become mature, or perfect, Christians, as he related in James 3:2. To attain this objective, he touched upon a wide variety of practical matters. Study the outline of the Epistle (on the following page), to gain an overview for this book.

James chapters 1 and 2. The introduction of the Epistle of James is brief and direct. James told his readers who he was and to whom this letter was sent (James 1:1). No specific conclusion exists at the end of the Epistle; however, lack of closing statements was an acceptable style for the Hebrew writers. Following the short introduction, James continued the

Read James chapters 1–5.



Hebrew style by quickly going from one area of concern to another.

In James 1:2-12 the writer begins with the problem of faith in the midst of trials and problems. As Christians we will undergo trials of our faith. We will not always understand the reason we are in difficult times. God, however, has a purpose in everything He allows to come our way. The believers who received James' letter were in the midst of various persecutions. James wanted to encourage them by sharing with them some of the benefits of such trials. Christians can (James 1:2), "...count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations," because these trials of faith produce in the believer spiritual maturity—maturity in Christ and His Word. The Christian will never know that God's Word in his soul is ever effective until it is applied to the test of trials. When God's Word is applied to trials, victory will be seen. Trials also deepen the Christian's prayer life (James 1:5-8) and provide opportunity for production and future rewards (James 1:9-12).

In James 1:13-18 a similar matter is presented: faith in the midst of temptations which come not from God, but from the world, the flesh, and the devil. Christians will be tempted to sin, but Christians need not give way to temptation. The source of power for resisting temptation is (James 1:18), "...the word of truth." As the promises and doctrines of God's Word are used to resist temptation, the Christian will exercise and grow strong in his faith.

Having mentioned two of the problems God's people face daily, James next turned to the Christian's source of power and hope, the living and written Word of God. In James 1:19-27 the author shows how the believer must allow God's Word to do its full work in him. Christians

must be (James 1:19), "swift to hear" and thus "slow to speak, and slow to wrath." As the believer in Christ studies the Bible he must use it as a mirror that will show him his error and his shortcomings (James 1:23-25). We must also allow the Word of Truth to work in us, strengthening us to resist temptations and to endure trials. James would not have his readers think that growing in the Word is a mere academic exercise. In James 1:26-27 he included a test for true spiritual growth. The test included results which would be seen in the life of the one who walked with God. The results were a controlled tongue or manner of speech and a desire to help orphans and widows.

In James 2:1-13 James offered another test of true Christian maturity. Beginning in the second chapter, James told of the error of partiality. Christians are to express God's love to all others as did the Lord Jesus Christ (James 2:1). In the assembly believers must not favor one man over another because God's grace is extended to all men (James 2:2-7). A divine command was repeated by James when he stated (James 2:8), "...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself..." If we ignore this one commandment, we have broken the entire law of God; and judgment comes against us when we show no mercy to others (James 2:13).

In James 2:14-16 the writer reveals faith as a living thing, which as with all living things, has production. The production of faith, or works, shows our inner faith to others. Belief alone can even be held by demons (James 2:19), but faith producing divine works is reserved for the children of God. God can see the inner status of His people; but man can only see faith as it is expressed in stability, caring, and a godly life. James illustrated faith producing works by looking at two Old Testament believers. Both Abraham and Rahab were declared or imputed righteous by God. This divine declaration occurred following their salvation as they lived their lives in faith which produced works of righteousness (James 2:21-26).

Theme: The Operation of Faith OR
How Faith Works

- I. Swift to Hear
 - A. James 1:1, Introduction
 - B. James 1:2-12, Trials
 - C. James 1:13-18, Temptations
 - D. James 1:19-27, The Word
 - E. James 2:1-13, Impartiality
 - F. James 2:14-26, The Works
- II. Slow to Speak
 - A. James 3:1-12, The Tongue
 - B. James 3:13-18, Wisdom
- III. Slow to Wrath
 - A. James 4:1-17, Conflicts
 - B. James 5:1-20, Various Exhortations

Key Verse—James 1:19



**Outline
The Epistle of James**



Match these items from the outline of James.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| 1.61 _____ conflicts | a. 1:2-12 |
| 1.62 _____ temptations | b. 5:1-20 |
| 1.63 _____ the Word | c. 2:14-26 |
| 1.64 _____ various exhortations | d. 4:1-17 |
| 1.65 _____ swift to hear | e. 3:13-18 |
| 1.66 _____ the tongue | f. 4:1-5:20 |
| 1.67 _____ trials | g. 1:1-2:26 |
| 1.68 _____ impartiality | h. 2:1-13 |
| 1.69 _____ wisdom | i. 1:19-27 |
| 1.70 _____ the works | j. 3:1-12 |
| | k. 1:13-18 |

James chapters 3–5. The last three chapters of the Epistle of James continue to deal with the concerns of the authors regarding those who would receive his letter. James wrote about the tongue, wisdom, and conflicts; and he gave various exhortations in this portion of his Epistle.

In James 3:1-12 the author related the misuse of the tongue. Too many Christians had offended others and their Lord through their communication (James 3:2). James used a number of analogies, such as the tongue being a fire and an unruly evil, to teach God’s people that the tongue should be brought under control. Christians today must also heed James’ message. Rumors are stated and half-truths are repeated because we cannot control the tongue. The perfect, or mature, believer is one who has his communication subject to Christ (James 3:2).

In James 3:13-18 wisdom is the topic considered by the writer. A rhetorical question begins this section as James asked (James 3:13), “Who is a wise man and endowed with knowledge among you...” James taught that wisdom comes either from earthly sources or from a

heavenly source. Man’s earthly wisdom results in horrible actions, but God’s wisdom results in peace (James 3:14-18). When Christians can lay claim to God’s infinite and divine wisdom, why do they continue to be persuaded by human viewpoint and human thinking? We can have in us the very mind of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16).

In James 4:1-17 the writer dealt with the conflicts of the Christian life. Faith must continue to function even in the midst of conflicts. When the Christian subjects himself to the world, he is out of place like a square peg trying to fit into a round hole. The result of this friendship with the world is sin (James 4:1-4). The solution to the problem of friendship with the world is for the child of God to subject himself to God and His grace (James 4:7). Not all conflicts come from the world. Christians also engage in conflicts with other members of the body of Christ. James offered a very simple solution to this problem (James 4:10-11), “Humble yourselves... Speak not evil one of another, brethren...” By using the term *brethren* James indicated he was writing to believers in Christ who come into

conflict with other Christians. God has treated us in grace, and we must at all times treat others in grace.

Conflict in the Christian life can also stem from not allowing the Lord to lead and guide His children (James 4:13-17). Such unspiritual thinking makes the believer independent from God. If we are subject to Christ our Lord, we will live dependent upon Him.

In James chapter 5, various exhortations are given to enhance the Christian life. The wealthy man is told to take care lest his riches become a distraction to a life dependent upon the Savior (James 5:1-6). James reminded his readers of the blessed hope they share as they look forward to the coming of the Lord (James 5:7-8). The necessary patience believers must have as they wait for the coming of Christ in glory is illustrated by the lives of the prophets and the patience of Job (James 5:10-11).

The Epistle of James concludes with encouragement for holy living (James 5:12-20). The Christian is instructed to call for the anointing of oil if he is sick. Oil, to the Jews of James' time, was a sign of the friendship and support of one person to another. In this instance the sick person received the love and help of others who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. Oil was also used as a practical way to comfort the sick and to reduce fever.

When the Christian is unduly afflicted, God the Father will provide comfort for such trials of faith. James mentioned the power of prayer in times of distress and illustrated the power of prayer by the life of Elijah the prophet (James 5:17-18). James' final statement encourages Christians to support one another and to help the brother who had fallen away from Christ.



Answer true or false.

- 1.71 _____ James compared the tongue to a fire.
- 1.72 _____ James affirmed that faith must continue to function even in the midst of conflicts.
- 1.73 _____ The Epistle of James concludes with encouragement for holy living.
- 1.74 _____ In James 3:13-18 various exhortations are given to enhance the Christian life.
- 1.75 _____ Since God has treated us in grace, we must at all times treat others in grace.



Review the material in this section in preparation for the Self Test. The Self Test will check your mastery of this particular section. The items missed on this Self Test will indicate specific areas where restudy is needed for mastery.

Complete these statements (each answer, 3 points).

- 1.012** James originally lived in a. _____ in the province of
b. _____, and later moved to c. _____.
- 1.013** Jesus was referred to by the townspeople of Nazareth as the a. _____
and the b. _____.
- 1.014** James called himself a a. _____ of b. _____.
- 1.015** The recipients of James' Epistle were persecuted by their own a. _____,
by the b. _____, and by c. _____ afflictions.
- 1.016** James is one of the a. _____ Epistles, addressed to the
b. _____ tribes of Israel who were c. _____
abroad because of d. _____.

Complete these activities (each answers, 3 points).

- 1.017** List five things from nature that James mentions in his Epistle.
- a. _____ b. _____
c. _____ d. _____
e. _____
- 1.018** List six of the nine areas of concern which make up the outline of the Epistle of James.
- a. _____ b. _____
c. _____ d. _____
e. _____ f. _____

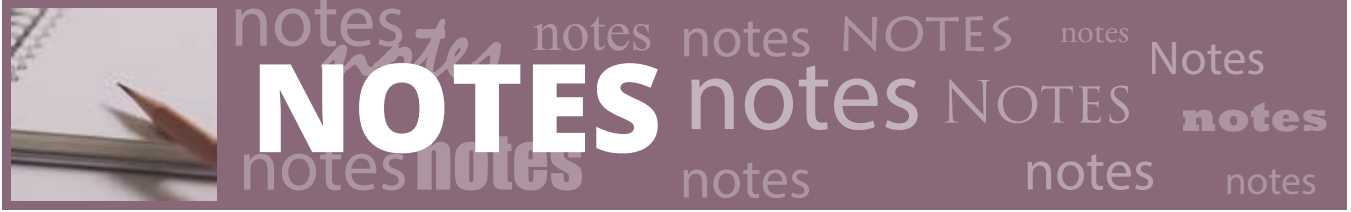
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