



# James

## Faith That Works

Sample Lesson #1

and

Leader's Guide Answers

# 1: So You Say You Believe ...

*Read James 1:1–12; other references as given.*

There are two basic messages in the Word of God: the way to God and the walk with God. While a portion of God's Word teaches the way to God (Leviticus, John, Romans, etc.), the book of James teaches the walk with God. Although James has been accused of teaching "works salvation," it actually teaches salvation that works.

A genuine faith will produce genuine fruit! And if there is no genuine fruit, there was no genuine conversion. This fruit, says James, is not some self-proclaimed loyalty to God but a biblical response to the various trials and temptations of life. James is short on words (108 verses) but long on duty (54 commands).

Before you begin, ask God to reveal Himself through His Word and conform you into the image of His Son.

1. Most conservative biblical scholars believe God used James, the half-brother of Jesus, to write the book bearing the same name. Although James was not a believer during the earthly ministry of Jesus (John 7:5), he must have accepted Jesus as the Messiah at the time of the crucifixion or shortly thereafter. He became the leader of the Jerusalem church (Galatians 2:9, 12).
  - a. To whom is the book addressed (James 1:1–2; 2:1)?
  - b. The twelve tribes of Israel were scattered abroad or dispersed, indicating that their departure from Palestine was motivated by external pressure (James 1). What was the probable cause of their dispersion (Acts 8:1)?
2. The book of James is more a preaching lecture than a letter. The book presents several distinguishing characteristics of genuine belief in God. These evidences of genuine faith are presented in short exhortations (usually a few verses) that instruct believers how they should respond to various situations in life. What is the first indication of genuine faith in God (James 1:2–4)?
3. In James' exhortation to rejoice during a time of trial, he presents several important facts about the nature of trials (James 1:2–4).
  - a. Name at least four important facts about the trials of life (James 1:2–4).
    1. \_\_\_\_\_
    2. \_\_\_\_\_
    3. \_\_\_\_\_
    4. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. List at least two things every Christian should remember in order to rejoice during a time of testing (James 1:2–4).
    1. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. \_\_\_\_). 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (v. \_\_\_\_)
4.
  - a. Who can acquire the wisdom of God (James 1:5–7)?
  - b. How does someone acquire the wisdom of God (James 1:5; Proverbs 1:7)?

5. James presents a rather negative picture of an individual who will not allow himself to trust God (James 1:6–8). What four things does James say about this individual?
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
6. If a man is **double-minded** (James 1:8), his instability will be a poor reflection on Jesus Christ and a source of frustration to others. What *do you think* is meant by the phrase **double-minded**? Please be as complete as you can with your answer.
7. Most believers have at least one area in their lives where they are still double-minded. In what specific areas of your life are you double-minded?
8. a. The second test of genuine faith is how a Christian responds to his economic station in life (James 1:9-12). How can the poor man (brother of low degree) not allow his economic limitations in life to be a source of constant discouragement (James 1:9)?
- b. The rich man is supposed to rejoice in his **humiliation** (James 1:10). What *do you think* this means?
9. What are some indications that a Christian is not satisfied with his or her present economic status in life?
10. Take a minute to honestly assess your attitude toward your present economic situation and the economic situation of others. Can you honestly say that your attitude reflects a biblical perspective and a genuine faith in God?
11. a. “Blessed is the man who endures temptation” (James 1:12). What does the word **blessed** mean?
- b. What *do you think* it means to **endure temptation** (James 1:12)?
- c. Are you able to endure temptation, or do you find yourself regularly falling prey to the same old temptations?

## 1. So You Say You Believe ...

1.
  - a. Jewish believers living outside of Palestine. Perhaps they had been a part of the Jerusalem church at one time and James, as leader of the church, felt a continuing responsibility to them (notice the word **brethren** in James 1:2; 2:1; 3:1).
  - b. Persecution.
  
2. The Christian's response to the trials of life.
  
3.
  - a.
    1. Trials are part of the Christian's life (James 2; notice the word **when** is used instead of **if**).
    2. Trials will come upon believers at unexpected times (James 1:2; notice the words **fall into**).
    3. Trials come upon the believer in various ways (James 1:2).
    4. God uses trials to develop godly character in believers (James 1:3).
  - b.
    1. The Christian needs to realize God has a specific purpose for every trial (James 1:3–4).
    2. The believer needs to realize his ability to rejoice during a trial is directly related to his knowledge of God and how He works in the believer's life (notice the word **knowing**).
    3. The Christian needs to continue to remember that God has a purpose for allowing trials to come into his life. (Note: the Greek word for "knowing" is a present, active participle which teaches that the believer has a continuing responsibility to remain alert to God's purpose for trials.)
  
4.
  - a. Anyone who is willing to seek God.
  - b.
    1. The Christian should pray for wisdom (James 1:5).
    2. He should humble himself before God (Proverbs 1:7).
    3. He should study God's Word so that he can acquire the wisdom of God (Proverbs 2:1 ff.).
  
5.
  1. He is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed (James 1:6).
  2. He shall not receive anything from the Lord (James 1:7).
  3. He is doubled-minded (James 1:8).
  4. He is unstable (James 1:8).
  
6. The Greek word (*dipsuchos*) means "double-souled" or "double-minded." In this context, it refers to a condition of spiritual immaturity (Ephesians 4:14). The individual is constantly vacillating between the way of God (belief) and the way of this world (unbelief). The results are spiritual confusion, doubt, unanswered prayer, ineffective witness, absence of joy, etc.
  
7. Answers will vary.
  
8.
  - a. He can rejoice in his elevated position within the family of God. He can rejoice that he is a child of God and an heir through Christ (Galatians 4:7).
  - a. The rich man can rejoice that God has saved him. He can rejoice that many of the earthly temptations are out of reach for him. He knows the temptation to become self-sufficient in his thinking, and he can praise God for revealing Christ to him. He can also rejoice that the Word of God continues to instruct him about the deceitfulness of riches (1 Timothy 6:17 ff.) and the need to invest in the eternal so that he might receive a heavenly reward. This reminder from the Word should be a constant source of joy for the rich man because it helps him focus on eternal values. Certain other answers could apply.
  
9. The constant desire for other things, overdue bills, heavy credit card use, installment purchases, overcommitment to work (e.g., two or three jobs), envy, jealousy, a critical spirit toward rich people, worldly speech, a lack of commitment to the Lord and His work, get-rich-quick schemes, etc. Other answers could apply.
  
10. Answers will vary.
  
11.
  - a. Although the Greek word (*makarios*) has been translated "happy," it goes far beyond the meaning of this English word. Even in secular Greek, the word describes "the transcendent happiness of a life beyond care, labor and death." In biblical usage, it means a "distinctive religious joy" that the believer alone can possess. It gives him the ability to persevere under trial, knowing that God is sovereign, His grace is sufficient, and His ways are perfect.

- b. The man who perseveres under trial keeps his focus on the Lord in spite of the difficult circumstances he might continue to face. The man who perseveres exhibits a confidence that God will sustain him throughout the duration of the trial, regardless of the outcome. This type of perseverance is more than a passive resignation and manifests itself in a tenacious spirituality in the face of humanly overwhelming pressures. This perseverance is made possible to those who have been saved and have committed themselves to “doing all to the glory of God.”
- c. Answers will vary.