JAMES
MERCY TRIUMPHS
BETH MOORE

with articles by
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VIEWER GUIDES WITH ANSWERS

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1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Our journey with James does not begin in the letter he wrote but with a plan God wrote. Part of God’s infinite genius appears in how such humanness can play into the divine story.

“Then ___He___ ___appeared___ to James” (I Cor. 15:7).

1. ___Jesus___ ___appeared___ to those who ___needed___ to see Him most.

Consider several we know by name from this and other accounts.

John 7:1-9

“Jesus’ brothers said to him” (v. 3, NIV) is one of two quotes attributed to or involving Jesus’ brothers in the Gospels. Consider recent events in John 6:60-66.

The only other direct quote from Christ’s collective natural family is Mark 3:21 (NIV), “They said, ‘He is ___out___ of___ his ___mind___.’ ”

2. James enters the ___scene___ as an ___unbeliever___.

viewer guide | session one
3. Jesus radically ______ restructures ______ the idea of ______ family ______.

Consider what seems to be the progression:

- Natural Family ➔ Family + Disciples ➔ Disciples – Family ➔ Spiritual Family ➔ Resurrected Family
  
  John 2:12  
  Mark 3:31-35  
  John 19:25-27  
  Acts 1:12-14

1 Corinthians 15:9-10

4. By the ______ grace ______ of God ______ James ______ became what ______ James ______ became.

“without effect”—Greek kenos (pronounced “kay-NAHS”)—

“____ empty ____, vain, ineffective, ______ useless ______ … The basic meaning of this word is empty, lacking content, or ______ hollow ______.”

5. The power of the ______ resurrection ______ means that nothing but the ______ tomb ______ is meant to be ______ empty ______.

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We spent all of week 1 getting to know the man, James. Today we open our Bibles to the message of James where our attentions will be fastened for the next five weeks. Read James 1:1.

1. What James 1:1 doesn’t say about the writer is as telling as what it does. Servant (Greek doulos)—“a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”

2. The letter of James is addressed to the “twelve tribes scattered among the nations” (NIV). Points of particular significance:

   • The Greek word translated “scattered” is literally “in the _diaspora_.”
     (See Acts 8:1,4.)

   • James is the Old Testament name _Jacob_.

   • Greek transliteration of James: _Jacobus_.

   • Hebrew transliteration of James: _Ya’aqov_.

   • James wrote this letter not as “a _Jewish_ _Christian_’ … but a _Christian_ _Jew_ … He was writing with full hope that the Jews as a whole would turn to Christ.”

“The Epistle was penned in the days when Christianity and synagogue were not yet _divorced_, when Jerusalem was still as _Jesus_ _knew_ it and was, further, still the center of Christianity as a religion and as an organization.”
3. James might have been the __first__ book of the New Testament __written__.  

“The Epistle of James can take its natural place, alongside other literature in the process of formation in the second decade of the Christian mission, as the first surviving document of the church.”

4. James was one of the __last__ New Testament books to be __admitted__ into the canon.

“Canon”—__rule__ or __standard__

5. James draws straight from the well of Jesus’ __teachings__ more than any other New Testament author.

6. The message of James can be captured in two words: __LIVE__ __IT__.

7. Our lesson’s conclusion is James’ salutation: (Greek chairein) __Joy__ to __you__!

Let Beth know at lproof@lproof.org if you memorize the Book of James.

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John 16:20-24

On week 2, day 1 of our homework, we saw the exhortation of James to “consider it a great joy … whenever [we] experience various trials” (Jas. 1:2). Today we will widen our scope on joy by studying a concept in Christ’s own teaching in John 16:20-24.

Two terms from John 16:20-24 are going to preoccupy our attentions today:

**Joy** (Greek *chara*) ↔ **Anguish** (Greek *thlipsis*)

The word “anguish” is often used to convey the added element of mental distress.

Consider two examples:

- pain + anxiety = anguish
- suffering + dread = anguish

The etymology of the word “anguish” (Latin *angere*) includes the meaning “to choke.”

Consider the similarity in the Greek definition of “anguish” in John 16:21:

Greek *thlipsis*—from *thlibō*—“to crush, press, compress, squeeze. *Thlipsis* conveys the picture of something being crushed, pressed, or squeezed from a great weight. It is used to denote grievous physical affliction, or mental and spiritual distress.”

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1. **Anguish** and joy can **coexist** (Jas. 1:2).
   Also compare Romans 9:1-5 to 2 Corinthians 7:4-7.

2. **Anguish** and joy can **trade** **places**.
   “The Spirit of the Lord God is on Me, because the Lord has anointed Me … to provide for those who mourn in Zion; to give them a crown of beauty ____instead____ of ____ashes____” (Isa. 61:1-3).

3. The source of anguish can **morph** into **joy** (John 16:20).
   Compare Psalm 30:11. Hebrew hapak—“to turn, … ____convert____, ____change____. … Frequently used in connection with the acts of God.”

4. Mental anguish can be like the **mind** in **labor** (Ps. 55:1-5, see v. 4).
   Hebrew hiyl—“to turn in a circle, twist, revolve; to writhe, travail (in childbirth), bear a child. … The main idea is that of writhing in pain, which is particularly associated ____with____ childbirth____. Also denotes ____suffering torment, ____experiencing anguish or distress.”

5. **Anguish** is **meant** to **lead** to a **birth** (John 16:20-22).

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2. Ibid., 1512.
3. Ibid., 1515.

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A wonderful part of taking a book of the Bible at this pace is the luxury of mining treasures out of single words or phrases. We are going to return to segments from this week’s homework and draw out two phrases that could offer riches beyond what we’d recognize on the page.

Part One: Revisit James 1:25—“looks intently”

Greek parakupto—“The verb has the basic meaning of ‘stoop down’ but comes to be applied especially to the action of ‘looking by bending over.’”

Consider two other places this word is translated in the New Testament:
• John 20:11
• 1 Peter 1:12

Note particular wording in the following translation: “The one who peers into the perfect law of liberty and fixes his attention there, and does not become a forgetful listener but one who lives it out—he will be blessed in what he does” (Jas. 1:25, NET).

Part Two: Read James 2:1-9. Focus on verse 1—“our glorious Lord Jesus Christ”

• James 2:1—The New International Commentary of the New Testament translation of the phrase: “the Lord Jesus Christ, our Glory.”
Consider the following excerpts:

“The Lord Jesus Christ is the ____divine____ ____glory____ … Jesus is the very ____embodiment____ of the divine glory made present in the world. ____Like____ the ____Shekinah____ to the people of God in the Old Testament and the Immanuel who is Jesus, the very glory of God is embodied in the person of Christ. An interchangeability between Christ and ____glory____ is observable here.”

Dr. C.H. Dodd writes of the “well-known maxim of Pirqe Aboth:
‘When two sit and there are between them words of ____Torah____, the ____Shekinah____ ____rests____ between them.’”

• James 2:1—The New International Commentary of the New Testament translation of the entire verse: “Do not try to combine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, ____our____ ____Glory____, with the ____worship____ of men’s ____social____ ____status____.”

Reread James 2:3. Reflect on a literal translation of the Greek:
“while you say to the poor man: ‘Stand there,’ or ‘Sit here ____under____ my ____footstool____.’”

Concluding thought: Faith and ____favoritism____ don’t ____mix____.

6. Ibid.

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James 3:13-18

For those of us who were willing, the opening pages of week 4 sketched James’ signature verses across our hearts. Long after our journey is over, you and I will know its mission was accomplished if we’re still willing to ask ourselves the prying question: When it comes to my faith, what good is it? (2:14,16).

The key word pops up again in James 3:13, offering us a prime opportunity in today’s session to pose a philosophical question:

What is the good life?

1. One that saves us from ourselves (v. 14).

In preparation for the next point, consider James 3:17 in the New King James Version: “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

2. One with a track record of yielding (v. 17).

Compare the wording of Matthew 27:50 (NASB, ESV)—“Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His Spirit.” The Greek word aphiemi means “to send forth.”

Keep in mind a vital difference in motivation: we yield out of wisdom from above, not out of fear below.
3. One that is ___full___ of ___mercy___ (v. 17).

Mercy morphs into ___depression___ when we take
God’s ___responsibility___ instead of our possibility.

Glance back at James 2:16. Consider the wording of the New Living
Translation: “Good-bye and have a ___good___ ___day___.”

Consider the following quote:

“It is not the form of the statement that is reprehensible, but
its functioning as a ___religious___ ___cover___ for the ___failure___
to ___act___.”¹

4. One that is ___full___ of ___good___ fruit (v. 17).

Reflect on a rich statement written by Dr. James B. Adamson: “Fruit
is both ___an___ ___end___ and ___a___ ___beginning___, the crown of
one process and the ___germ___ of the ___next___ being present in
the ___seed___.”²

Part One: James 4:9-10

When is it appropriate to turn our joy into gloom?

- When we’ve consciously ____ traded ____ the ____ joys ____ of the Lord for the ____ highs ____ of the ____ world ____. “Whoever ____ decides ____ to be the world’s friend makes himself God’s enemy” (Jas. 4:4, NET).

- When we don’t ____ take ____ God ____ seriously ____.

  “Or do you think the scripture ____ means ____ nothing ____ when it says …” (Jas. 4:5, NET).

- When we’re ____ arrogant ____ in or about ____ our ____ sin ____.

- When ____ ridiculing ____ sincere believers is our idea of ____ hilarious ____.
Part Two: James 4:11

Premise: In a religious pop-culture where we hear so much and see so much, __cynicism__ is one of our top risks. Five top reasons not to get __cynical__:

1. Jesus is still flagrantly __changing__ __lives__.

2. Real __people__ are doing the real __thing__ all over the real __world__.

3. The appetite to __study__ __Scripture__ is increasingly __ravenous__.

4. Some long-standing __barriers__ are __breaking__ __down__.

5. God will __kick__ your __tail__.

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James 5:7-11

Our homework leading up to today’s session has centered entirely upon the 5th and final chapter of James. Today we will return to several portions of the chapter that call for extra emphasis.

Let’s give this session a specific title drawn from verse 7: 

Between ___ the Rains

According to James, what do we do when we find ourselves in this particular season?

1. Accept the ___ of the ___.

2. Actively ___ God’s ___.

“Every reference to ‘___ early ___ and ___ later ___ rains ___’ in the OT occurs in a context affirming the ___ faithfulness ___ of the ___.”

Compare Deuteronomy 11:13-14 and Hosea 6:3.
3. Avoid a __caustic___ __undercurrent__ (vv. 8-9).

   The key word _grumble_ is especially captured in the “___ unexpressed____
   feeling of bitterness or the ___ smothered ____ resentment that may
   express itself in a ___groan ___ or a ___sigh__.”

4. __Ignite__ fresh resolve through the __stories__
   of __others__ (v. 10).

   _hupodeigma—a __model__

   “See, we __count ___ as ___ blessed ___ those ___ who ___ have ___ endured ___”
   (v. 11).

5. Ask of God like __much__ is __at__ __stake__ (vv. 17-18).

   In verse 17 “a man ___just ___ like ___ us ___” (NIV)—
   Greek _homoioopathes_—“It means, literally, ‘to be of like
   __feeling / / passion__’, but has the sense of ‘like __nature__’.”

   Let’s conclude with a glance at the original story in 1 Kings 18:41-46.

2. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, vol. 12, Hebrews-Revelation (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing

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James 5:19-20

Today we close our journey together through the life and Book of James. As a tribute to his message and ministry, we’ll return to the last sentence that dripped from his passionate pen.

Note 5:19 in the ESV: “My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back . . .”

1. Anyone can wander.

wander—Greek planethe

2. God watches for someone willing to bring him or her back.

Caution: Our narcissistic culture makes it easy to twist the concept of boundaries into a practice Jesus didn’t teach.

Consider the following:

I can’t
My help doesn’t help
Unauthorized danger
It’s wrong

4 SOLID BOUNDARIES
Nehemiah 9:20-22 (Message) concludes with a beautiful guideline:

“You gave them your good Spirit to teach them to live wisely. You never stinted with your manna, gave them plenty of water to drink. You supported them forty years in the desert; they had everything they needed; their clothes didn’t wear out and their feet never blistered. You gave them kingdoms and peoples, establishing generous boundaries.”

3. **Anyone + Someone = A Win for Everyone**

Series conclusion ...