

## James, Part 9: The Dangers Of Pride

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, April 4, 2018

(Jenga blocks) Quietly remove blocks from the tower until it falls.  
"Is this what I end up with when it's all about me?"

**Video** = "The Danger of Pride" (Church Fuel, 1:15)

There's trouble in this church, and it's you, and you, and you, and ME!  
The same was true in the church James was writing to. These people are still struggling with PRIDE! (Plus gossip, lying, and judging)... and he deals with it bluntly. He also warns about being future-minded. Listen:

**James 4:11-17** = "Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. 12 God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor? 13 Look here, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.' 14 How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it's here a little while, then it's gone. 15 What you ought to say is, 'If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.' 16 Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil. 17 Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it." (NLT)

### I. From What We Say To What We Do a. Speaking Evil

- i. Let's just begin by being honest, who has ever spoken anything evil about anyone if your life (out loud or in your mind)? (raise hands) = **EVERYONE!**
- ii. I believe James encourages us not to do this because it's simply not our place. I am a sinner just like anyone else and I have no right to judge someone else any more than they have to judge me!

#### b. Judging God

- i. Judging God? I thought we were talking about judging other people. Let's get deep for a minute...
- ii. In what ways do we judge others and end up judging "God's law"? What's this mean? (Student share)
  1. If grace really is all I know it to be and I believe it to be, every time I judge someone I am discounting God's grace to love and forgive in that situation.
  2. Obey what God says, stop trying to be God (that's not your "job" according to v.11)

#### c. Planning Ahead

- i. Life is short (like a morning fog) = blow baby powder out of my hand (v.14)...
- ii. It's been said, "No one plans to fail, but many fail to plan". I have been studying vision a lot in my online class this semester & keep coming back to this verse:
  1. Proverbs 29:18 = "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (KJV)
  2. God says we should plan and have a vision!
  3. Without it, this service wouldn't happen, this ministry wouldn't be meeting your needs, and this church wouldn't survive!
- iii. But, this passage is warning us to be careful not to let our planning become boastful pride!
  1. When we forget to acknowledge the God who is in control of our days... we've made it about us! Pride! Dangerous!!
- iv. So, what should our attitude be?
  1. V.15 = "If the Lord wants us to, we will..."
  2. Like your grandma used to say, "Lord willing..." (It's really up to God).
  3. When we can step out of the idea that this is "my" life and realize it is "His" life... then we will truly be LIVING!



#### d. Avoiding Sin

- i. Help me understand this last verse from a teenager's perspective... Why is God not satisfied that we simply "know" what we ought to do? (Students share)

1. It is sin to know what's right and ignore it!
  2. Same is true is you "know of" God but don't really "know" God (personally)!
- ii. Question = Has pride got you in prison?

(prison of pride pic) A prison of pride is filled with self-made men and women determined to pull themselves up by their bootstraps even if they land on their rear ends. It doesn't matter what they did or to whom they did it, or where they end up; it only matters that "I did it my way."

You've seen the prisoners. You've seen the alcoholic who won't admit his drinking problem. You've seen the woman who refuses to talk to anyone about her fears. You've seen the businessman who adamantly rejects help, even when his dreams are falling apart. Perhaps to see such a prisoner all you have to do is look in the mirror.

"If we confess our sins..." The biggest word in the Scriptures just might be that two letter one, *if*. For confessing sins – admitting failure – is exactly what prisoners of pride refuse to do.

"Well, I may not be perfect, but I'm better than Hitler and certainly kinder than Osama Bin Laden!" (*name edited*)

"Me a sinner? Oh, sure, I get rowdy every so often, but I'm a pretty good ol' boy." "Listen, I'm just as good as the next guy. I pay my taxes. I coach the Little League team. I even make donations to Red Cross. Why, God's probably proud to have someone like me on his team."

Justification. Rationalization. Comparison. These are the tools of the jailbird. They sound good. They sound familiar. They even sound American. But in the kingdom, they sound hollow...

When you get to the point of sorrow for your sins, when you admit that you have no other option but to cast all your cares on him, and when there is truly no other one that you can call on, then cast all your cares on him, for he is waiting. (The Applause of Heaven by Max Lucado)

## II. From Pride To Humility

### a. Which Is Easier?

- i. Obviously humility is the answer to our pride issues. The key (set of keys) to unlock this prison of pride.
  1. Humility defined = "humbleness, meekness, the opposite of arrogance"
- ii. Why is humility harder to practice than pride? (Students share)
  1. We're surrounded by pride more than humility and we have been living the prideful (sinful) life much longer!

### b. How Much Damage?

- i. Have you ever thought about how much your pride has damaged your relationship with God over the years? Or, how it has damaged your relationship with others? Too much!

- ii. So, how do we begin to repair the damage and heal those relationships?

### iii. Three words (write them own on your handout)

1. Humility = "Be humble, thinking of others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3, NLT)
2. Priority = we need Him and His Word to remain our daily priority, before the busy ness of school and life kicks in!
3. Awareness = now that you know you are naturally prideful, don't forget that and filter every thing you say and do through that!

### c. What's The Plan?

- i. If you are like me, you want a practical plan to help you in this battle against pride. Here it is!
  1. This is mine, maybe it will help you...
- ii. Justin's Plan For Humility
  1. **Begin** each day in intimate study of God's Word and prayer (share about 21 Days of Prayer and God's The Names of God)
  2. **Think** before I speak, every time
  3. **Remember** the old "golden rule" (How would I want to be treated?)
  4. **Constantly** study pride & its consequences to remind myself of its dangers!



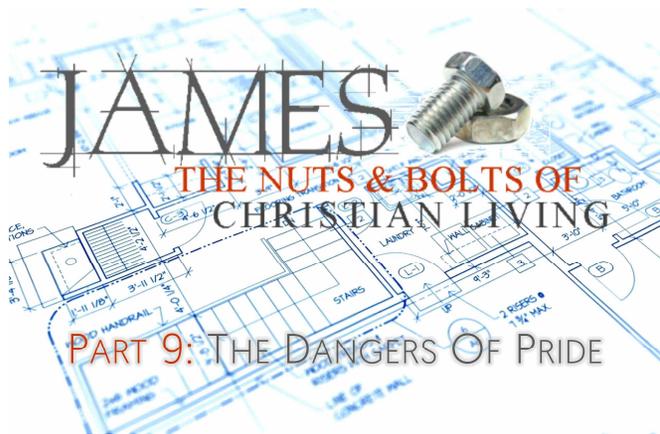
**Let's pick up the pieces (Jenga blocks) of this broken, prideful life and let God build something great as we humble ourselves before Him!**

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## FBSM Small Group Leader Guide

**Review:** When Jesus told us not to worry about tomorrow (Matthew 6:34), he was not rejecting the importance of planning. In fact worrying about tomorrow is sometimes an indication that we haven't planned enough. James's counsel is to prepare for what we can, always acknowledging God's ultimate control over tomorrow. Trusting him is the best way to keep from being consumed by worry or betrayed by arrogance in assuming that tomorrow will run as we've planned.

**React:** Like "Justin's Plan For Humility", what steps can you take to develop a spirit of humility as you plan for the future?



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**I. From What We \_\_\_\_\_ To What We \_\_\_\_\_**

**a. Speaking \_\_\_\_\_**

**b. Judging \_\_\_\_\_**

- In what ways do we judge others & end up judging "God's law"? What's this mean?



**c. \_\_\_\_\_ Ahead**

- Proverbs 29:18
- What should our attitude be?



**d. Avoiding \_\_\_\_\_**

- Has pride got you in a prison?

**II. From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_**

**a. Which Is \_\_\_\_\_?**

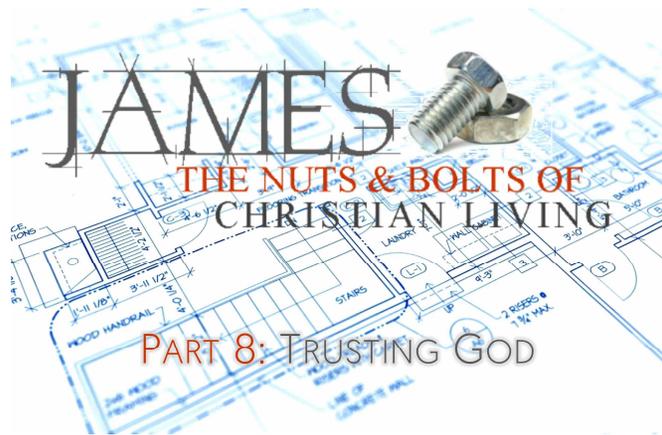
- Humility = humbleness, meekness, not arrogance

**b. How Much \_\_\_\_\_?**

- Repairing the damage / healing those relationships:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**c. What's The \_\_\_\_\_?**

- *Justin's Plan For Humility:*
- Begin \_\_\_\_\_
- Think \_\_\_\_\_
- Remember \_\_\_\_\_
- Constantly \_\_\_\_\_



## James, Part 8: Trusting God

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, March 28, 2018

Video = "Why We Can Trust God (Jordyn)" (RightNow Media, 3:52)

### "I trust Him because I know Him" (Jordyn)

How do you define someone you can "trust"? (Students share)  
(Someone you expect to be there, have confidence in, depend on, believe in)

**James 4:1-10** = "What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? 2 You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. 3 And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. 4 You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. 5 Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him. 6 And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. 9 Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor."

## I. The Wars We Fight

(hockey fight pic) Who doesn't like hockey? Why? Because of the fights! Stan Mikita, a professional hockey star, used to get into a lot of fights during games. He stopped when his eight-year-old daughter asked a very grown-up question: "How can you score goals when you're always in the penalty box, Daddy?" (Bits & Pieces, July, 1990, p. 19)

### a. At War With The World

- i. What causes the "wars" within us and around us in our relationships?
- ii. The wars around me are caused by the "war within" me (v.1)... pride and selfishness
- iii. Me vs. God becomes we vs. each other!

### b. At War With God

- i. This is a popular passage = "You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God." (v.4)
- ii. Look at the strong language = "adulterers" (people who cheat on their first love)
- iii. What does it mean to be a "friend of the world"? (Students share)
  1. Seeking the world's advice over God's
  2. Seeking to please people more than God
  3. Making things about me more than others



### c. At War With The Devil

- i. It is about time we took God's side and fought back, our real enemy ... Satan!
- ii. Let's dig in, look at verses 7-9, and let's list some ways we can stand against the devil!
- iii. Volunteer read each verse (7, 8, & 9)
- iv. Ways to stand:
  1. Know he will run, we are strong enough (7)
  2. Draw near to the God who longs to be near you as well (8)
  3. Do some "spring cleaning" of sin so you can better follow God instead of ourselves (8)
  4. Grieve when you don't take a stand (9)
  5. Live humble for the greatest advantage (10)

### d. At War With Ourselves

- i. Did you catch that promise about coming close to God? (v.8) He will come close to you too! Wow!!
- ii. But, what's verse 9 say we are to sorrow and grieve over? ("Let there be tears... sorrow ... grief...")?

- iii. How far we are from the Lord because of our pride or how much we have missed of what the Lord is teaching us because of our selfishness.
- iv. Hear me = It is a "crying shame" how much deeper your walk with the Lord could be if it wasn't for your struggle with pride!
- v. So... what is the solution to all these wars?

**II. The Trust We Need**

**a. Trust Is A Balancing Act**

- i. (hover board) Have you ever tried riding one of these hover boards? If you have, you know it takes some getting used to. My parents have tried and fallen, my wife has tried and fallen, and I have even fallen off.
  - 1. Emilee demonstrates balancing (leaning just enough to move forward and backward without falling on your face or backside)
- ii. The same is true with trust... we need to live in this world but rely on God! It's a balancing act!
  - 1. Let's be honest, we are stubborn. I know I am, I have been living in this body for 37 years now and have been in control of me for that long, but God deserves control.
- iii. Humbling ourselves before God (v.10) is the key to allowing Him to take control!



**b. Trust Is Giving Up Control**

- i. To trust God is to choose His will over your own.
- ii. Have you ever been convinced that you knew God's will for your life? (Students share)
  - 1. My examples = knowing it was God's will to marry Summer, it was God's will to go into student ministry, knowing it was God's will to move to Albertville. How did I know?... prayer, studying God's Word, & some wise, godly counsel.
- iii. Giving up control is tough... take a minute to write down the areas in your life where it is difficult for you to turn over control to God (handout).

**c. Trust Is Winning The War**

- i. The bad news is that we are in a constant battle. The good news is that we are really only in one overall war (which relates to all our other struggles)... it is the war with your pride!
- ii. So... how do we win the battle?
  - 1. Remember, "We are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies..." (Eph. 6:12)

- iii. We need to DRAW closer to God, how?
  - 1. **D**o away with the things that lead to your pride (those friends, social media, etc)
  - 2. **R**eflect Christ in your words and actions
  - 3. **A**rm (protect) your mind, your thoughts
  - 4. **W**ant to (really) hear from & talk to God (prayer and reading His Word)
- iv. Trusting God really does mean seeking to please Him more than pleasing anyone else (you'll talk about that more in small groups in a moment).

*(Get on hover board) How much are you "leaning" into God to take you places? Trust Him... it's worth it.*

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## FBSM Small Group Leader Guide

Date: Wednesday, March 28, 2018

**Review:** Who do you want to please? The choice is simple, yet hard. We can please God or someone else (including ourselves). We were created for God's pleasure and glory, but we will sink into petty selfish behavior if we don't humbly bow before God. We can choose friendship with God or friendship with the world (including ourselves). As James shows us in the passage, we can troubleshoot almost any problem we get into by asking, "Who am I trying to please?"

**React:** After reading the above quote from Max Lucado, ask: Who are you trying to please? Be honest and specific.

*Leader's Notes:*

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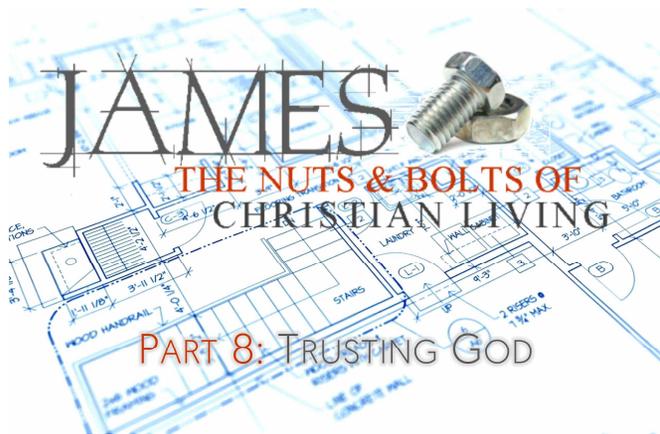
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# James, Part 8: Trusting God

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, March 28, 2018

**Video** = "Why We Can Trust God (Jordyn)" (RightNow Media, 3:52)

**James 4:1-10** = "What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? 2 You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. 3 And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. 4 You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. 5 Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him. 6 And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. 9 Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor."

I. The \_\_\_\_\_ We \_\_\_\_\_

a. At War With The \_\_\_\_\_

b. At War With \_\_\_\_\_

- What does it mean to be a "friend of the world"?

c. At War With The \_\_\_\_\_

- Ways to stand = vv. 7-9

d. At War With \_\_\_\_\_

II. The \_\_\_\_\_ We \_\_\_\_\_

a. Trust Is A \_\_\_\_\_ Act

- Humbling ourselves before God (v. 10) is the key to allowing Him to take control!

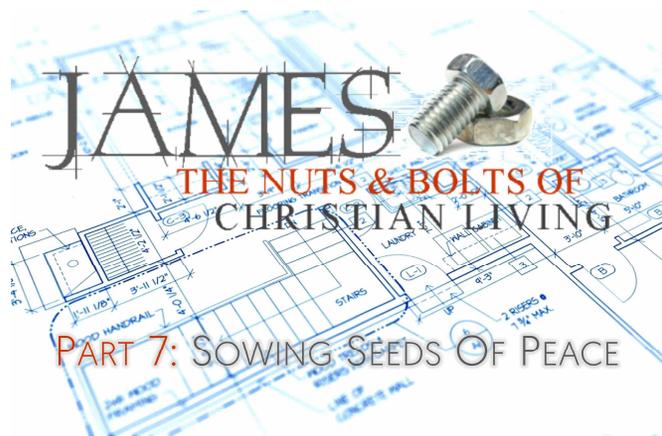
b. Trust Is Giving Up \_\_\_\_\_



- List areas of your life that are difficult for you to turn over to God's control:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

c. Trust Is \_\_\_\_\_ The War

- How to DRAW closer to God...
- D \_\_\_\_\_
- R \_\_\_\_\_
- A \_\_\_\_\_
- W \_\_\_\_\_



# James, Part 7: Sowing Seeds Of Peace

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, March 7, 2018

Video = "God Is Consistent" (RightNow Media, 2:49)

**There are a lot of different religions out there with lots of different advice about finding peace...**

Friar Oscar Romero: "Peace is not the product of terror or fear. Peace is not the silence of cemeteries. Peace is not the silent result of violent repression. Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity. It is a right and it is a duty."

Hans Küng: "There will be peace on earth when there is peace among the world religions."

Ramakrishna, a Hindu mystic: "God has made different religions to suit different aspirations, times and countries...one can reach God if one follows any of the paths with wholehearted devotion."

Ancient Japanese saying: "There are many paths up the Mountain, but the view of the moon from the top is the same."

Thich Nhat Hanh, Buddhist monk and peace activist: "How do you want to create peace, if there is no peace inside yourselves?"

Mahatma Gandhi: "Be the peace you wish for the world."

Non: "When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace."

**James 3:13-18** = "If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. 15 For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. 16 For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you

will find disorder and evil of every kind. 17 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. 18 And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness."

**B & B pic** (The godly example of Mr. B in response to finding out about Mrs. B's extramarital affair was such an example of peace in the middle of a volatile situation. His holding his tongue and thinking before he spoke truly showed his maturity and Christ in the situation. Through his patient but stern witness and forgiving spirit, I believe their marriage is stronger because of this indiscretion.)

## I. The Words Of Wisdom

### a. Worldly Wisdom



- i. Think about the word "wisdom" (to be wise).
- ii. How would you describe worldly wisdom? (Students share)
  1. Dr. Phil advice or "do what feels good" or "yourself before others" or "happiness is paramount", etc...
- iii. Throughout the letter of James there are allusions to the words and wisdom of Jesus. James was Jesus' half-bro. Though he did not believe in Jesus before the Resurrection, he did remember much of what Jesus said.

### b. Godly Wisdom

- i. On the contrary (and it is contrary, opposite), this passage describes God's wisdom as this:
  1. "pure, peace loving, gentle at all times, willing to yield to others, full of mercy, good deeds, no favoritism, always sincere" (v.17)
  2. Always ready to help others
  3. Always desiring to do good
  4. Fair and honest
  5. Brings peace to every situation

### c. The Worldly Vs. The Godly

- i. The opposite of peace & wisdom is jealousy and selfishness = "For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom" (v.15)... "Wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind" (v.16)
- ii. It really is about my will versus God's will (worldly vs. godly). Jealousy and selfishness is all about me! Me first... out of line, causes confusion
- iii. Ultimately, when I do what I want more than what God wants... evil will result! But, there's another way:

## II. The Practice Of Peace

### a. When We Work For Peace



- i. What happens when we work for peace? = Compromise, compassion, unity, & peace happens!
- ii. Being a peacemaker means you are conforming to God's will in thought and deed!
- iii. V.18 = "And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness."

(pic of Nazi children) The principle for peace is the same as the principle for crops: Never underestimate the power of a seed.

The story of Heinz is a good example. Europe, 1934. Hitler's plague of anti-Semitism was infecting a continent. Some would escape it. Some would die from it. But eleven-year-old Heinz would learn from it. He would learn the power of sowing seeds of peace.

Heinz was a Jew. The Bavarian village of Furth where Heinz lived was being overrun by Hitler's young thugs. Heinz's father, a school teacher, lost his job. Recreational activities ceased... Hitler youth roamed the neighborhoods looking for trouble. Young Heinz learned to keep his eyes open. When he saw a band of troublemakers, he would step to the other side of the street. Sometimes he would escape a fight – sometimes not.

One day, in 1934, a pivotal confrontation occurred. Heinz found himself face-to-face with a Hitler bully. A beating appeared inevitable. This time, however, he walked away unhurt – not because of what he did, but because of what he said. He didn't fight back; he spoke up. He convinced the troublemakers that a fight was not necessary. His words kept battle at bay. And Heinz saw firsthand how the tongue can create peace. He learned the skill of using words to avoid conflict. And for a young Jew in Hitler-ridden Europe, that skill had many opportunities to be honed.

Fortunately, Heinz's family escaped from Bavaria and made their way to America. Later in life, he would downplay the impact those adolescent experiences had on his development, but one has to wonder. For after Heinz grew up, his name became synonymous with peace negotiations. His legacy became that of a bridge builder. Somewhere he had learned the power of the properly placed word of peace. You don't know him as Heinz. You know him by his Anglicized name Henry. Henry Kissinger. (pic on screen, Secretary of State, National Security Advisor, and Noble Prize winner)

Never underestimate the power of a seed. (From *The Applause of Heaven* by Max Lucado)

### b. How We Become A Peacemaker

- i. Think about how a wise person resolves conflict... with the right flavor or quantity of words. Peaceful words will lead to peace resolutions!
- ii. Peacemaker = you make peace
- iii. Plant and water dropper (life: plant, water: peace)



- iv. Sowing seeds of peace means "dropping" little (even subtle) hints of peace in every piece of life
  1. Seeds may take a while to grow... patience!
  2. Especially with people unwilling to work for peace right now... patience!
- v. Why do you think it is important for Christians to sow seeds of peace? (Students share)
  1. We live in a selfish world! Need peace!
  2. If we're not showing God's peace, who will?

### c. Why Not Try It Now?

- i. Now, it's time to get practical!
- ii. Think of some practical ways you can bring peace to a conflict you are facing.
  1. Maybe list that conflict or that person on [your handout](#) and then list what you could do to welcome God's peace into that situation. Be a peacemaker!

**(hold plant) You never know what your seeds of peace will grow into.**

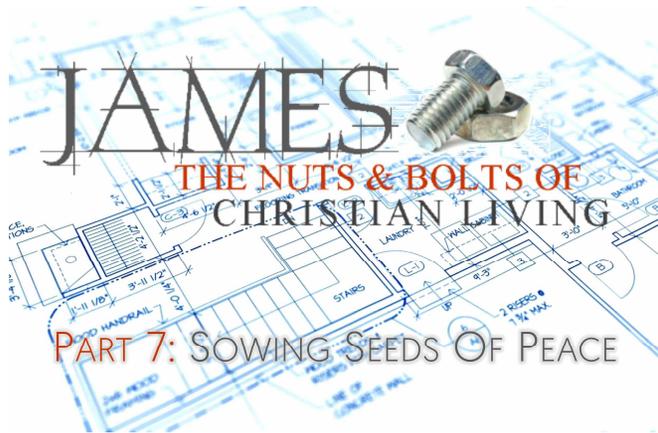
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## FBSM Small Group Leader Guide

Date: Wednesday, March 7, 2018

**Review:** When we face conflict that is escalating, hit the "pause" button and think it through. If envy, anger, or selfish ambition is present, wisdom is usually absent. Before we speak or engage in a conflict situation, it's wise to run out plans past the eight traits of wisdom that James listed. Is what I'm about to propose pure, peaceable, gentle, submissive, merciful, fruitful, impartial, and sincere? If our thoughts don't pass these tests, it's time to rethink.

**React:** Would your friends consider you a wise person? Why or why not? Would others consider you a peace-maker? Why or why not?



# James, Part 7: Sowing Seeds Of Peace

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, March 7, 2018

**Video** = "God Is Consistent" (RightNow Media, 2:49)

**James 3:13-18** = "If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. 15 For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. 16 For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. 17 But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. 18 And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness." (NLT)

## I. The Words Of \_\_\_\_\_

a. \_\_\_\_\_ **Wisdom**

b. \_\_\_\_\_ **Wisdom**



- "pure, peace loving, gentle, willing to yield, mercy ..."

## c. The \_\_\_\_\_ Vs. The \_\_\_\_\_

- Opposite of peace & wisdom = jealousy & selfishness

## II. The \_\_\_\_\_ Of Peace

### a. When We \_\_\_\_\_ For Peace

- Being a peacemaker means you are conforming to God's will in thought and deed!

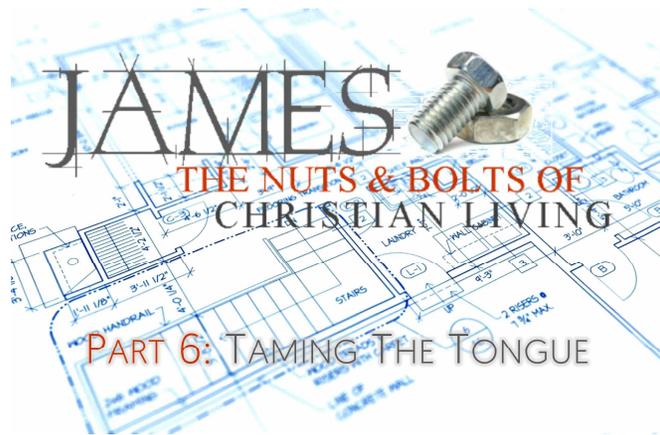


### b. How To Become A \_\_\_\_\_

- The right flav or quantity of words
- "Dropping" little hints of peace in every piece of life
- Be patient!

### c. Why Not \_\_\_\_\_ Now?

- List a conflict or person you are in conflict with:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How can you welcome God's peace into this?:  
\_\_\_\_\_



## James, Part 6: Taming The Tongue

*First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, February 28, 2018*

Tonight, as we learn more from the book of James, with part 6 of our series, I have one simple question... what if we all could just "shut it" sometimes? What if we could really tame our tongues? ([Duct tape on mouth](#))

**Video** = "Eph429" (Shift Worship, 1:34)

(Hold up salt shaker, small stone, & a nail) A pinch of salt, a pebble in a shoe, and a nail in a tire are all small items that can have large consequences. This is what James is trying to tell us tonight about this little thing in our mouths called our tongues. Out-of-control speech is dangerous. The tiny tongue can be fire, poison, and evil. Listen to James...

**James 3:1-12** = "Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. 3 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. 4 And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. 5 In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6 And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. 7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, 8 but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God.

10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring." (NLT)

### I. Small But Powerful

#### a. Bit Or Rudder

- i. Do you see how these analogies of a small bit in a horse's mouth (v.3) and a small rudder on a huge ship (v.4) reveal the power of such a small tool that can make a BIG impact?!
- ii. As the mouth goes, so goes the life = if I can guide my mouth, I can guide my whole life.
  1. Think of how your friendships, your family situation, of life would be different if you hadn't said "that thing".
  2. It came out and you wished you could take it back immediately ... we've all done that!



#### b. Spark Or Fire

- i. Look at verses 5-6 again = "A tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6 And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire..."
- ii. In what ways is the tongue like fire? (Students share)
  1. A word of discouragement can "burn" someone. Gossip spreads quickly and hurts many (like a forest fire).

#### c. Good Or Bad

- i. The tongue can be used for good as well as evil. Your words can literally change the direction of someone's day... a word of encouragement or discouragement.
- ii. Words make a difference = listen to the lyrics of that song "Words" by Hawk Nelson... "words can build you up, words can knock you down, put a fire in your heart, or put it out"

### II. Difficult But Possible

#### a. Controlling Our Tongue Is Tough...

- i. Have you ever thought about why it is so hard to think before you speak? I have a theory.
- ii. Your mouth is a lot closer to your brain than your heart is. Think about it... As quickly as we think of something, we say something.

1. That's why James had to say in **James 1:19** = "You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."
2. Or, like Paul said in **Ephesians 4:29** = "Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them."

iii. If we filtered our thoughts through our heart (where the Spirit of God resides) we might not speak the same words.

**b. ...But It Can Be Done**

- i. See James' examples (ask students what abt each):
- ii. Forest fire (vv.5-6) = spreads like gossip!
- iii. Taming animals (vv.7-8) = but can't tame ourselves?
- iv. Spring of water (vv.10-11) = fresh water/salt water (blessing and cursing) from same source? No!
- v. Fig tree (v.12) = produce anything but figs? No!



(Fishing boat pic) Three longtime friends were out fishing on a boat.

After a couple hours without so much as a nibble, they were starting to get bored. "I've got an idea," the first man said. "Let's be totally honest with each other and confess our worst sins. I'll go first. I have a big problem with the sin of lust. I've been cheating on my wife for over a year. I just can't seem to control myself."

The second man said, "As long as we're being honest with each other, I'll tell you what my problem is. It's the sin of greed. I just can't get enough money, so I've been embezzling funds from my company for years. I just can't seem to control myself."

The third man said, "Well, my problem is the sin of gossip. Not only can't I control myself, I can't wait to get home!" (Hot Illustrations 1.0, True Confessions)

**III. Yours But His**

**a. For The Glory Of God**

- i. Controlling our tongues can bring glory to God or detract from His glory. God created our tongues in the first place! How you react, respond, and encourage can all be for His glory!

**b. For The Encouragement Of Others**

- i. It's your tongue, but what if God could use it?
- ii. Here's a few examples:
  1. Sometimes not saying what you are thinking can encourage others
  2. A simple compliment or word of love can change a mood or a day completely
  3. How you say things (kindly or genuinely) can make a difference

**c. For The Use Of The Spirit**

- i. How can we submit our tongues to the control of God's Spirit? = ask Him for help, surround yourself with people who speak in wisdom, read about it!

**d. For The Word Said So**

- i. Ecclesiastes 5:2 = "So let your words be few"
- ii. Proverbs 12:25 = "An encouraging word cheers a person up"
- iii. 1 Thessalonians 4:18 = "Encourage one another with these words"
- iv. Job 16:5 = "Instead, my words would encourage you"
- v. Acts 15:32 = "...encouraged the brothers with many words, and strengthen them"

**e. For The One On Your Heart**

- i. As we close, I want you to think of someone you can speak words of blessing to tonight? Write that name down on your handout and text (or better yet call) them later! Speak life!

***God, change us from the inside out, purify our hearts so our speech will be pleasing to You. May our words only be encouraging...***

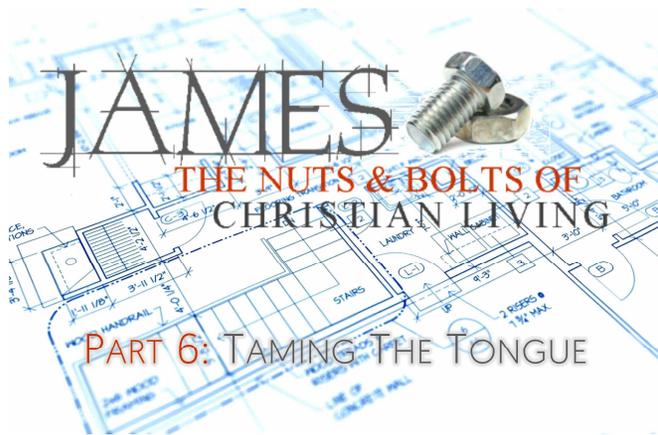
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## FBSM Small Group Leader Guide

Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2018

**Review:** In the big picture of faith and works, James says our speech is the number one indicator of what we believe. How would others describe the color and content of our words? James doesn't want us to convey mixed messages. If the way we speak turns people away, then our faith in action may never get a chance to touch their lives. Is what I'm saying true? It is necessary? Will it honor God? We need to look at the big picture and not our immediate reactions.

**React:** How would others describe the way you talk in light of your faith in Jesus?



# James, Part 6: Taming The Tongue

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, February 28, 2018

What if we all could just "shut it" sometimes?

What if we could really tame our tongues?

Video = "Eph429" (Shift Worship, 1:34)

**James 3:1-12** = "Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly. 2 Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. 3 We can make a large horse go wherever we want by means of a small bit in its mouth. 4 And a small rudder makes a huge ship turn wherever the pilot chooses to go, even though the winds are strong. 5 In the same way, the tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire. 6 And among all the parts of the body, the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. 7 People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, 8 but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. 9 Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. 10 And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! 11 Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? 12 Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring." (NLT)

I. Small But \_\_\_\_\_

a. \_\_\_\_\_ Or \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ Or \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_ Or \_\_\_\_\_



II. Difficult But \_\_\_\_\_

a. Controlling Our Tongue Is \_\_\_\_\_...

- James 1:19 / Ephesians 4:29

b. ...But It Can Be \_\_\_\_\_



III. Yours But \_\_\_\_\_

a. For The \_\_\_\_\_

b. For The \_\_\_\_\_ Of Others

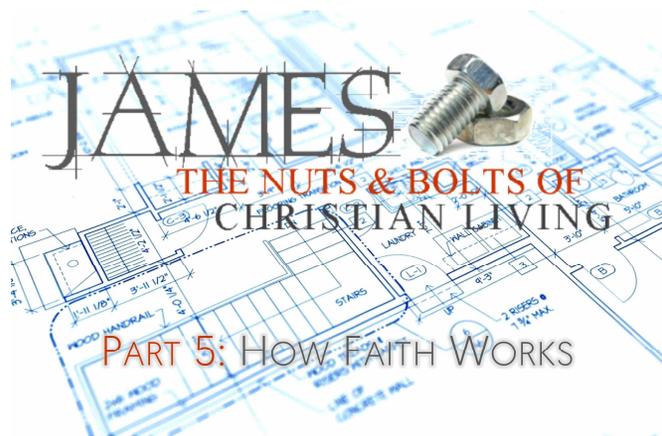
c. For The Use Of The \_\_\_\_\_

d. For The \_\_\_\_\_ Said So

- Ecclesiastes 5:2, Proverbs 12:25, 1 Thessalonians 4:18, Job 16:5, Acts 15:32

e. For The One On Your \_\_\_\_\_

- Think of someone you can speak words of blessing to tonight = \_\_\_\_\_



## James, Part 5: How Faith Works

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, February 21, 2018

Video = "You Do The Math" (3:24)

Balancing this whole faith and works thing can be confusing at times. I say let's get it straight from the Bible (through James) as we continue our series called "The Nuts and Bolts of Christian Living":

**James 2:14-26** = "What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? 15 Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, 16 and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? 17 So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. 18 Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds." 19 You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. 20 How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless? 21 Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. 23 And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." He was even called the friend of God. 24 So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. 25 Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she

hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. 26 Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works."

### I. Living Out Your Faith

#### a. A Real-Life Example



Bayshore Baptist Church pastor James "Tripp" Battle, 31, was shot to death about 3 p.m. Thursday, according to the Harlan County Sheriff's Office. This is a Facebook family group of Battle, his wife, Joy Battle, and their two children Sophie, 6, and Joshua, 3.

- i. (pic of Battle family) It's one thing to say you are a part of a church who loves Jesus, it's another thing to show it. This will always be my favorite example of Albertville FBC.
- ii. When Tripp Battle (former youth pastor) was tragically killed leaving his wife Joy to raise their two kids without any life insurance or much savings... God's people (in Albertville, Bradenton, and beyond) stepped up and provided money, a house, comfortable living arrangements, love, and so much more. It's a picture of what the church should look like... going overboard for those in need!

#### b. A Real-Dead Faith

- i. Why is faith without works (faith with no action) dead? (Students share)
  1. Any one can talk the talk. We prove our love for God by our actions, we prove our faith by fleshing it out.
- ii. (WWJD bracelet pic) The best way to demonstrate living faith is living and loving like Jesus! Asking "what would Jesus do" in all situations. = bracelets were huge when I was in high school.
  1. Living faith = alive, lived out!

#### c. A Belief-Only Faith

- i. Do you rationalize your inactive faith?
  1. "God knows my heart", "I don't have the skills", "People will be influenced by my good example", "I don't want to be offensive"...
- ii. Merely believing God isn't enough. Why? Do you really believe? If you really believed God sent His Son to die for your sin and eternity, you wouldn't be able to keep this love and forgiveness from anyone. You would tell every one!!
- iii. Look at James' examples here:
  1. Abraham = "You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete." (v.22)
  2. Rahab = was a what? Prostitute! Tell me God can't use your mistakes? He uses everyone = "She was shown to be right with God by her actions..." (v.25)

## II. Using Words Or Not

### a. Listen Up

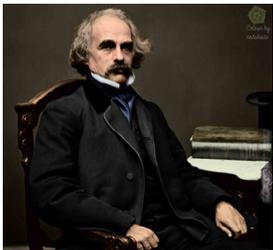
(Pic of baseball) You don't have to speak to encourage. The Bible says, "It is best to listen much, speak little" (James 1:19, TLB). We tend to speak much and listen little. There is a time to speak. But there is also a time to be quiet. That's what my father did. Dropping a fly ball may not be a big deal to most people, but if you are thirteen years old and have aspirations of the big leagues, it is a big deal. Not only was it my second error of the game, it allowed the winning run to score. I didn't even go back to the dugout. I turned around in the middle of left field and climbed over the fence. I was halfway home when my dad found me. He didn't say a word. Just pulled over to the side of the road, leaned across the seat, and opened the passenger door. We didn't speak. We didn't need to. We both knew the world had come to an end. When we got home, I went straight to my room, and he went straight to the kitchen. Presently he appeared in front of me with cookies and milk... Dad never said a word. But he did show up." (Max Lucado, *A Love Worth Giving*)

### b. Speak Up

(Pic of Nathaniel Hawthorne) Nathaniel Hawthorne came home heartbroken. He'd just been fired from his job in the custom house. His wife, rather than responding with anxiety, surprised him with joy. "Now you can write your book! He wasn't so positive. "And what shall we live on while I'm writing it?" To his amazement she opened a drawer and revealed a wad of currency she'd saved out of her housekeeping budget. "I always knew you were a man of genius," she told him. "I always knew you'd write a masterpiece." She believed in her husband. And because she did, he wrote. And because he wrote, every library in America has a copy of *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. (Lucado)

### c. How Can You Show Up?

- i. Think of some steps right now about how you can "show up" and practice true Christianity through your words and other ways.
- ii. In my family? = attend games, spending time together (with eye contact and touch), being present in the same room, not just in the room (undivided attention)
- iii. In my ministry? = being at your ball games and plays, attending school lunches with you, sending texts and making encouraging comments to you
- iv. Life is best lived with others, or it's really not living. This world would be weird if you were the only person left. Live like Jesus with others!



## III. A Disciplined Spiritual Life

### a. Reach Out!

- i. I want you to take a minute and list some ways (on your handout) you can reach out to someone in need in your immediate circumstances. (Write on handout, Students share if time)
  1. Pay attention to those around you
  2. Make time when the need arises
  3. Don't judge a book by its cover
  4. Think... then respond like Jesus
- ii. BTW, deepening your faith and falling more in love with Jesus will open your eyes more to those in need all around you. It's called "spiritual maturity".

### b. Practice!

- i. I learned this from a former student (softball player), her coach taught her "practice makes permanent" (not perfect, but permanent).
  1. Read more, pray more, study more, love more, serve more!
  2. Practice your faith, don't just talk about it!

***Being a Christian means being the church not just attending church!***

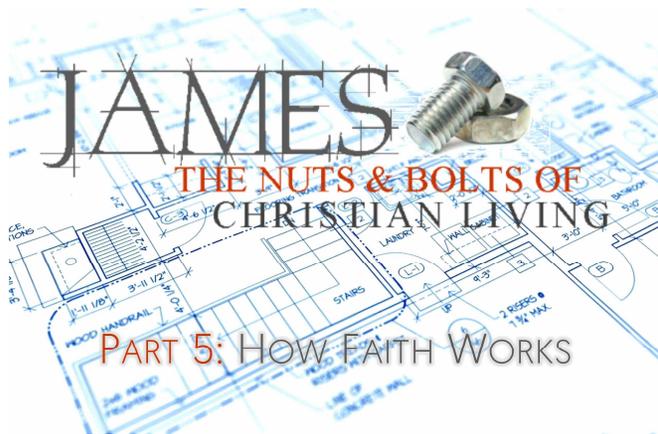
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# FBSM Small Group Leader Guide

Date: Wednesday, February 21, 2018

**Review:** The Bible describes faith as belief that results in a dynamic, active response to God's grace. The belief and trust part focuses on God, and the active part focuses on gratitude and obedience. Faith is not "belief in works" or even "belief in faith" but it is works coming out of a settled trust in God. Both workless faith and faithless work fall short. Authentic faith trusts and obeys.

**React:** Which do you struggle with more, and why: "workless faith" or "faithless work"?



# James, Part 5: How Faith Works

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, February 21, 2018

**Video** = "You Do The Math" (3:24)

**James 2:14-26** = "What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save any one? 15 Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, 16 and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? 17 So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. 18 Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds." 19 You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. 20 How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless? 21 Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. 23 And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." He was even called the friend of God. 24 So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone. 25 Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. 26 Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works."

**I. \_\_\_\_\_ Out Your Faith**

a. A Real-Life \_\_\_\_\_

b. A Real - \_\_\_\_\_ Faith

c. A \_\_\_\_\_ - Only Faith

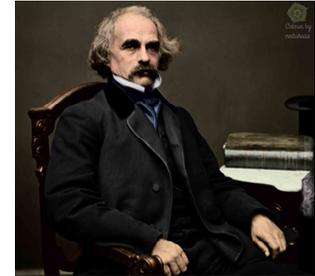
- Abraham (v.22)
- Rahab (v.25)

**II. Using \_\_\_\_\_ Or Not**

a. \_\_\_\_\_ Up

b. \_\_\_\_\_ Up

c. How Can You \_\_\_\_\_ Up?



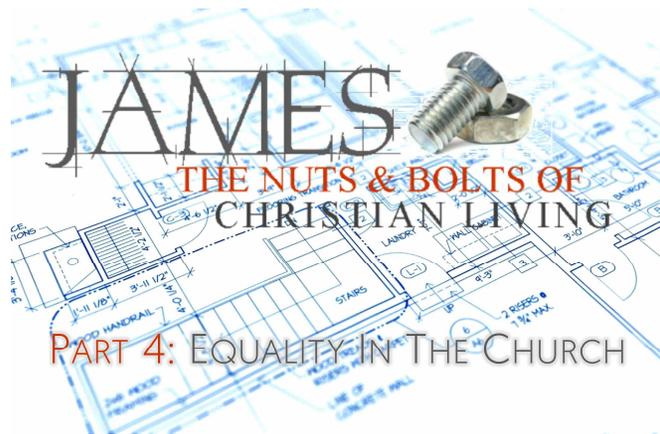
**III. A Disciplined \_\_\_\_\_ Life**

a. \_\_\_\_\_ !

- Reaching out to those in need around you:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ !

- Practice makes \_\_\_\_\_



# James, Part 4: Equality In The Church

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Video = "Matter" (Freebridge Media, 1:25)

You are prejudice! Every one of you! (Myself included). We all are! I remember attending my first Wednesday night at Albertville FBC as a guest speaker (back in October 2013). Some were friendly, some were uncertain, and some were extremely curious of me. I never want anyone to feel like an "outsider" like I once did.

This is how it was in the early church that James was writing to as well! Christians were tempted to treat any prestigious visitors with special deference. There was partiality and it was undermining the Gospel and socially fragmenting the church. What's the antidote to that happening today? Listen...

**James 2:1-13** = "My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others? 2 For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. 3 If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, 'You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor'—well, 4 doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives? 5 Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? 6 But you dishonor the poor! Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? 7 Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear? 8 Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: 'Love your neighbor as

yourself.' 9 But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. 10 For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws. 11 For the same God who said, 'You must not commit adultery,' also said, 'You must not murder.' So if you murder someone but do not commit adultery, you have still broken the law. 12 So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free. 13 There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you."

## I. Status Update

### a. The Status Of People

- i. Facebook statuses used to tell us a lot about people!
- ii. Let's just cover this basic question first: Why is it wrong to treat rich people better than poor people? (Students share)
- iii. We can't see people based on their "status" in life, God doesn't see anyone like that and calls us not to either! We are so judgmental sometimes!

### b. The Status Of The World

- i. How does God treat the poor and powerless? = poor by the world's standards equals rich by God's standards sometimes ("rich in faith", v.5)
  1. Psalm 49:5-6 = Why do some "fear when trouble comes, when enemies surround"? Because those people "trust in their wealth and boast of great riches." (NLT) No!

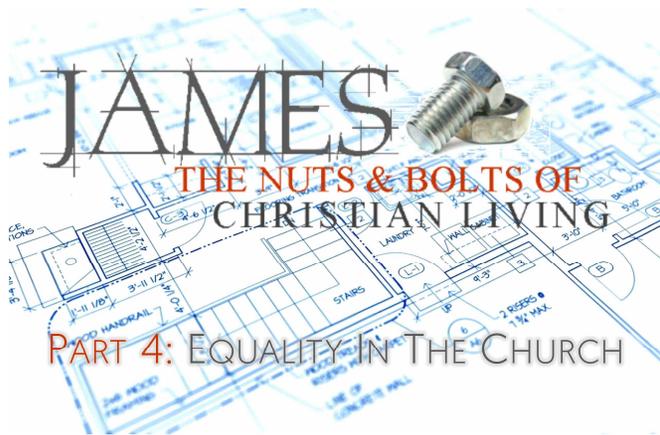
## II. Playing Favorites

### a. Favoritism Is Dangerous!

- i. Have you ever thought about how playing favorites can be dangerous? We are all partial to someone or something (because we are human). We may think we are just or fair but if every one is bias, no one can be truly fair/unbiased!
- ii. Examples in churches today: People in "power" treated with more attention, those who don't dress nicely judged easier, parents with troublesome kids are looked down on, me caring too much about what others think of me or my status in life, attendees who show up more are "more spiritual", attendees who miss worship often are "slackers"
- iii. Playing favorites = playing God (think you are superior) = it is SIN (according to v.9)
  1. Think of myself better than others?
  2. I am not the judge, jury, and executioner!







# James, Part 4: Equality In The Church

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Video = "Matter" (Freebridge Media, 1:25)

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## I. \_\_\_\_\_ Update

a. The Status Of \_\_\_\_\_

b. The Status Of The \_\_\_\_\_

- "Rich in faith" (v.5)
- Psalm 49:5-6



## II. Playing \_\_\_\_\_

a. Favoritism Is \_\_\_\_\_!

- Playing favorites = playing God

b. God's Favorite Thing Is \_\_\_\_\_!

- He's the only One worthy to judge others, and still He chooses mercy first!

## III. The \_\_\_\_\_

a. The \_\_\_\_\_ Ones

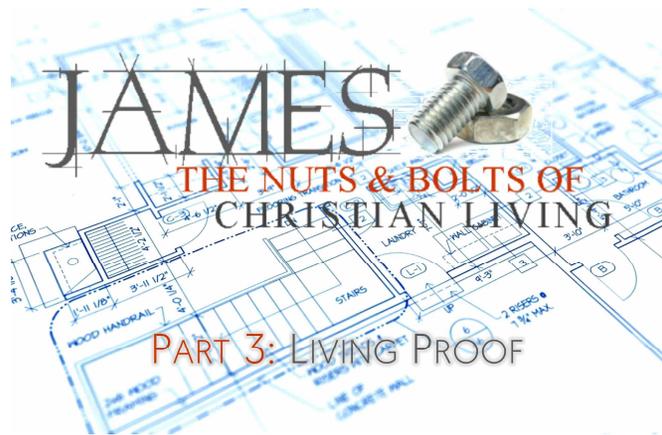
- Can you list some people you think might feel uncomfortable in our church?

b. The \_\_\_\_\_ Ones

c. The \_\_\_\_\_ Ones

- "Royal law" (v.8)
- Everyone's basic need = LOVE!





## James, Part 3: Living Proof

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, February 7, 2018

(Hold up Summer's resume) Many of you know my wife is working on her student teaching, hoping to get a full-time job as an English teacher this year. Here's her resume (explain a resume)... Godliness is not usually on many resumes. The word summarizes spiritual maturity, yet is difficult to clearly define. Can you think of someone you know personally who truly exemplifies godliness? (Student share names & why) These are great examples of people who proved their faith, not just talked about it. James would like that!

**James 1:19-27** = "Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. 20 Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. 21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. 22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. 26 If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. 27 Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you."

### I. Avoiding The Ungodly Life a. No More Anger



- i. How does this passage describe living a good and godly life? Where does anger fit in?
  1. It doesn't fit in! This concept of being "quick to listen" and "slow to speak" (v.19) seems to cure all our anger issues! Then, and only then, can we start living out the "righteousness God desires" (v.20)
  2. Your mom ever say to you like my mom did... "take a chill pill"? Now, we can...

Video = "Take A Chill Pill" (RightNowMedia, 0:40)

3. Ok, not really, but wouldn't it be cool to have a chill pill whenever that ungodly anger seems to well up in you? (pill bottle)

### b. No More Deception

- i. Would you consider yourself a "fool"? No one wants to be called a "fool", but v.22 tells us we are all fools!
  1. Why? What's it say? (Students share)
  2. It's this whole religion v.s. relationship thing!
  3. I was at Evans Elementary the other day for an event and I said to this 6<sup>th</sup> grader that I was a youth pastor and asked her if she went to church... "no, I'm not religious type"... my reply: neither am I!
- ii. How can we do what God's Word says and not just listen to it?
  1. Priorities = my faith will show true in my priorities (no more deceiving myself)!

### c. No More Spiritual Amnesia

- i. Do you see the spiritual amnesia here?
- ii. V.23 describes people who listen to God's Word but do not obey it. Maybe the better word would be "hearing" and not "listening" to God's Word.
- iii. Like glancing in the mirror (hold up a mirror) and forgetting what you just saw ... amnesia!

## II. Defining The Godly Life

### a. A Blessed Life

- i. God blesses those who study and obey His Word! How? Look at v.25.
  1. It sets you free & makes you happy!
  2. Freedom! = "If the Son sets you free, you are free indeed" (God, John 8:36)
  3. V.25 (NCV) = "Those who do this will be made happy."
  4. "Because I'm happy ..." (Pharrell Williams)

## b. A Genuine Religion

- i. The purest and most genuine kind of faith is defined here (v.27) by James. You see it?
  1. Care for the forgotten (widows & orphans)
  2. Care about your influencers (are they evil or worldly?)
    - a. Don't be corrupted = mostly by who you spend time with (in person or online).
    - b. "Bad company corrupts good character" (1 Corinthians 15:33)

## III. Living The Faithful Life

### a. Music

(Empty ballroom pic) In *Just Like Jesus* Max Lucado tells a compelling story of dancers who had no music. They had everything else. They had a fancy ballroom, which was decorated to the hilt. They had a stage upon which musicians could perform, but no musician was to be found. One person claimed to be a musician. He could not perform, because his violin had no strings.

Some tried to dance without any music. This resulted in confusion. Eventually they just took to sitting around wondering if they'd ever get a chance to dance.

Finally a musician entered and played beautifully. Some started to dance, but not all. The musician was not what they expected, not what they wanted. He didn't meet their expectations, so some stubbornly refused to dance. They even criticized and complained about the musician's style and presentation. To listen to them talk one would think they couldn't even hear the music that was being played. It was beautiful, but their own expectations and desires had so encrusted their hearts, that they couldn't even hear the music. They would never dance, because they refused to hear the beautiful melody being played for them.

This raises an important question for us today: Are we hearing the music God has chosen to play? Are we listening to the way He calls out to us through the beautiful melodies He performs for us through His creation? Can we hear the Spirit of God singing sweetly in our inner being so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith? Are we moving to the rhythm of God's goodness and grace which is gloriously presented in the message of the Christ and His kingdom call on our lives? (<https://spiritualoasis.wordpress.com/2006/06/27/hearing-gods-music/>)

### b. Protection

- i. One essential way to live out God's Word is to protect yourself from the world's influences. Give me some ideas on how to do that? (Students share)
  1. Spend time with God daily
  2. Pay attention to your "influencers"
  3. Pray for your opposition (love them anyway)



## c. Change

- i. Believers: In what ways has your life changed since your conversion? (Students share)
- ii. My list = I'm more positive, I met my wife and began a family, I enjoy getting up early to meet with Jesus, I believe I'm genuine in my worship and ministry to you guys!

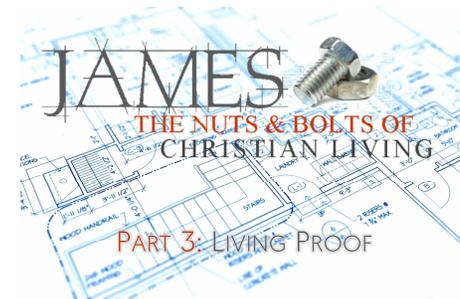
## d. Demonstration

- i. In what ways does your life demonstrate to others that you are a Christ follower? Write down some ways on your handout now as we close.
- ii. Examples = I think before I speak, I want to be defined by love and forgiveness, I give credit to God more than myself, I pray often for others, I try not to judge people, I seek to display the "Fruit of the Spirit", I trust God even in my difficulties.

***Don't just talk the talk, let's walk the walk! Be a doer of the Word!!***

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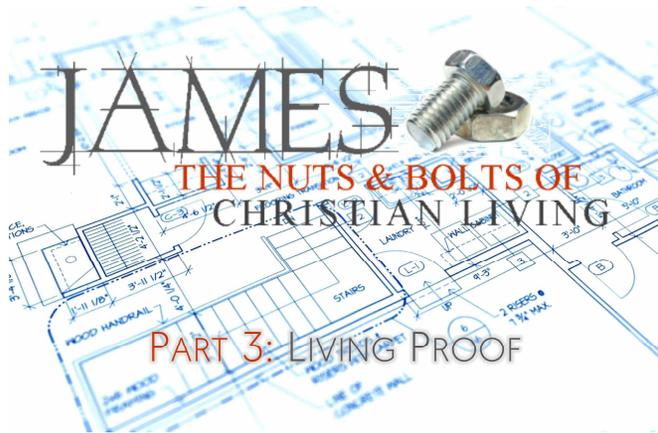
# FBSM Small Group Leader Guide



Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2018

**Review:** The good news of the gospel of Christ affects the whole person. It's not a set of rules to outwardly follow, but a change deep within that leads to a difference in our behavior. The effects of the gospel in our lives can be seen by a continual process of inward transformation and then outward action that honors God. God's Word frees us to live in truth and His Spirit gives us the power to live it out.

**React:** Would your friends at school tomorrow say that you are a Christian (a follower of Christ) based on the way you act? If so, why?



# James, Part 3: Living Proof

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, February 7, 2018

**James 1:19-27** = "Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. 20 Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. 21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. 22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. 26 If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. 27 Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you."

## I. Avoiding The \_\_\_\_\_ Life

### a. No More \_\_\_\_\_

- Where does anger fit in?



Video = "Take A Chill Pill" (RightNowMedia, 0:40)

### b. No More \_\_\_\_\_

- Would you consider yourself a "fool"?
- Religion vs. Relationship

### c. No More Spiritual \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Defining The \_\_\_\_\_ Life

### a. A \_\_\_\_\_ Life

### b. A \_\_\_\_\_ Religion

- 1 Corinthians 15:33

## III. Living The \_\_\_\_\_ Life

### a. \_\_\_\_\_

### b. \_\_\_\_\_

- How can you protect yourself from the world's influences?

### c. \_\_\_\_\_

### d. \_\_\_\_\_

- In what ways does your life demonstrate your faith?

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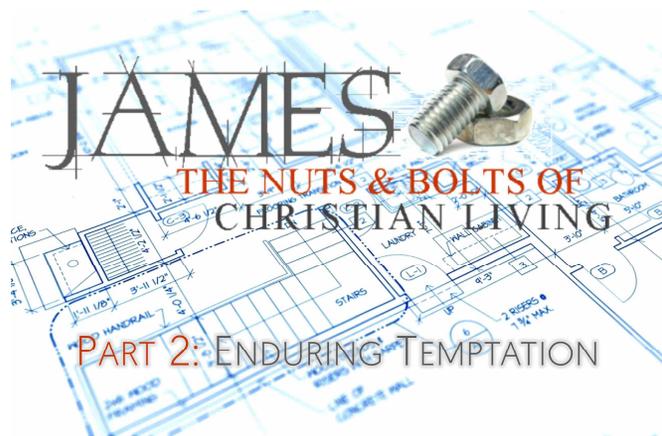


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# James, Part 2: Enduring Temptation

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Video = "SLAP: Strict Lockdown Accountability Partner" (Bluefish, 1:50)

Let's be real... all of us could use a good "slap" (foam hand) all the time... because we all struggle with temptation. Constantly! Let's see what James has to say as we continue our new series: the nuts and bolts of Christian living...

## I. Count Your Blessings

### a. Our Tendency

- i. Know that classic church hymn "Count Your Blessings"? = it highlights our tendency to tally our temptations and count our complaints rather than count our blessings.
- ii. Take two minutes to jot down some of your "blessings" (the items and people you consider as God's blessings in your life)... blanks on handout

### b. His Mercy

- ii. We are so blessed... let me share my list with you guys = [Life Lessons book \(pg.12\)](#)
- iii. Fact: we will face temptation, James says, because of our evil desires deep down, but as followers of Jesus we have plenty of reasons to live with joy.

**James 1:12-18** = "God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. 13 And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, 'God is tempting me.' God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never

tempts anyone else. 14 Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. 16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. 18 He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession."

## II. Understand Your Temptations

### a. The Blessing Of Temptation

- i. Blessing? What?!?!?
- ii. Look at it... God blesses those who endure it (it may not seem like a blessing when you face temptation, but a blessing is coming from God because of it)

### b. The Rewards Of Temptation

- i. That same verse says... reward (a crown of life) is coming from God, when you endure!
- ii. Reference to [Revelation 2:10](#) = "But if you remain faithful even when facing death, I will give you the crown of life." (NLT)
- iii. "The 'crown of life' may be the 'victory wreath' following the Greek use of *crown* for the garland given to winners in athletic events" ([Compact Bible Commentary](#)). = Whatever it is... it's good!!! Endure!

### c. The Source Of Temptation

- i. I love these verses... it's like God is saying, "it's not me, it's you". Look at [verses 13-14](#) again.
  1. God never tempts us to do wrong
  2. Temptations come from ourselves (it's already in our minds).
- ii. How does it get there? We put it there (maybe not even realizing it) = TV, social media, music, movies, friends, negative thoughts left unchecked, etc!
- iii. Your main source = your phone? ([hold up phone](#))
- iv. Why is it tempting for some people to blame God as the source of temptation? ([Students share](#))
  1. Blaming others is much easier! "Blamer!"
- v. [Verses 14-15](#) gives a formula of sin = a downward spiral of sin ([pic on screen](#))!
- vi. List the results of continually giving into sin ([Students share out loud](#))
  1. My list = bondage, hard-hearted toward God, isolation/loneliness, addiction, depression, victim mentality, lack of desire to live, anger/bitterness, "death"



### d. The Results Of Temptation

- i. Listen to how author Max Lucado shares it...



(Basketball scoreboard pic) The small population of people who saw me play school athletics have never questioned my decision to enter the ministry. I have, however, received a letter reminding me of the time I deep-snapped a football over the punter's head. A another former classmate reminisced with me about the fly ball that slipped out of my glove and allowed the winning run to score. And then there was the time my buddy scored a touchdown on a eighty-yard punt return only to have it called back because his buddy, yours truly, got penalized for clipping. Oh the pain of such memories. They hurt, not just because I messed up, but because I helped the other team. It's bad to lose; it's worse still to help your opponent win!

My most blatant experience of aiding the opposition occurred in a sixth-grade basketball tournament. I can't remember the exact score when I finally got to play, but I know it was close. I recall a loose ball, a scramble to grab it and complete surprise when my teammate on the bottom of the pile threw it to me. When I saw that no one was between me and the basket, I took off. With the style of an MVP-to-be, I made a lay-up worthy of air-time on ESPN. My surprise at the ease of the basket was surpassed only by my surprise at the silence of the crowd.

No one applauded! Rather than pat me on the back, my team buried their faces in their hands. That's when I realized what I'd done. I'd made a basket on the wrong end of the court – I'd aided the enemy! I'd helped the wrong team. No wonder no one tried to stop me – I was helping their side.

Can you imagine how silly I felt? If you can, then you can imagine how silly Satan must feel. Such is the pattern of the devil's day. Every time he sets out to score one for evil, he ends up scoring a point for good! When he schemes to thwart the kingdom, he always advances it. (From *The Great House of God* by Max Lucado)

### III. Remember Your Victory

#### a. Stop Blaming God

- i. Instead of blaming God for your temptations, learn more about yourself and where it all starts
- ii. Is temptation sin itself? (Students answer)
- iii. Remember that temptation is not sin and it ultimately comes down to a choice.

#### b. Start Enlisting Help

- i. We need other believers! Why?
  1. To learn from their mistakes & victories
  2. To share your struggles & prayer requests
  3. To find ACCOUNTABILITY

#### c. Start Believing God Is Good

- i. Look at verses 17-18 again...
- ii. Everything from God is good, He only wants what's best for us, we are His "prized possession"!

- iii. We all make selfish decisions than can cost us dearly, but God gives us the strength to overcome those decisions or those mistakes.

#### d. A Cookie Anyone?

- i. Let me close with this simple but powerful illustration, here's a cookie jar. I'm sure you have heard of the proverbial "hand caught in the cookie jar". (Cookies in cookie jar) = What are your temptations (cookies)?
  1. List them on your handout now.

*Recognize them, trust God with them, and live victorious in spite of them!*

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## FBSM Small Group Leader Guide

Date: Wednesday, January 31, 2018

**Review:** We can do two things when we meet temptation: run from it or face it. Both actions are forms of resistance. The ones we must face with God's wisdom are often the internal ones (we can't very well run away from those). Temptations of fear, selfishness, etc., need to be resisted with the truth of God's Word. Fleeing from or avoiding external temptations is an excellent tactic. Joseph ran away from Pharaoh's seductive wife. In every temptation we need God's help. We need to ask God what we can learn from a temptation we face, rather than relying on human wisdom and questioning God's motives.

**React:** What temptation are you facing (you would be willing to share) that you could use God's wisdom in dealing with right now?

*Leader's Notes:*

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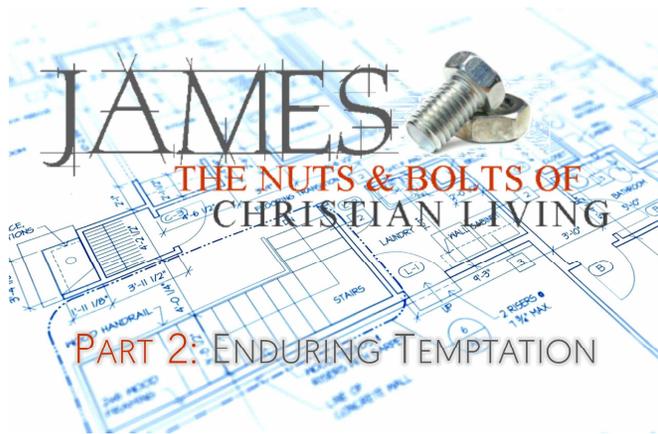
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# James, Part 2: Enduring Temptation

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, January 31, 2018

## I. Count Your \_\_\_\_\_

### a. \_\_\_\_\_ Tendency

My blessings: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### b. \_\_\_\_\_ Mercy

- Fact: we ALL face temptation!

**James 1:12-18** = "God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. 13 And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, 'God is tempting me.' God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. 14 Temptation comes from

our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. 15 These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. 16 So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. 17 Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. 18 He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession."

## II. Understand Your \_\_\_\_\_

### a. The \_\_\_\_\_ Of Temptation

### b. The \_\_\_\_\_ Of Temptation

- Revelation 2:10

### c. The \_\_\_\_\_ Of Temptation

- How does it get there? We put it there!

### d. The \_\_\_\_\_ Of Temptation

## III. Remember Your \_\_\_\_\_

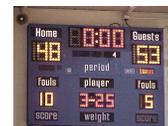
### a. Stop \_\_\_\_\_ God

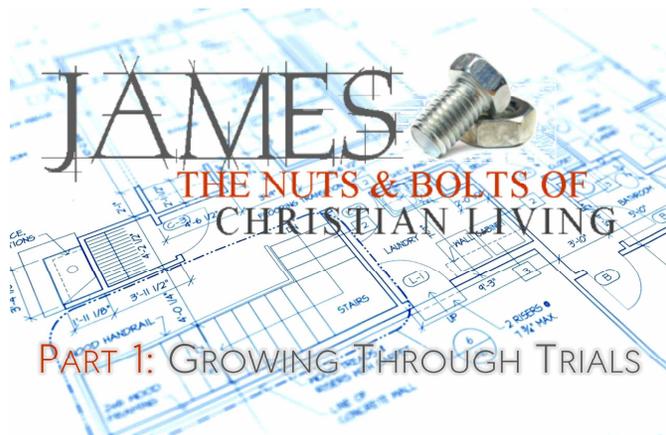
### b. Start \_\_\_\_\_ Help

### c. Start Believing \_\_\_\_\_

### d. A \_\_\_\_\_ Anyone?

- What are your temptations? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_





# James, Part 1: Growing Through Trials

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, January 24, 2018

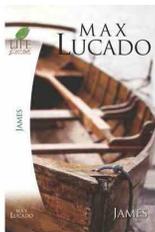
Opening Video = "James Intro 2018" (1:12)

From "growing through trials" (not just going through trials) to "enduring temptation" (which we all face daily) to "living proof" (proving our lives to God) to "equality in the church" (to model equality to the world) to "how faith works" (because genuine faith is hard) to "taming the tongue" (my biggest struggle) to "sowing seeds of peace" (need more peace in your life?) to "trusting God" (if we only really did) to "the dangers of pride" (the root of every sin we fight against) to "warnings to the rich" (compared to the rest of the world, yes, that's you) to "the rewards of perseverance" (you get what you get and you don't pitch a fit) to "prayers of faith" (making prayer real). All of these basics of a real faith in Jesus are necessary and the Book of James unpacks them all. Let's talk for the next 12 weeks about the nuts and bolts of Christian living... welcome to **James!**

## I. Getting To Know James

### a. More Than A Writer

- i. Obviously James wrote this book in the Bible (probably around A.D. 49, prior to the Jerusalem Council held in A.D. 50)
- ii. James was also the half-brother of Jesus (meaning: he knows what he's talking about), and he was a leader in the Jerusalem church!
- iii. This book is about faith and deeds, it's about trials of faith, it's about controlling our tongue, and it's about the dangers of wealth. A action-packed!
- iv. Resource I'm using = [Life Lessons \(Max Lucado\)](#)



## b. More About Monday Than Sunday

- i. Here is a story James would have liked...

(pic on screen) Francis of Assisi once invited an apprentice to go with him to a nearby village to preach. The young monk quickly agreed, seizing an opportunity to hear his teacher speak. When they arrived in the village, Francis began to visit with the people.

First he stopped in on the butcher. Next a visit with the cobbler. Then a short walk to the home of the woman who recently buried her husband. After that a stop at the school to chat with the teacher. This continued throughout the morning. After some time, Francis told his disciple that it was time to return to the abbey.

The student didn't understand. "We came to preach", he reminded. "We haven't preached a sermon."

"Haven't we?" questioned the elder. "People have watched us, listened to us, responded to us. Every word we have spoken, every deed we have done has been a sermon. We have preached all morning."

James would have liked that. As far as he was concerned, Christianity was more action on Monday than worship on Sunday. "My brothers and sisters, if people say they have faith, but do nothing, their faith is worth nothing. Can faith like that save them?" (James 2:14 NCV)

Saint Francis is noted as saying, "Preach without ceasing. If you must, use words."

- ii. So, I guess the simple question to begin with is... does your faith match your life, how you live?

**James 1:1-11** = "This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the 'twelve tribes'—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings! 2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. 5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. 6 But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. 7 Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do. 9 Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. 10 And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. 11 The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements."

## II. Responding To Trials

### a. We All Face Them

- i. Okay... let's be honest. Every one of us is in the middle of a trial, just got through one, or is about to head into one.
- ii. What's a trial? = a "struggle"?
- iii. No, think about the word... trial = "test"

**b. We Need To Use Them**

- i. We can't focus on "when" or "if" a trial will come into our lives... we need to focus on "what will we do with a trial?"
- ii. How does James encourage people to respond to trials? (Students share)
  - 1. With joy? Why? (Students share)
  - 2. This is how we learn to trust God!!!
- iii. Here's a perfect example from a HS senior...



Video = "Know The Word: Rejoice In Trials" (Student Life, 1:46)

**c. We Seek Wisdom Through Them**

- i. Did you catch how a person gains wisdom to deal with trials (problems)? Look at v. 5 again!
  - 1. Just **ask**!! He will give it. (Really ask!)
- ii. But, who should NOT expect to receive anything from God when asking? Look at v.7 = it's pretty clear:
  - 1. The one who wavers, who has divided loyalty, the "doubter".
  - 2. Do you doubt? You will miss His wisdom!

**III. Living Out Joy**

**a. Your "Thumps"**

(pic on screen) "When a potter bakes a pot, he checks it's solidity by pulling it out of the oven and thumping it. If it 'sings' it's ready. If it 'thuds' it is placed back in the oven. The character of a person is also checked by thumping. Been thumped lately? Late-night phone calls. Grouchy teacher. Grumpy moms. Burnt meals. Flat tires. 'You've got to be kidding me' deadlines. Those are thumps. Thumps are those irritating inconveniences that trigger the worst in us. They catch us off guard. Flat-footed. They aren't big enough to be crisis, but if you get enough of them, watch out! Traffic jams. Long lines. Empty mailboxes. Dirty clothes on the floor... thump, thump, thump. How do I respond? Do I sing? Or do I thud? (Shaped by God by Max Lucado)

- i. How do you handle your "thumps"? You don't like them but you NEED them... to make you stronger, to make you better. To help you trust God more!

**b. Your Difficulties**

- ii. Have you faced any trials or difficulties in your life that seemed impossible at the time, but now you look back and see how you grew from that experience? (My two recent examples)
  - 1. Our move to Alabama = hard but awesome
  - 2. Our financial downfall in 2015 = didn't see how we could make it, but God is faithful
- iii. Anybody want to share how your relationship with God has changed through a trial? (Share briefly?)

**c. Your Joy**

- i. Think for a moment how you usually respond to life's difficulties. Me = anger and just shutting down (ask my wife).
- ii. What we should do is 1) step back, 2) take a deep breath, 3) try to get perspective, and 4) trust God has a reason for this!
- iii. We need to find joy in the midst of trouble! How?
  - 1. "when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy" (v.2) = trust He's in control!
  - 2. "your endurance has a chance to grow" (v.3) = growing pains! Worth it!
- iv. JOY (priorities of life) = Jesus, Others, Yourself (pic)



*If we need trials to grow, then let the trials come! Are you ready to grow?*

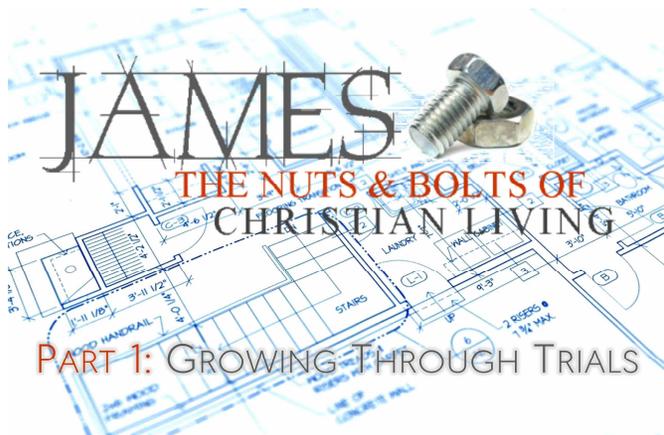
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**FBSM Small Group Leader Guide**

Date: Wednesday, January 24, 2018

**Review:** Many of us have contingency plans *if* things go wrong. In truth, we need a plan for *when* things go bad. If we assume that life is trouble-free, we will have to deal with constant disappointment. If we realize that life involves a mixture of troubles and blessings, we will have better reason to plan with hardships in mind. Trouble may not be here at this minute, but it's coming. James helps us see that God allows even trouble for our good. He doesn't want us to worry about why troubles come; he wants us to prepare and trust God when troubles do come.

**React:** What is one thing you can do this week to be prepared for when trouble comes into your life and you can still trust God anyway?



PART 1: GROWING THROUGH TRIALS

# James, Part 1: Growing Through Trials

First Baptist Student Ministry - Wednesday, January 24, 2018

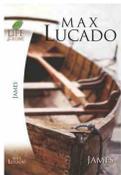
## I. Getting To Know \_\_\_\_\_

### a. More Than A \_\_\_\_\_

- Written about A.D. 49
- Half-brother of Jesus
- Action-packed!

### b. More About \_\_\_\_\_ Than Sunday

- Does your faith match your life?



boast that God has humbled them. They will fade away like a little flower in the field. 11 The hot sun rises and the grass withers; the little flower droops and falls, and its beauty fades away. In the same way, the rich will fade away with all of their achievements."

## II. Responding To \_\_\_\_\_

### a. We All \_\_\_\_\_ Them

- Trial = "test"

### b. We All Need To \_\_\_\_\_ Them

- How does James encourage people to respond to trials?

Video = "Know The Word: Rejoice In Trials" (Student Life, 1:46)

### c. We Seek \_\_\_\_\_ Through Them

- How a person gains wisdom? = \_\_\_\_\_

## III. Living Out \_\_\_\_\_

### a. Your " \_\_\_\_\_ "



### b. Your \_\_\_\_\_

### c. Your \_\_\_\_\_

- v.2 = Trust He's in control.
- v.3 = Your growing pains are worth it!

**James 1:1-11** = "This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the 'twelve tribes'—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings! 2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. 5 If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. 6 But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. 7 Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do. 9 Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. 10 And those who are rich should

- J.O.Y. = \_\_\_\_\_