

Undivided Devotion: Following Jesus as Lord in All of Life

The Letter of James

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“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. ² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:1-4)

1. The message of James

2. The mindset James wants us to have

For Further Thought and Discussion:

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper:

2. What is unique about James (see Acts 15:3f; 1 Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 2:9-10)? What's unique about the letter he writes, and its place in the New Testament? What sources appear to have influenced James' moral instruction (see Proverbs 1-9; Matthew 5-7; Luke 6)?
3. What problem is James' addressing in his letter (see 1:6-8; 4:8; see also 1:16, 26)? Why would this message have been particularly relevant to James' hearers? By contrast, what is James' goal in writing (see 1:4; 3:2)? What does it mean for a Christian to be "*perfect*"?
4. Read James 1:1-4. What "*trials*" (1:2) might James' readers have been facing (see 1:1; Acts 11:27-30)? What encouragement does James' offer? What doesn't it mean to "*Count it all joy*"? What does it mean (see Matthew 5:9-12)? Read Romans 5:3-5 and 1 Peter 1:6-7. What's the connection between our present suffering, the development of our character, and our future hope?

Application:

5. Time and again, James shows us the danger of mistaking religiosity (e.g. holding the right beliefs, performing the right rituals) for true repentance. He wants his hearers to see Jesus as Lord over every aspect of their lives. How is this message relevant to you? In what area of your life do you need to think more deeply about the implications of Christ's Lordship?
6. In 1:2-4, James provides us with a distinctively Christian view of suffering. What trial are you currently experiencing? How does this passage change the way you look at your current circumstances? What might God be teaching you through this season?
7. What's one thing from this week's sermon that you can apply to your life?