

# JAMES



WHERE THE  
RUBBER  
HITS THE  
ROAD

7 STUDIES FOR YOUTH

# Welcome to James – Where the Rubber Hits the Road

These studies are written for young people of high school, either in church youth groups or in school lunch time groups, etc.

An accompanying **8-week program for youth groups** is available here: [claytonfopp.com/james-youth-group-program](http://claytonfopp.com/james-youth-group-program), including an introductory session, and activities for each week. However this study guide can be used independently of the youth group program.

These study questions are intended for groups in which most of the students are Christian, or at least familiar with Christian thinking, although there's an anticipation that at least some doing these studies won't call themselves Christian yet.

The introductory questions are generally written in the hope that everyone will be able to answer them, regardless of where they are on their faith journey. Pick one or more of the introductory questions depending on your group. If you're able to get each member to make a contribution in answer to one of these questions, they'll feel much more comfortable contributing to the later questions in the study.

For each study there is a range of question, aiming to be appropriate for students across the high school age spectrum. So, choose the questions which you think will best suit your group. Don't work your way through all of them!

In your preparation, you may find it helpful to listen to, watch, or read some sermons from the letter of James here:

[claytonfopp.com/james-talks](http://claytonfopp.com/james-talks)

## Recommended Reading:

*James* - Tyndale New Testament Commentary. Douglas J Moo.

*The Message of James* - The Bible Speaks Today. J.A. Motyer

## Recommended Watching

*James*. The Bible Project (8:03) [bibleproject.com/explore/james](http://bibleproject.com/explore/james)

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## Study 1

## Temptation :: James 1:1 - 18

- 1.** *Very quickly* go around the group getting each member to say their name, school, an interesting fact about themselves, and what they think makes temptation hard.
- 2.** Make a list of all the temptations teenagers in your local area might face in a week.
- 3.** What trials are faced by Christians in our society? What about in other parts of the world?

### **Read James 1:1 - 18**

*In this passage the words trial and tempt are both used to translate the same word in the original language. In v2 & 12, the word 'trial' is used to express the notion of an external struggle eg poverty, sickness, persecution etc. In v 13 & 14, the word is translated as 'temptation' and refers to an internal difficulty we struggle with, eg discrimination against the poor etc.*

- 4.** In what ways are “trials” and “temptations” similar? In what ways are they different? Does it make any difference if we replace “trial” in verses 2 & 12 with “temptation”

**5.** What is the purpose of the wisdom from God in verse 5?

**6.** Why do you think there might be conditions placed on the asking for God's wisdom?

**7.** How does doubt stop us persevering?

How does doubt stop us persevering particularly when we're faced with temptation?

**8.** In verses 9 - 11, a trial is mentioned. What is it?

What is the poor man tempted to think about himself?

What is the rich man tempted to think about himself?

How will God's wisdom help us deal with these wrong views?

**9.** What is the wrong way to respond to temptation?

What is the right way?

Why do we often choose the wrong way over the right way?

**10.** Can you explain the process in verses 14 & 15?  
Is there an example you can think of which illustrates what James is talking about?

**11.** Sometimes we give into temptation because we think it will be fun, enjoyable, etc. What does James say to this in verses 16-18?

**12.** Create a “mental checklist” for when we’re confronted with temptation.  
What have we learned from James 1 that should be on our list? From elsewhere in the Bible?  
Is there an acronym you can make to help remember the list?

## Study 2

## Listening to God :: James 1:19 - 27

**1.** Do you think you learn best by reading, listening, doing, or something else?

**2.** Would you say you are generally “quick to listen” or “quick to speak”?

**3.** What are some ways that people say that they hear God speak?

**4.** Do you find it easy to read the Bible and put what you read into action?

### **Read James 1:19 - 27**

**5.** Describe the sort of person who you think is quick to listen. What is it that makes them a good person to be around?

**6.** Make a list of the things we find it easy to get angry about. Is it right to get angry at these things?

**7.** How does anger stop us living the kind of life God desires?

**8.** What is the difference between human anger and God's anger?

**9.** Why do you think God chose to give us his word through a book (the Bible) rather than only words passed from one person to another?

**10.** Why should someone bother to read the Bible?

**11.** What kinds of behaviour actually obstruct the work of God's Word in our lives?

**12.** What things stop us hearing God speak through the Bible?

**13.** What makes it hard for us to “do what it says”?

**14.** What part of “doing” God’s Word do you need to act on this week?

**15.** What do you need to get rid of in your life to “humbly accept God’s word”?

**16.** What does it mean to “accept the word planted in you”? (1:21)

**17.** What is the point of the mirror illustration in verse 23?



**18.** What might James mean when he talks about “the perfect law that gives freedom”? (v25)

**19.** How might people know that you are doing what the Word of God says?

**20.** What are some practical things we can do to let the Word of God shape us?

**21.** Think of one significant relationship you have. How might that relationship have been different this past week if you put verses 22 and 25 into action within that relationship?

## Study 3

## Playing Favourites :: James 2:1 - 13

1. For which event would you like front-row seats?
2. Are you someone who has favourite foods, TV shows, clothes, music, etc, or do you like lots of different things equally?
3. How do you feel when someone else is showing favouritism and you're the one missing out?

### **Read James 2: 1 - 13**

4. In what ways do Christians show favouritism?
5. In what ways might you be tempted to show favouritism?
6. Is it wrong to have a group of close friends?  
(see *Mark 3:13-14, John 11:35-36, John 19:26*)

**7.** How does showing favouritism mean that we have “evil thoughts”? (v4)

**8.** Often people say, “we mustn’t judge!” Is that what is being said here?

**9.** Are there some things we are supposed to make a judgment on? What sort of judgement are we to avoid?

**10.** What sort of person is the “poor man” in your life? New person at school? Unpopular person?

**11.** How can your belief in “our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” shape the way you act towards them?

**12.** What sort of person in your life is the rich man? How are you tempted to act towards this person?

**13.** Why is this hard to put into practice, even though we know it so well?

**Read Romans 13:8 -10 and Galatians 5:14.**

**14.** How does love fulfil the law?

**15.** Put the instructions in James 2:1 – 13 into a limerick, rap, song, etc.

## Study 4

## Faith & Actions :: James 2:14 - 26

1. Are you someone who likes to “do,” likes to “think,” or likes to “talk”?
2. How would someone know that you are a Christian?
3. Many people believe that God exists. Why doesn't this belief save them?

### **Read James 2:14 - 26**

4. What do you think might be going on that has caused James to write this section?
5. Since we're saved by God's grace (his undeserved kindness to us), and by trusting in Jesus' death for us, what's the point of doing good things?
6. Why do you think it's important that a Christian lives a good life?

**7.** How do the good things we do show that we have faith in Jesus?

**8.** How are our good deeds different from people who don't trust in Jesus?

**9.** How did Abraham's and Rahab's deeds show that their faith was real?

*See Genesis 22 & Joshua 2*

**10.** What is the difference between a living faith and a dead faith? How do you know if yours is alive?

**11.** Martin Luther, a Christian leader at the time of the Reformation (16th Century) said that a person is saved by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone. What do you think he meant?

### **Extra thinking questions**

#### **Read Romans 3:28**

**12.** How is Paul's argument in Romans 3 different to that of James?

**13.** What error in thinking or living is Paul trying to correct?

**14.** Where are the areas in your life where you could identify a gap between what you believe and the way in which you are living?

**15.** What steps can you take to address this gap?

**16.** If you were arrested and charged with being a Christian, what evidence would there be to prove it?

**17.** Do you think true faith is costly?

## Study 5      Watch Your Mouth! :: James 3:1 - 18

**1.** Can you recall a time when you said something you really shouldn't have?

What was the outcome? Were you able to undo any damage?

**2.** Do you think people notice the way you talk, what you say, or don't say?

**3.** How should we assess how mature someone is as a Christian?

### **Read James 3:1 - 18**

**4.** Why do you think we sometimes have so much difficulty controlling what we say?

**5.** Why does being able to control your tongue make you a perfect person?



**6.** What point is James making with his illustrations of the rudder and the spark?

**7.** Can you think of another comparison which would make the same point?

**8.** Have you ever experienced the hurt of someone else's words?

**9.** Has anyone ever been hurt by your words?

**10.** Would you agree that the tongue is "a restless evil full of deadly poison"?  
How is this so?

**11.** What do these passages say about the tongue?

Psalm 120:2

Job 20:12

Isaiah 50:4

Proverbs 18:21

Psalms 51:14

**12.** What damage can we do if we don't control what we say?

**13.** What are some helpful and practical ways we can keep a reign on our tongue?

**14.** What point is James making in verses 9 - 12? Why is this so important?

**15.** If people were listening to your words throughout the week, what sort of "spring" would they think feeds your tongue?

**16.** Is there someone who you consider to be wise?  
What is it about them that makes you think this?

**17.** How does James say wisdom is demonstrated?

**18.** How is the tongue like a fire?

**19.** In what kind of situations do you find it difficult to keep a tight reign on your tongue?

**20.** Is there a situation for which you need to ask forgiveness from God?  
From someone else?

## Study 6      What's in Your Heart? :: James 4:1 - 12

**1.** Can you think of a fight or quarrel you've had with someone recently?  
How did you feel afterwards?

**2.** What item is next on your list of things you'd like to buy?  
Why do you want that particular item?

**3.** If you can't have/get/do something you want, what is your natural response?

### **Read James 4:1 - 12**

**4.** What is the cause of fights and quarrels according to James?

**5.** What do fights and unanswered prayers have in common?

**6.** Why does James talk about prayers that aren't answered in 4:2 - 3?

How does this fit with what he already said in James 1:5 - 8?

**7.** If we are disputing among ourselves what does this tell us about who we are ultimately serving?

**8.** What is "friendship with the world"?  
Why is this "hatred towards God"?

**9.** What are the right motives for asking something from God?

**10.** In what way do you sometimes want to be friends with the world?

**11.** What does it mean that God's Spirit within us "envies intensely"?

**12.** What promises are made in verses 6 – 10?  
What commands are given?

**13.** What might be some signs that you are submitting your heart to God?

**14.** What does it mean to “humble yourself before the Lord”?  
How can you do that this week?

**15.** What have you been praying for in the last two weeks?  
Why are you praying for these things?  
Has God answered your prayers?

**16.** Do you think James 4 has anything to say about your prayers?

## Study 7

## Faith & Prayer :: James 5:13 - 20

**1.** Do you think you would rather endure a drought or a flood?  
Why?

**2.** What sorts of things have you heard people pray for?  
Make a list.

**3.** Have you ever seen or heard of someone miraculously healed from a sickness?

### **Read James 5:13 - 20**

**4.** What sorts of things do you think we should be praying for?

**5.** When is it easy to pray?  
When is it hard to pray?

**6.** How do you feel if you pray for a sick person and they don't get better?

*The passage about the "prayer of faith" is sandwiched between two references to the idea of believers wandering from their faith (James 5:7 - 12 & James 5:19 - 20), and is the context of a letter directed to Christians at risk of wavering in their faith, urging them to be single-minded and persevere. Along with this, the language of 'faith,' being 'saved,' sin being forgiven and the Lord 'raising up' seem to suggest that James is talking about more than physical healing and probably has salvation on view.*

**7.** The word translated "sick" may also be translated "weak" meaning "weak in faith."

Look up :

Romans 14:1

1 Corinthians 9:8

Hebrews 12:3

Revelation 2:3

These verses have the same words as used here to describe Spiritual sickness, weakness or weariness. How does this shape our understanding of what James is talking about?

**8.** What promise is made in this passage about those who are weak?



**9.** What benefits are there in confessing our sin to each other?

**10.** Do you think there are some things that it's better not to confess to others?

**11.** If we are aware of ongoing sin in our Christian community what responsibility do we have to each other to do something about it?

**12.** Do you think we exercise proper responsibility for one another in our group when it comes to brothers and sisters who are falling away or engaged in unrepented sin?

**13.** How could the members of this small group pray for each other more effectively?

**14.** Make a list of all the things we can thank God for.

**15.** How does praying for the things on our list demonstrate the reality of your faith?



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