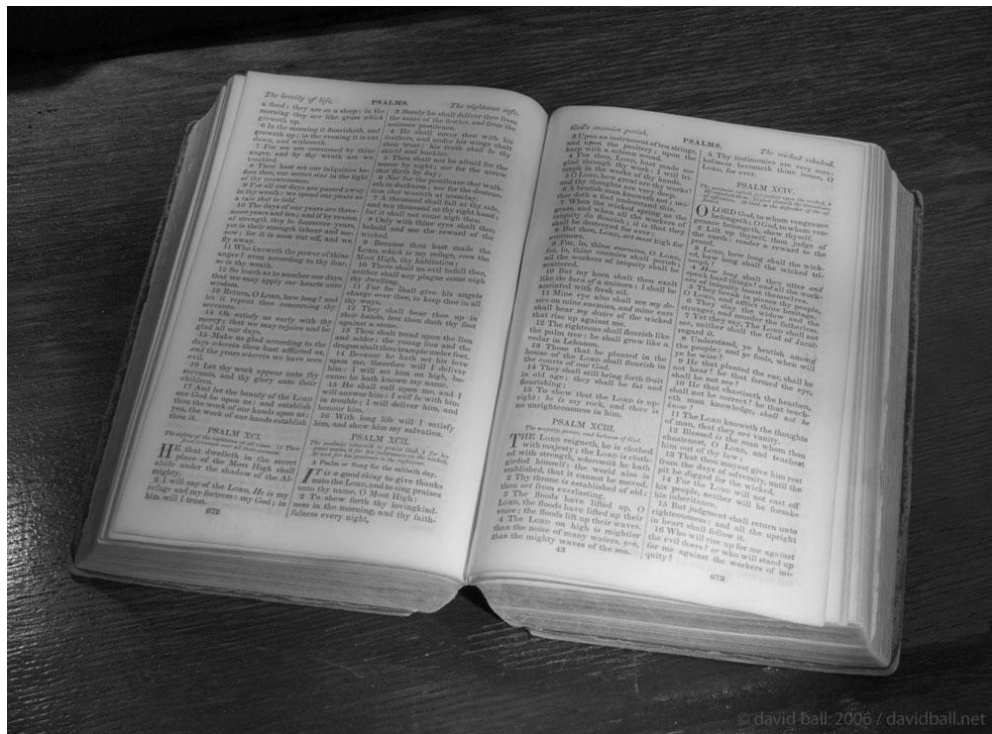


Chapter 5

A Study Guide through the Book of James



Ezra 7:10 –

(The example of Ezra)

For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord
and to practice it,
and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Note:

This study is a combination of Bible Studies and brief Commentary

My suggestion is to have someone lead the study while
someone else
read the commentary.

James 1:17, 21b,25

17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

21b n humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer,
this
man will be blessed in
what he does.

STUDY IN JAMES

Lesson One

James 1:1-8 (New American Standard Bible 1995)

1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Thought Questions:

1. What does God want me to do with my problems?
2. If I do what God asks, what is in it for me?
3. What is the point of this; just what is God seeking to develop in my life?
4. What are the promises and warnings in this section?
Put into your own words the meaning of these Scriptures:

I Thessalonians 5:18

Romans 8:28

Philippians 4:6

Colossians 3:16

I Peter 4:12

I Peter 5:6&7

Jeremiah 32:27

Do you believe God loves you?

Do you believe that God accepts you as His child?

Do you believe that God wants what is best for you?

Do you believe that God know what will bring us the fullest degree of happiness and meaning in life?

Then, what does God want you to believe about your problems and difficulties?

How to specifically deal with problems:

1. Talk to God about you problem.
2. Thank Him for it, knowing that it will be a means of blessing and character development for you.
3. Read His Word and meditate on it.
4. Ask Him to help you get the problem in the right perspective. (State it aloud. If it is still muddled, write it down. Don't distort, change, or evade; state it as it is.)

Do all the above with the determination that you are going to trust God for obedience.

Once this is done, amazing things will begin to happen. Now you will look at the culprit, not emotionally, trapped in your own feelings, but objectively, as if you'd stepped outside the whole wretched business and are viewing it without judgment or passion, just trying to see it for what it really is. Now, if you really mean business, you might see if and how you might be contributing to it, or sabotaging its resolution. Now, if you are really looking at it objectively self pity has got to go. An resentment. And the determination to have your own way in the matter at any cost. And all the negative attitudes that were tripping you up. Now you can put it in God's hands. Doesn't He know about it anyway? Didn't He (assuming you did not create it yourself) give it to you? Doesn't He have a purpose? Doesn't He care? In the face of all this, the idea that the thing is hopeless is unthinkable. It is profitable, and you are the one who is going to reap the profits.

There's more to the problem than meets the eye:

If you could see the complete picture there would be no room for faith. God keeps just enough from you to give your faith a little growing room! I Peter 1:6,7 tells us: "There is wonderful joy ahead, even though the going is rough for a while down here. These trials are only to test your faith that you may see whether or not it is strong and pure."

Going further:

1. Read I Peter 4:12-19. Write down a problem that you may have. Examine it in light of verse 15 and see if you are snitching a bit. Now examine it in light of verse 19. Does it honestly fit into this category? If it does, carry on!
2. Read Psalm 142:1-7. Are you depending on people only to solve your problems? Remember, you can't be disappointed in a person unless you are leaning on him to the exclusion of God.
3. Memorize Romans 8:28. Can you list any ways in which your problem might work out for your good? If you can't, can you trust God for it? (or for the unknown quantity?)

TEMPTATION, THY NAME IS TROUBLE

Lesson Two

Thou dost bring us nothing but grief, and surely no good ever comes of thee, but why of why are thou so attractive? Yes indeed.

The dictionary tells us that “tempt” means: To allure or entice to something unwise or wicked. To induce or persuade by enticement or allurement, at to do something unwise or wrong. To attract by holding out the probability of gratification or advantage, often in the direction of that which is wrong or unwise.

James 1:12-18 New American Standard Bible 1995

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow. 18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures. In verse fourteen, the authorized version says, “But every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.”

James is using a metaphor taken from hunting and fishing to lure forth the game from its covert, to entice a fish with the bait. And it goes without saying that the game so lured and the fish so enticed did not stay around long enough to make any plans.

How Did Temptation Get Started?

James tells us emphatically: “A man must not say when he is tempted, God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil and does not himself tempt anyone. Then who? And why?

It started back in the Garden of Eden. The culprit was Satan. “Has God told you cannot eat the fruit of every tree in the garden?” Satan asked Eve, and the implication was obvious; here was something Eve could not have. “Every tree but one,” said Eve. “God has told us not to eat of it or touch it, or we will die.” And Satan produced the very first temptation and it was most attractive and enticing. “You won’t surely die”, he said, “God knows if you eat it your eyes shall be open and you shall be as Gods.”

The rest is history. She ate it. She gave some to Adam. He ate it. And immediately the talent for blaming someone else came to them, full-blown. When God confronted Adam with his sin, Adam said, “She’s to blame.” And when God confronted Eve, she said, “The serpent’s to blame.”

And there we have it. But is it a bit too pat? Doesn’t it follow that if God created Adam and Eve and they did what they did, that He created evil?

No, God did not create evil. He created man and gave him free will. Well, we argue, man chose evil; isn’t it the same thing? No it isn’t. And it all has to do with love. God’s love for you is a wonderful and mysterious thing.

The wonder of it is that He loves you; the mystery of it is that He has made us all with the option to love Him in return, leaving us with the awesome power of choice. Think about it, if He did not leave you free to choose it would not be love. For the greatest thing about love is to be chosen.

Temptation Starts from Within You.

James says, “No, a man’s temptation is due to the pull of his own inward desires, which can be enormous attractive.” (verse 14) The King James translation has it: “Temptation is the pull of man’s own evil thoughts and wishes.”

Satan does not hand you the temptation with a blueprint showing the frustration, the failure, the alienation from God, the unrealized goals, the drug rehabilitation center, the unwanted pregnancy or whatever the end might be. He suggests only the pleasure of the moment, and it is assumed that somehow you are going to get away with it and come out unscathed.

Temptation would be helpless if there were nothing in you to which it could appeal; it has to strike an answering chord. There is something in you that responds to the bait, and that something is your own desire. Any con man will tell you that he can’t con a person whose face isn’t already streaked with larceny.

Some of our desires we jolly well know about. Some of them we are not aware of, but they are there in the pit stop getting gassed and oiled, ready at the drop of a temptation to get out on the track.

There’s an old Chinese proverb that goes: “Sow a thought and reap a deed; sow a deed and reap a habit, sow a habit and reap a destiny.” James put it: “His own inward desire took hold of him, and that produces sin. And sin in the long run means death.” And in verse 16 James says, “Make no mistake about that, brothers of mine.”

It starts with a thought. And a thought toyed with long enough ultimately results in action. If you dwell on it long enough, the chances are you’ll do it; it’s as simple as that. And sin, as a way of life must in the end lead to destruction.

How Do I Deal with Temptation?

There must be a few things established first before you face them.

1. Goals - what is your purpose for living?

What do you think about the following?

All things being equal, temptation usually presents itself in the form of a shortcut to your goal.

“I want what I want when I want it” the song goes, and “it” can mean anything.

When our Lord was tempted in the wilderness, Satan tempted Him in the area of His rights. Satisfying hunger, proving He is the Son of God by supernatural means, ruling the kingdoms of the earth. But if He had taken any of the shortcuts Satan proposed He would have upset the perfect plan of God and stopped short of the cross.

We want love and we snatch at it too soon or by the wrong rules and it turns to ashes in our greedy little fists. We want appreciation and we whine for it or demand it or try to buy it. We want responsibility and leadership and we bulldoze over others and cheat to get it. We want to be popular and we compromise our integrity to step up there on top. We want security in its broadest sense, and we knock the props out from under every effort of God to give us His security. We want not to be lonely and we refuse the discipline it takes to be the sort of person others want to be around.

The goals may be legitimate all right all right; the snag is the shortcut. There are really two kinds of goals one must have, temporal and eternal. So many people get so temporal goal orientated that they don't have, or they loose sight of their eternal goal. Temporal goals are those things that make for this life only money, security, etc.. We must evaluate our temporal and eternal goals and if they conflict with each other, then the temporal goal must go.

An old saying I once heard really puts things in the right perspective. "Live today as you shall wished you had lived it when you see Jesus."

2. What is God's Purpose for You?

I don't mean only your vacation, though that is a part of it. But what is God's general purpose for you? What does God want you to be character wise and example wise as His children in this world?

THINK: If you have these two prerequisites established then victory is much more probable for you.

NOW THE HOW TO:

Remember to be tempted is not a sin. So how you respond to the temptation will determine whether you will overcome it or it will overcome you.

If you really want to overcome temptation then:

1. Immediately thank God that you don't have to respond to the temptation anymore since Jesus has set you free.
2. Pray for someone you know needs your prayers.
3. Keep praying until your mind is at peace about the temptation.
4. The recall Scripture that deals with eternity, Heaven, facing Jesus, ect. Praising God for the victory.

PROJECTS:

1. Memorize I Corinthians 10:13
2. Establish you eternal goals. The following Scriptures will help you.

Mark 8:34-38	John 17:4	II Corinthians 5:9	Romans 14:12,13,19
Galatians 5:16,17	Galatians 5:13	Philippians 2:10,11	Colossians 3:1-4
I John 3:1-3	II Peter 3:11,12	Hebrews 11:13-16	Hebrews 11:24-26
I Corinthians 3:11-15		Revelations 20:11-15	

Then see if there are temporal goals that you need to do away with, then do it!

3. Write down the goals that are most important to you in one column. Write down what you've been doing to attain them in another column, and if you've been using shortcuts, no fudging.

4. Write down some of the temptations that plague you most. What answering chord did they strike in you? Be honest with yourself.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE BIBLE: REALLY?

Lesson Three

James 1:21-25

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted which is able to save your souls.

But prove yourselves doers of the Word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror.

For once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of a person he was.

But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. What are the promises regarding the Word of God in this section?
2. What are the purposes of a mirror? And in how many ways is God's Word like a mirror?
3. How do I prove myself a "doer of the Word" (v-22)
4. What is the point in verses 23 and 24?
5. Why, do you think, is the Bible called the "law of liberty" in verse 25?
6. What does God want me to see in the mirror of His Word?

II Corinthians 5:17

Romans 8:15 & 16

Hebrews 10:17

Ephesians 2:4-7

John 3:18; Romans 8:1

7. If Doing is important, what is it that God wants me to do?

John 8:31 & 32

Romans 12: 1 & 2

Galatians 5:16

Colossians 2:6; 3:1 & 2; 3:12-17; 3:23 & 24

I John 1:9

Matthew 6:19-21; 6:33

Luke 10:27

James 1:19-21

I Peter 1:16; 5:5-8

The key to Personal Joy and Happiness- Verse 25. (Also note: Matthew 7:24-27 and John 13:17)

God's process for personal Joy and Happiness is very basic and simple.

It is _____ + _____ = Personal Joy and Happiness.

The root meaning of the word "blessed" in verse 25 is happiness. Happiness of a deep personal satisfying nature. In fact it implies satisfaction. The thought here is a happiness that encompasses the whole being, body, soul, and spirit. This happiness is only experienced when our life is pleasing to God. We know it and we know He knows it and our spirit sings for joy which produces throughout our being the realization and the reception of the love of God. That is truly a blessing. So what happens is that when the conditions are met by a willing heart then whatever we do there is the expression and experience of Joy in our lives. PRAISE GOD !!!! He pours into the hearts of the obedient ones rich fulfilling satisfaction that only they experience. This is what David meant in Psalm 23:5 when he said, "My cup runneth over."

Do you want the Joy of the Lord? Then be a doer, because that is where it's at with God.

PROJECTS:

1. Seek from God what "law of liberty" means (verse 25) with these additional verses:

John 8:31,32 - Romans 8:2 - II Corinthians 3:17 - Galatians 5:13 - I Peter 2:16

2. Note these Old Testament stories on obedience and disobedience:

Genesis 22:1-18 - Genesis 5:21-24 - Hebrews 11:5 - Jude vs. 14 & 15

I Kings 18:1-40 - II Kings 5:1-27 - I Kings 13:1-26

THE SIN OF PARTIALITY

Lesson Four

James 2:1-13 -

2 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? 5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? 7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. 11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy, mercy triumphs over judgment.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. Think seriously; do you ever look down on people for any reason? What does God say about that?
2. How does God look at a people? As a child of God then how are you to look at them?
3. Is anyone without sin besides Jesus? Then, don't get hung up on sinners, you are one too, remember?
4. What do you think it means that "mercy smiles in the face of judgment?"
5. What kind of people do you respond wrongly to? (Write down characteristics)

The things we can be snobs about would fill a book. Education ("Did you know he comes from one of those small country colleges?") Family background ("She's pulled herself up by the bootstraps, but, my dear, you should see her family!") Intellect ("He's quite bright!") Personality ("I can hardly stand her, she's a bore.") Even sins! ("don't know how she ever could have done such a thing. I would never trip over that temptation!")

How picky is God?

Matthew 22:2-13

Acts 10:34,35

Eph. 6:9

Galatians 2:6

Romans 2:11

How picky should God's children be?

Romans 12:16

Luke 10:30-37

Note how Jesus was toward different kinds of people.

1. He was a friend to the rich like Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:39).
2. He commended the poor woman who gave two mites into the Temple treasury (Luke 21:23).
3. He went to the home of a Pharisee (Luke 7:36).
4. He ate with a hated publican, Zacchaeus (Luke 19:5).
5. He healed the servant of a Roman centurion (Lk 7:2-10)
6. He took time out to speak to a woman of Samaria and bring her and her whole village to Himself (John 4).
7. Our Lord was available to everybody. The Lord said: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden... (Matt. 11:28).

A sin is a sin is a sin is a sin. We need to call it what it is. To be a snob is a sin; to be against snobs is also a sin. So when you react to people other than the way Jesus would, you will need to confess it.

Why do you think this is important for us to see and understand?

PROJECTS:

1. Are you in a clique? Make a list of the reasons why. Is it worth it? How can you (or your clique) make your church a friendlier place to be in? (If you and your clique really work this one out, the clique will be "out" too!)
2. Make a list of the things you feel you are snobbish about. Stare at it for a while. Don't you feel silly?
3. Read Acts chapters 10 and 11. See how God had to break the barriers down between people in order to get the Good News out to the rest of the world.

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, DO SOMETHING

Lesson Five

Read James 2:14-26

'That's not the way I heard it'

"What's this?" you say. "Isn't James getting a bit high-handed here? I thought I was saved by faith - faith plus nothing."

You are right. You are saved by faith plus nothing. It is the grace of God, and nothing you could possibly do could merit it. "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," (Romans 3:28 KJV) says Paul, and again he says, "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ... for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16) and again he says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31, KJV). It couldn't be plainer.

But... You got there by faith plus nothing. It was the grace of God.

But now that you have accepted your Lord by faith, and stepped from darkness into light, now that you are here, the ground rules are different. To take this step and then do nothing, makes about as much sense as whamming a ball over the back fence for a homer and then just standing there on home plate.

A quick look in the book of Matthew will help clarify this faith - work issue.

Matt. 5:14-16

Matt. 21:28-31

Matt. 7:15-23

Matt. 25:31-46

Paul also emphasized that one's faith should be visible.

Ephesians 5:8,10,11

Romans 14:12

Ephesians 2:10

II Corinthians 5:10

Phil. 2:12-13

What about Abraham and Rahab?

Hebrews 11:8,17-19

Hebrews 11:31

How does Colossians 2:6 fit in here then? Easy. We are to live daily exercising the same kind of faith it took for us to become a child of God. This daily use of faith will demonstrate itself in visible action.

It's true, you can't be saved by works alone. But you can't be saved without producing works, any more than you can fall in love without wanting to please your loved one.

PROJECTS:

1. This exercise will take two columns (and a lot of courage). Make a list of what you are "saying" (what you believe God can do) in various significant areas of your life. Now make a list of what you are actually "doing" in these same areas. Put it up where you can check it out occasionally - (in a very private place; you won't want anyone to see it for a while, until you've shaped up.)
2. Memorize - Colossians 2:6 and Ephesians 2:10.
3. Read these stories of faith and note how in every case their faith produced visible action.
 - a. Exodus 14:10-16 (Note Moses was the only one who had faith and God still acted.)
 - b. I Kings 18:20-40
 - c. II Chronicles 20:1-30
 - d. Mark 2:1-12 Note verse 5
 - e. Acts 3:1-10 Note Peter was willing to stick his neck out.
 - f. Acts 16:16-34

WHAT DID YOU SAY??

Lesson Six

Read James 3:1-12

The bible says a lot about our speech. One of the strongest passages is today's text.

Read James 3:1-12.

Some self-evaluation here.

1. As you look back over the past week, what did you say that was a compliment, an encouraging, was it helpful or positive?
2. What did you say that was a complaint, a discouragement, hurtful, or negative?
3. Did you say more positive comments or more negative comments?

God very specifically states that we need to watch what we say so that we don't offend God, others, and even ourselves.

List at least 5 things from this passage that the tongue is or does:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

From these six scriptures, what are we commanded to do with regard to our tongue or speech?

Psalm 34:13

Eph. 4:31

Titus 3:1,2

James 1:26

James 4:11

I Peter 2:1

PROJECTS:

1. Every night, for one week, spend a few minutes thinking about all that you said during that day.

2. Purpose - to “think before you speak”. Of what you are thinking is negative, then don’t speak at all.

3. Memorize James 3:5-12. When you think negative thoughts, then quote this scripture to yourself.

WHAT IS WISDOM?

Lesson Seven

Check out I Kings 3:5-14 (verse 28)

James 3:13-18

“Are there some wise and understanding men among you? Then your lives will be an example of the humility that is born of true wisdom. But if your heart is full of rivalry and bitter jealousy, then do not boast of your wisdom, don’t deny the truth that you must recognize in your inmost heart. You may acquire a certain superficial wisdom, but it does not come from God, it comes from this world, from your own lower nature, even from the devil. For wherever you find jealousy and rivalry you also find disharmony and all other kind of evil. The wisdom that comes from God is first utterly pure, then peace loving, gentle, approachable, full of tolerant thoughts and kindly actions, with no breath of favoritism or hint of hypocrisy. And the wise are peacemakers who go on quietly sowing for a harvest of righteousness in other people and in themselves.”

What is a good definition of WISDOM?

From James 3:15 & 17 we note that there are two kinds of wisdom?

<u>Earthly (v.15)</u>	<u>Heavenly (v. 17)</u>
I Corinthians 3:19	Isaiah 11:2
I Corinthians 3:20	Job 28:28
Isaiah 29:14	Proverbs 4:7
Proverbs 15:21	Proverbs 2:6
Proverbs 16:25	Isaiah 48:17
Proverbs 24:7	John 8:31,32
Romans 1:21-23	I Corinthians 2:12

What did Paul often pray for when he prayed for other Christians?

Ephesians 1:16 & 17

Colossians 1:9 & 10

Note James 1:5

PROJECTS:

1. Read Proverbs and note verses on Wisdom.
2. Pray for wisdom in light of James 1:5-8 daily, asking God for you to see things as He sees them.
3. Memorize Scripture:
 - Proverbs 3:5 & 6
 - Colossians 3:12-17
 - Colossians 3:23 & 24
 - Ephesians 3:14-21
 - Romans 13:11-14

OH LORD, I WANT WHAT I WANT WHEN I WANT , HOW I WANT AS I WANT - CAUSE I WANT

Lesson Eight

Read - James 4:1-4

What's Wrong with me?

James 4:1-3 (Note each verse)

Romans 7:14,15,18,19,21-24

Galatians 5:17 (verses 10-21)

Jeremiah 17:9,10

Read James 4:5-10

God's Medicine:

Verse 5 II Corinthians 11"2

Verse 6 Luke 18:9-14

Verse 7 John 12:26

Ephesians 4:27; 6:10-13

I Peter 5:8-9

Verse 8 Jeremiah 29:13

Verse 9 Isaiah 59:2

Verse 10 I Peter 5:9

Can you think of other scriptures that gives insight to what James is addressing here in these verses chp. 4:1-10?

What's In It for Me?

The whole chapter boils down to one word: **choice**. There is a war going on in your personality, your desires or His, your will or His. The skirmishes will go on for as long as you live. He gives you strength to win, but only one skirmish at a time.

The only “want” you can have that is absolutely 100% disaster proof is to want His will for your life. And what will you get? Peace with God and a better life than you could have possibly chosen for yourself.

PROJECTS:

1. Memorize Psalm 37:4-5 and Matthew 6:33
2. Think through the consequences of a strong desire in your life.

If you got what you wanted, what might the ramifications be?

Would getting it be worse than not getting it.

THERE WAS THIS PLAN

Lesson Nine

James 4:13-17

- 13 - “Just a moment, now, you who say: ‘We are going to such and such a city today or tomorrow. We shall stay there a year doing business and make a profit!’
- 14 - How do you know what will happen even tomorrow? What, after all, is your life? It is like a puff of smoke visible for a little while and then dissolves into thin air.
- 15 - Your remarks should be prefaced with, ‘If it is the Lord’s will, we shall still be alive and shall do so and so.’
- 16 - As it is, you get a certain pride in yourself in planning your future with such confidence. That sort of pride is all wrong.
- 17 - No doubt you agree with the above in theory. Well, remember that if a man know what is right and fails to do it, his failure is a real sin.

“Look here,” says James, “Come now, wait a minute, let’s stop and consider this matter.” Are you living your life as if God had absolutely nothing to do with it? Or that He isn’t really interested; that it doesn’t really matter to Him what you do. That is pure nonsense! Why is there a judgment? Why rewards? Why the bible? Why Jesus Christ? Why anything?

Look at Luke 12:16-21

What is the point of the story?

That’s right; in making his plans for his future, the “fool” in the story forgot that the length of his life was something he had nothing to say about. And he found out to his dismay that he was not going to be around to enjoy what he was planning. Let’s think a minute. What things in life do we have control over (that we are responsible for)?

What do we have absolute control over?

What does the future hold? You cannot be sure. But one thing is sure; He who holds the future also holds your hand and you had better work on you relationship with Him.

You see, life is a matter of choice. And once time is spent you cannot go back and do it or live it over again. And this is the catch, if you leave God out of your plans or if you are asking Him to bless your plans when your motives are wrong then you have gone about it all wrong (that is sin. v. 17). You have lost something which really is valuable to lose. You have lost the experience of God and you in complete harmony, a relationship with God which is like heaven on earth. You see when a Christian submits his will to God in regards to his plans (all of them) he enters a relationship with God which brings confidence, joy, purpose, and a sense of God’s presence which is invaluable, and priceless.

Psalm 16:11

“God will make known to me the path of life (only when I submit my will to His). In His presence is fullness of joy; in His right hand there are pleasures forever.’

I think it is important to define “wrong choices” before we go on. I do not believe that it is so much a matter of whether you go to Washington State or the University of Washington, but whether or not you really sought the Lord in the matter before making a decision. How and why you come to a decision is as wrong as the decision itself.

What are the consequences of wrong choices? I am sure there are many but besides the failure to realize God in the way I have described it above (which is a great loss) one more really stands out.

Follow this thought:

Once something is done its done and you can not go back and live it over again. The sad truth is that now your choices are more limited. Now you must choose from what you have left. If you have committed fornication (pre-marital intercourse), you made a bad mistake. Where do you go from here? Well, God is merciful, god loves you, He will always love you, but look what you did; the scars will never leave you. What you did determines the rest of your life. The scope has narrowed down. Every choice you make now is dependent upon choices you made. Now you pick up the pieces, remember He loves you, but you have limited Him. He can only work with what’s left. Do you get another chance? **YES!** But you don’t get it the way it was; you just get it the way it is.

Look up these verses. What do they tell you about choices?

Gal. 6:7-9

I Cor. 2:9

I Cor. 3:11-15

I Kings 18:21 - (substitute anything for Baal even yourself)

Jer. 29:11

Closing Thought:

Life is God’s gift to me.

What I do with my life is my gift to God. How does that look in a practical way?

IS IT A SIN TO BE RICH?

Lesson Ten

Read James 5:1-6

These six verses are very strong in their condemnation of wealthy, heartless plantation type owners who have abused and underpaid their laborers to increase their personal gain. But James is writing to Christians. The ungodly rich would probably never get to read it or hear it. It's a roundabout way of telling the poor Christians not to envy the rich, ungodly, or otherwise. It is warning the rich Christians lest they fall into the snare of letting their wealth become too important to them, which takes care of most everybody, doesn't it?

How does all this apply to you, a high school student? It applies to you because the principle is MATERIALISM, and that is where it is at today. The dictionary tells us that materialism is "attention to or emphasis on material objects, needs, and considerations, with a disinterest in or rejection of spiritual values." It is when things like a car, stereo, clothes, boyfriends, girlfriends, TV, movies, music, and even a bank account become more important to you than what God is trying to work out in your life.

Look up the following verses. What do they say about money and riches?

Prov. 23:4-5

Matt. 6:19-21,24

Col. 3:5

I Tim. 6:7-11

I Tim 6:17-19

II Tim. 3:1-5

Heb. 13:5

Nowhere in the above verses did it say that it was wrong or evil to have money or nice things. The problem is that, in having money and nice things, they so often have control over us. You see even in the verses in James which we read at the beginning, there is no put down with possessing money. The put down came because of how they got it and what they did with it. It is important to think about money and to evaluate its hold on us. Go through these questions to determine just where you stand on money, possessions, and God.

1. Do you spend more time thinking about money and possessions or God, heaven, and spiritual things?
2. do you decide whether you will go on a retreat or to a youth group activity based on how much the activity costs?
3. When you look for a job, do you consider how it will affect your involvement with you family, with the youth group, or you relationship to God?
4. Is you desire for God as strong as your desire for money and possessions?
4. Does your future occupation depend on how much you will make, or on God's will and direction for your life?
5. Do you get you greatest joy and happiness from spiritual things or from your money (spending it or saving it) and your possessions?

How important is money to you? Your attitude and relationship with money and possessions reflects the degree to which you and God will relate. Luke 16:11, "So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?"

If you are setting your heart only on the material things you have or want, you are passing up the kind of riches that count for eternity. God understands that you need money. But He does not want money to be your God. Matthew 6:33 - "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you."

The question is: What is the most important thing to you?

Answer it by how you live your life?

WHAT ARE YOU HOPING FOR?

Lesson Eleven

James 5:7-11

⁷“Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain. ⁸You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is a hand. ⁹Do not grumble, brethren, against one another, that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we call those happy who were steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

What are you hoping for in

verse 7:

verse 8:

verse 9:

verse 10:

verse 11:

The Lord Jesus Christ is coming back! That day looks very near, yet tomorrow never seems to get here. When James wrote the book (which was the first New Testament book written) way back around 47-48 AD Those people expected Jesus to return during their lifetime, and after 1,933 years, Jesus hasn't shown up yet! Boy, talk about being late for a party! Were the people back in James' time fools for expecting Jesus to appear then?

Why do you think God has wanted Christians to live in anticipation of His return even when He knows they will die before He comes back?

How do these scriptures relate to the above question?

I John 3:1-3

I Peter 3:10-13

Matthew 25:1-13

Matthew 24:42-47

II Tim. 4:8

Now go back and review the verses from James on Christ's return.

What is it that we are to do?

From verse 7 _____ Why?

verse 8 _____ Why?

verse 9 _____ Why?

In thinking about the Lord's return, what are we to learn from:

The farmer (v.-7)

The Prophets (v.10)

Job (v.11)

In verse 11 it says "we count those blessed who endure." Remember "blessed" means happy; so why do you think a person would be counted as happy for enduring?

So now we come to the nitty-gritty! What are you doing now which you hope will pay off when Christ returned? Go ahead, make a list.

Are you reading the Bible? Daily/often?

Are you praying for friends to become Christians?

Are you living a pure life?

Are you telling your friends about Jesus?

Are you sacrificing anything for God?

Are you anticipating fulfilling His will for your life?

Are you - (fill in the rest of the blanks)

I DON'T NEED ANY HELP, I'D RATHER DO IT MYSELF

Lesson Twelve

It is an amazing thing that we, who are Christians, take so long to understand that the expression above is an expression of a sinful heart. "I'd rather do it myself," is what Adam and Eve said to God and look what happened.

Peter says, "God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble." (I Peter 5:5)
A proud, self-sufficient attitude is not what brings the fullness of God. As a matter of fact, you get the idea that God makes things even more difficult on those who think they can do it on their own.

Please read **James 5:13-20** and note how God instructs us to handle the different enemies in our lives.

From James 5:13-20

How does God want us to handle?

1. Suffering?
2. Cheerfulness?
3. Sickness?
4. Our own sins?
5. Backsliding Christians?

Please note the following verses and place them in the most appropriate categories above.

Note also the additional advice these verses give in the different areas.

- Galatians 6:1-3
- I Peter 4:19
- I John 1:9
- Philippians 4:4

- Philippians 4:6-7
- I Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Psalm 119:11
- II Corinthians 1:3-5
- Matthew 18:15-17
- Colossians 3:8-10

What is God trying to tell us?

Three really important things:

1. We can't handle life situations independently. We need God's help.
We need to constantly remember, John 15:5.
2. We need to receive from God the instructions for living life.
We must practice - Proverbs 3:5-7.
3. We must constantly choose to do it God's way. We must cooperate with God, Mark 8:34

