



RESTORING

WISDOM FROM THE BOOK OF JAMES

DEVOTION

LESSON 1

Introduction

The Theme of James

God offers us wisdom for a life of devotion as we grow in our understanding of His character.

Key Concepts

- **Perfect** (1:4, 17, 25; 3:2)
 - This concept involves wholeness or completion.
- **Double-minded** (1:8; 4:8)
 - This describes the way we vacillate between choosing Jesus and choosing the world. A divided mind is the opposite of wholehearted devotion to Christ.

Key Concepts

- **Steadfast** (1:3–4, 12; 5:11)
 - This word means *endurance* or *perseverance*.
- **Suffering, Trials, Temptation, Weakness** (1:2, 3, 12, 13; 5:10, 13–15)
 - These words describe those experiences where we are presented with a choice to sin or to obey God.

Key Concepts

- **Wisdom (1:5; 3:13–17)**
 - Wisdom is God's knowledge and perspective that He provides to us through His Word and the Holy Spirit.

Context

James, the brother of Jesus, ministered to the believers gathered in Jerusalem, as well as to those scattered over Asia Minor. These Christians faced intense persecution for their faith.

Context

James identifies himself as a “brother” around 20 times in the book, indicating that he is both a fellow believer and a fellow sufferer.

Chapter Content

- Chapter 1—Trusting God's goodness
- Chapter 2–3—Trusting God's wisdom
- Chapter 4—Trusting God's presence and sovereignty
- Chapter 5—Trusting God's justice and power



LESSON 2

Faith and Testing

Lesson 2 Outline

- **Faith and Trials (vv. 2–12)**

Lesson 2 Discussion

According to James,
how should we view the trials
we experience (v. 2)?

Lesson 2 Outline

- Faith and Trials (vv. 2–12)
- Thinking and Feeling (v. 2)

Lesson 2 Discussion

What is the “big picture” that gives us this joyful response?

What is God’s ultimate purpose for allowing us to endure trials?

Lesson 2 Outline

- **Faith and Trials (vv. 2–12)**
- **Thinking and Feeling (v. 2)**
 - Reason for Joy—Completion (vv. 3–4)
 - Roots of Joy—God's Wisdom (vv. 5–12)

Lesson 2 Outline

- Wisdom Given with Grace (v. 5)

Lesson 2 Discussion

How does God answer our request for wisdom (v. 5)?

Lesson 2 Outline

- Wisdom Given with Grace (v. 5)
- Wisdom Received by Faith (vv. 6–8)

Lesson 2 Discussion

What are some truths about God that we could meditate on during trials?

How can we help believers to think biblically about suffering but still show empathy to their pain?

Lesson 2 Outline

- Wisdom Given with Grace (v. 5)
- Wisdom Received by Faith (vv. 6–8)
- The Faithful Restored by Wisdom (v. 9)

Lesson 2 Discussion

What are some promises that can encourage believers during trials?

Lesson 2 Outline

- Wisdom Given with Grace (v. 5)
- Wisdom Received by Faith (vv. 6–8)
- The Faithful Restored by Wisdom (v. 9)
- The Proud Humbled by Wisdom (vv. 10–11)

Lesson 2 Discussion

How does material wealth affect our response to trials?

Lesson 2 Outline

- Wisdom Given with Grace (v. 5)
- Wisdom Received by Faith (vv. 6–8)
- The Faithful Restored by Wisdom (v. 9)
- The Proud Humbled by Wisdom (vv. 10–11)
- The Faithful Rewarded by Wisdom (v. 12)

Lesson 2 Discussion

What is the reward promised by God for those who endure trials and love Him (v. 12)?



LESSON 3

Faith Fights

Lesson 3 Discussion

Can you think of an example of a difficult trial that could also present a temptation to sin?

Lesson 3 Outline

- **Identify the Enemy—Understanding Temptation (vv. 13–15)**

Lesson 3 Discussion

What about God's character indicates that He will not tempt us with sin (v. 13)?

Lesson 3 Discussion

Does it seem weird that God controls trials and temptations and exercises His authority over them? Why?

Who else would you like to be in control of your trials or temptations?

Lesson 3 Discussion

Why is it a struggle to trust that God is sovereign—especially over evil in our life?

Lesson 3 Discussion

Do you ever ask God why He has put you in a difficult situation?

Why do you keep giving into sin, no matter how much you don't want to?

Lesson 3 Discussion

Why doesn't God just take away all your desire for sin?

Why does it seem easy to blame God for our sin struggles?

Lesson 3 Discussion

Where does temptation really originate?

Lesson 3 Outline

- **Identify the Enemy—Understanding Temptation (vv. 13–15)**
 - Temptation Comes from Our Own Desires (v. 14)
 - Temptation Is Specific (v. 14)

Lesson 3 Discussion

The world believes that people are innately good—especially because people can do so much good in the world.

How does this idea contrast with what the Bible says about our natural inclinations?

Lesson 3 Discussion

Why is it dangerous to believe that we are innately good?

What is the cure for a sinful heart?

Lesson 3 Outline

- **Desire Draws Us Out and Traps Us (v. 14)**

Lesson 3 Discussion

What are some ways that temptation can be deceitful?

Lesson 3 Discussion

What are some good things that can be twisted into temptations?

Why do you think it is so hard to recognize when these things become a temptation to sin?

Lesson 3 Outline

- **Desire Draws Us Out and Traps Us (v. 14)**
- **The Consequences of Temptation (v. 15)**
- **Resisting Temptation (vv. 16–18)**

Lesson 3 Outline

- Identify Our Own Worst Enemy—Self
(v. 14)
- Believe that God Is the Only True Source
of Good (vv. 16–17)

Lesson 3 Discussion

What two things do we learn about God's character, according to verse 17?

Lesson 3 Outline

- Identify Our Own Worst Enemy—Self (v. 14)
- Believe that God Is the Only True Source of Good (vv. 16–17)
- Pursue the Life-Giving Truth of God (v. 18)

Lesson 3 Discussion

How does the process of temptation contrast with the process of sanctification (vv. 12, 14, 18)?



LESSON 4

Faith Listens

Lesson 4 Outline

- **Two Reminders**
 - Devotion Takes Work (Phil. 2:12)
 - Devotion Depends on Grace (Gal. 2:21)

Lesson 4 Outline

- **The Picture of Faith (James 1:19–20)**
 - A Positive Picture—Listening

Lesson 4 Discussion

What distracts us from listening to the Word of God?

How can we demonstrate that we want to learn from God?

Lesson 4 Outline

- **The Picture of Faith (James 1:19–20)**
 - A Positive Picture—Listening
 - A Negative Picture—Wrong Speech

Lesson 4 Discussion

Do you ever become so
obsessed with telling God
about your life and problems
that you neglect to listen?

What does it mean to listen to
God?

Lesson 4 Discussion

What is the difference between complaining to God versus sharing our trouble with Him?

Lesson 4 Discussion

How can we balance genuine crying out to God, like the Psalmist, and humble attentiveness to God's instructions?

Lesson 4 Outline

- **The Process of Growing Faith (v. 21)**
 - Preparation
 - Planting

Lesson 4 Discussion

James doesn't just tell us to get rid of sin; he tells us what to put in its place, as well.

What should fill that void, according to verse 21?

Lesson 4 Discussion

With what attitude do we receive it?

Lesson 4 Outline

- **The Process of Growing Faith (v. 21)**
 - Preparation
 - Planting
- **The Product of Faith—Blessing (vv. 22–27)**

Lesson 4 Discussion

What does acceptable obedience to God look like, according to verse 27?



LESSON 5

Faith Loves: Part 1

Lesson 5 Outline

- Faith Is Impartial (v. 1)

Lesson 5 Discussion

What did James say the believers were doing in showing partiality (v. 4)?

Lesson 5 Outline

- Faith Is Impartial (v. 1)
 - Favoritism Reveals Wrong Values
(vv. 2–3)

Lesson 5 Discussion

What are some criteria we use to determine a person's value?

Lesson 5 Outline

- **Faith Is Impartial (v. 1)**
 - Favoritism Reveals Wrong Values (vv. 2–3)
 - Favoritism Makes Us Unjust Judges (v. 4)
 - Favoritism Distorts the Gospel (v. 5)

Lesson 5 Discussion

How do you think favoritism reflects on the gospel?

Lesson 5 Discussion

How should the gospel transform how we treat those around us?

How can we remind ourselves to show mercy to others?

Lesson 5 Outline

- **Faith Is Impartial (v. 1)**
 - Favoritism Reveals Wrong Values (vv. 2–3)
 - Favoritism Makes Us Unjust Judges (v. 4)
 - Favoritism Distorts the Gospel (v. 5)
 - Favoritism Is Illogical (vv. 6–7)

Lesson 5 Outline

- **Faith Means Loving
Our Neighbors (vv. 8–13)**
 - The Law of Love (v. 8)
 - Criminals Making Excuses (vv. 9–11)

Lesson 5 Discussion

What truth does James teach in verse 10?

Lesson 5 Outline

- **Faith Means Loving
Our Neighbors (vv. 8–13)**
 - The Law of Love (v. 8)
 - Criminals Making Excuses (vv. 9–11)
 - Love Reflects the Gospel (vv. 12–13)



LESSON 6

Faith Loves: Part 2

Lesson 6 Discussion

Can someone genuinely believe in something without doing anything about it?

Lesson 6 Discussion

In context, what do you think is the relationship between James's teaching on favoritism and his teaching in this passage?

Lesson 6 Outline

- Faith Shows Compassion Despite the Cost (vv. 14–17)

Lesson 6 Discussion

Our faith is worthless if we don't do what (v. 17)?

Lesson 6 Outline

- **Faith Shows Compassion Despite the Cost (vv. 14–17)**
 - Roadblocks to Compassion
 - Wealth

Lesson 6 Discussion

What is your attitude toward those who are poor?

How do you help those in need?

Lesson 6 Discussion

When someone presents you with an obvious need, do you help them? Why or why not?

Lesson 6 Outline

- **Faith Shows Compassion Despite the Cost (vv. 14–17)**
 - Roadblocks to Compassion
 - Wealth
 - Hypocrisy

Lesson 6 Discussion

How can you respond to the people around you who need help?

In what ways do we tend to judge the motives or actions of those in need?

Lesson 6 Outline

- Faith Obeys Courageously
(vv. 18–26)

Lesson 6 Discussion

What does James say is insufficient grounds for faith (v. 19)?

Lesson 6 Outline

- Faith Obeys Courageously
(vv. 18–26)
 - Abraham's Faith (Gen. 22:1–14)
 - Rahab's Faith (Josh. 2:1–21; 6:22–25)

Lesson 6 Discussion

How did Rahab demonstrate her faith in God (v. 25)?

Differences Between Abraham and Rahab

	Abraham	Rahab
Social Class	Wealthy	Not wealthy—she sold herself for money
National Identity	Jew	Pagan foreigner
Circumstances That Lead to Faith	Received a direct promise from God	Observed the works of God



LESSON 7

Faith Speaks

Lesson 7 Outline

- God Judges Our Speech (vv. 1–2)

Lesson 7 Discussion

Why does James caution his readers about becoming teachers or masters (v. 1)?

Lesson 7 Outline

- **God Judges Our Speech (vv. 1–2)**
 - Teachers Are Accountable (v. 1)
 - We All Sin in Our Speech (v. 2)

Lesson 7 Outline

- Speech Is Powerful (vv. 3–5)

Lesson 7 Discussion

According to James, if we can control our speech, what else will be able to control (v. 2)?

Lesson 7 Discussion

In what ways are words like fire
(vv. 5–6)?

Lesson 7 Discussion

Why do we forget the impact our words can have on others, especially online?

How have the words of others shaped you?

Lesson 7 Discussion

How can we practice
mindfulness in our speech?

Lesson 7 Outline

- Speech Is Powerful (vv. 3–5)
- Our Speech Is Naturally Depraved (vv. 6–10)
 - Depraved Speech Has Lasting and Pervasive Impact (vv. 5–6)
 - It Can Defile the Entire Body
 - It Can Defile the Course of Our Lives

Lesson 7 Discussion

Without providing specifics, how have you experienced hurt from someone's sinful speech?

Lesson 7 Discussion

What types of speech have you found most destructive (lying, gossip, sarcasm, etc.)? Why?

Lesson 7 Outline

- Depraved Speech Is Uncontrollable (v. 8)
- Depraved Speech Is Inconsistent (v. 9)

Lesson 7 Discussion

How do we show hypocrisy in our speech (v. 9)?

Lesson 7 Outline

- **God's Will for Our Speech (vv. 11–12)**
 - God Created Our Ability to Communicate (Gen. 1:27)
 - God Redeems Our Speech (vv. 11–12)



LESSON 8

Faith Revealed: Part 1

Lesson 8 Outline

- **What Is Wisdom? (v. 13)**
 - Wisdom Is More Than Just Knowledge—
It's Skill
 - Wisdom Is Exercised with Gentleness

Lesson 8 Discussion

What virtue characterizes true wisdom (v. 13)?

Lesson 8 Discussion

How does James say we should demonstrate true wisdom (v. 13)?

Lesson 8 Discussion

How have you tried to fix your problems by relying on your own wisdom instead of God's? What was the result?

Lesson 8 Outline

- **Foolishness Revealed (vv. 14–18)**
 - Foolish Attitudes (v. 14)

Lesson 8 Discussion

What attitudes are condemned in verse 14?

When we have bitterness, jealousy, and selfish ambition in our heart, what does James tell us not to do (v. 14)?

Lesson 8 Discussion

What reason does he provide
(v. 15)?

Lesson 8 Outline

- **Foolishness Revealed (vv. 14–18)**
 - Foolish Attitudes (v. 14)
 - Bitter Jealousy
 - Selfish Ambition

Lesson 8 Discussion

How do the Bible's descriptions of success compare with the world's definition of success?

Lesson 8 Discussion

How can a believer be successful, yet live differently and distinctly?

Lesson 8 Discussion

What accompanies envy and selfish ambition (v. 16)?

Lesson 8 Outline

- Foolish Actions (vv. 15–16)
 - Chaos
 - Evil
- **Where Does This "Wisdom" Come From? (v. 15)**
 - Our selfish, sinful nature



LESSON 9

Faith Revealed: Part 2

Lesson 9 Discussion

What does James communicate about wisdom by saying that it is “from above”?

Lesson 9 Outline

- Christlike Wisdom

Lesson 9 Discussion

How is the wisdom from above characterized (v. 17)?

Lesson 9 Outline

- **Christlike Wisdom**
 - Pure Wisdom (1 Pet. 1:18–19)

Lesson 9 Discussion

Is this type of purity possible?

How can we be wise with the kind of purity that James mentions?

Lesson 9 Outline

- **Christlike Wisdom**
 - Pure Wisdom (1 Pet. 1:18–19)
 - Peaceful Wisdom (Eph. 6:15)

Lesson 9 Discussion

How does an understanding of peaceful wisdom change the way you interact with unbelievers?

What about with believers?

Lesson 9 Discussion

What does this indicate about a life characterized by conflict?

Lesson 9 Discussion

How should a Christian address a conflict using this wisdom characterized by gentleness?

Lesson 9 Discussion

What about when core beliefs
are on the line?

Lesson 9 Outline

- **Christlike Wisdom**
 - Pure Wisdom (1 Pet. 1:18–19)
 - Peaceful Wisdom (Eph. 6:15)
 - Active Wisdom (Eph. 2:4–7)

Lesson 9 Discussion

Are you merciful toward others?

Are you overly harsh or critical of people, especially in the times when they need the most mercy?

Lesson 9 Discussion

Are you quick to forgive when offended or hurt?

Are you ready to help when others have needs? Do you sympathize with the pain of others?

Lesson 9 Outline

- **Christlike Wisdom**
 - Pure Wisdom (1 Pet. 1:18–19)
 - Peaceful Wisdom (Eph. 6:15)
 - Active Wisdom (Eph. 2:4–7)
- **Cultivating Wisdom (v. 18)**

Lesson 9 Discussion

What will we gain if we live in peace (v. 18)?



LESSON 10

Faith Restores

Lesson 10 Outline

- A Description of Conflict (vv. 1–2)
- The Source of Conflict (vv. 1–3)

Lesson 10 Discussion

What does James say is the source of conflict (vv. 1–2)?

Lesson 10 Outline

- A Description of Conflict (vv. 1–2)
- The Source of Conflict (vv. 1–3)
 - Our Own Desires (v. 1)

Lesson 10 Discussion

Why don't we get what we want
(vv. 2–3)?

Lesson 10 Discussion

What do you think about this?
Is self-centeredness really at
the heart of all conflict? Why or
why not?

Lesson 10 Outline

- A Description of Conflict (vv. 1–2)
- The Source of Conflict (vv. 1–3)
 - Our Own Desires (v. 1)
 - Enemies of God (vv. 4–5)

Lesson 10 Discussion

In verse 4, what does James call his audience after they left God to pursue their own desires?

Lesson 10 Outline

- **The Source of Restoration**
(vv. 6–10)
 - The Roadblock to Restoration—Pride
 - The Attitude of Restoration—Humility

Lesson 10 Discussion

What is promised in verse 8?

Lesson 10 Discussion

What will God do when we humble ourselves (v. 10)?



LESSON 11

Faith Submits

Lesson 11 Outline

- God Is the One Lawgiver and Judge
(vv. 11–12)

Lesson 11 Discussion

What happens when we judge the law (v. 11)?

Lesson 11 Outline

- **God Is the One Lawgiver and Judge (vv. 11–12)**
 - Warnings Against Judging the Law

Lesson 11 Discussion

Who is the only judge and lawgiver (v. 12)?

Lesson 11 Discussion

What is this judge able to do
(v. 12)?

Lesson 11 Discussion

Does James's command imply that we must never evaluate the morality of someone?

Lesson 11 Discussion

How can we avoid condemning others in a culture where immorality is acceptable and intolerance is considered hate?

Lesson 11 Outline

- **God Is the One Lawgiver and Judge (vv. 11–12)**
 - Warnings Against Judging the Law
 - Judging and Love

Lesson 11 Discussion

Why do you think it is so easy for us to condemn others?

Lesson 11 Discussion

What biblical truths about God must we remember to help us with our speech?

Lesson 11 Outline

- **God Is the Sovereign of Time**
(vv. 13–15)
 - We Don't Know the Future

Lesson 11 Discussion

What does James say about the assumption that our plans are certain (v. 16)?

Lesson 11 Outline

- **God Is the Sovereign of Time**
(vv. 13–15)
 - We Don't Know the Future
 - Trust God's Wisdom

Lesson 11 Discussion

How should knowledge of our brevity change the way we live (v. 15)?

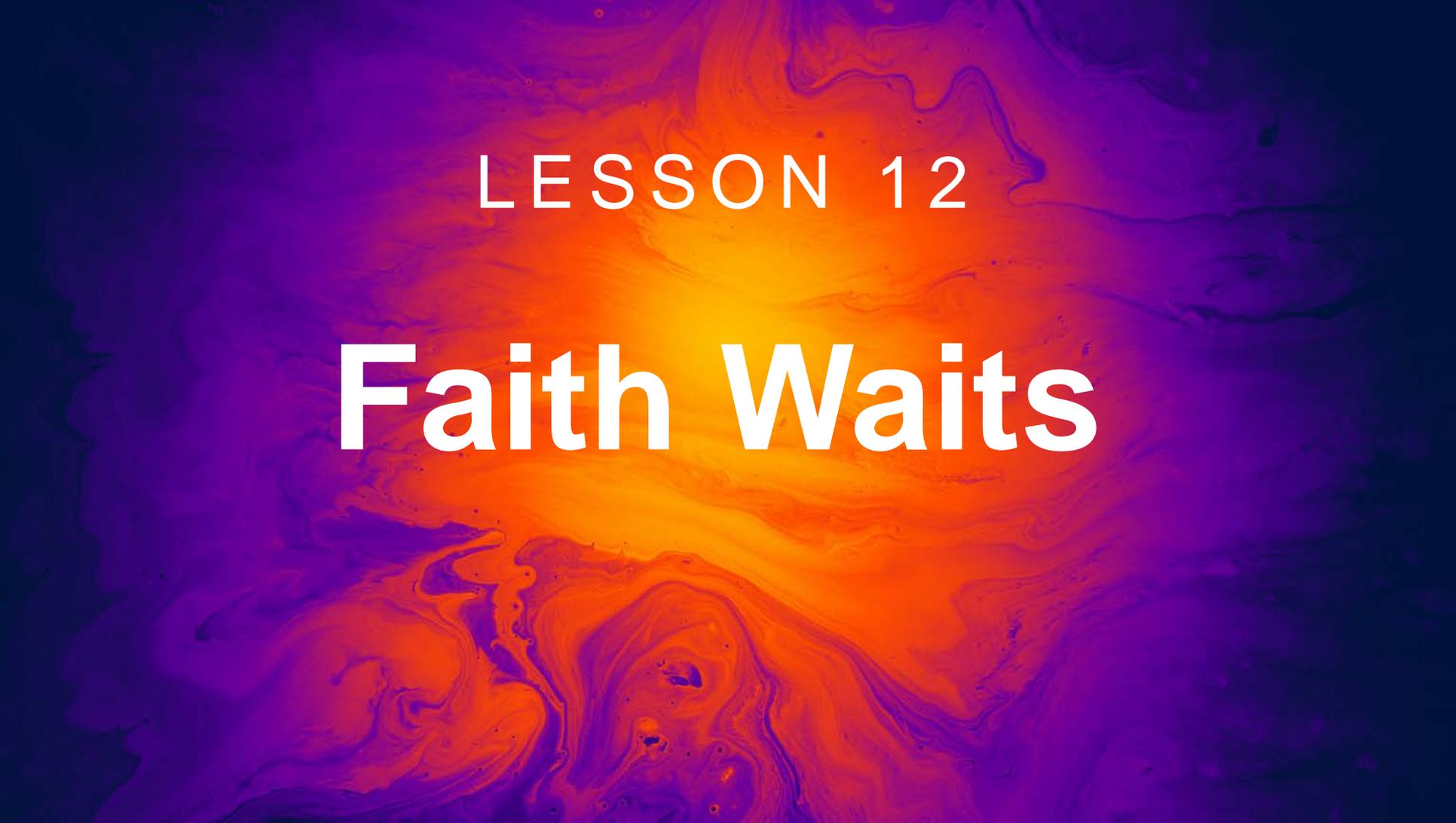
Lesson 11 Discussion

How do you respond when things don't go the way you planned?

Lesson 11 Discussion

What are some practical ways we can make plans while still acknowledging God's sovereignty?





LESSON 12

Faith Waits

Lesson 12 Outline

- The Consequences of Materialism

Lesson 12 Discussion

What are some principles that Jesus taught about the dangers of wealth?

Lesson 12 Outline

- **The Consequences of Materialism**
 - Material Possessions Decay (vv. 1–3)

Lesson 12 Discussion

Why does James tell the rich to weep (vv. 2–3)?

Lesson 12 Outline

- **The Consequences of Materialism**
 - Material Possessions Decay (vv. 1–3)
 - Selfishness Leads to Abuse (vv. 4–6)

Lesson 12 Discussion

What evil did the rich men
commit (vv. 4–6)?

Lesson 12 Discussion

In what ways are we tempted to treat people like objects?

Lesson 12 Discussion

How can we avoid this temptation?

Lesson 12 Outline

- **The Consequences of Materialism**
 - Material Possessions Decay (vv. 1–3)
 - Selfishness Leads to Abuse (vv. 4–6)
 - Selfishness Lacks Integrity (vv. 4, 12)

Lesson 12 Outline

- God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed (vv. 4–6)

Lesson 12 Discussion

What promise is found in verse 4?

Lesson 12 Outline

- God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed (vv. 4–6)
- Faith Produces Patience (vv. 7–12)
 - A Farmer Uses Patience (v. 7)
 - The Prophets Patiently Endured (v. 10)

Lesson 12 Outline

- Job's Patience Rewarded (v. 11)
- The End in Sight—Christ's Imminent Return (v. 8)
- **Contentment with the Process (vv. 8–12)**



LESSON 13

Faith Prays

Lesson 13 Discussion

What does James call on us to do in spite of trouble, happiness, or sickness (vv. 13–14)?

Lesson 13 Outline

- Motives for Prayer (vv. 13–16)

Lesson 13 Discussion

What does God promise in
verse 15?

Lesson 13 Outline

- **Motives for Prayer (vv. 13–16)**
 - Suffering
 - Happiness

Lesson 13 Discussion

How many of our prayers contain praise?

Why does it seem natural to reach out to God in suffering, yet difficult to praise and thank God in good times?

Lesson 13 Outline

- **Motives for Prayer (vv. 13–16)**
 - Suffering
 - Happiness
 - Sickness—Physical and Spiritual

Lesson 13 Outline

- The Focus of Prayer (v. 15)
 - Faith in the God Who Hears Prayer

Lesson 13 Outline

- The Result of Prayer (v. 16)

Lesson 13 Discussion

How does James describe the prayer of a righteous person (v. 16)?

Lesson 13 Outline

- **The Result of Prayer (v. 16)**
 - Healing (vv. 15–16, 19–20)
 - Spiritual Restoration (vv. 19–20)

