

## GreyStone EDU James: GS.EDU 2020

SESSION 01: BROTHER/SERVANT

WEEK OF 6/2/2020

You're in! Thank you for registering for our Distance-Discipleship Summer Study: JAMES by Matt Chandler; hosted by Grey Stone EDU with Small Groups by Lifeway! We are going to grow spiritually over the next 13 weeks by studying this vital book together!

In order to view the video teachings each week, you will need to download the **Lifeway Small Groups Application**. The study videos are FREE on your ROKU, APPLE-TV, or AMAZON FIRE TV devices (as well as the Apple Store for i-Pad & i-Phone and Google Play for Android devices). Simply search for the "Small Group by Lifeway Application" and install it.

The App looks like this:

After installing the app, open it on your device and look for the JAMES Study to access the 13-week study. (Note: There are several other free studies available as well.) You can even download the video to watch later.

\*\*\*Every Tuesday, registrants will receive an email link with the Resources, Video Teaching information and weekly Study Notes. The study runs from June 2 -August 25, 2020 online.

### MAIN POINT

James had a unique earthly relationship with Jesus, but his letter clarifies what the Christian life should look like for all believers.

### INTRODUCTION

- **What's one phrase, nickname, or fact that summarizes who you are?**
- **What is your favorite book of the Bible that you have studied? How did you see the book differently after you completed your study?**

Today we begin a study of the Book of James. We'll start by simply looking at one verse—the introduction to the letter. Because all Scripture is the inspired Word of God, we can learn a lot from a greeting. James's introduction identified the theme and tone of the entire letter.

The Book of James is a highly practical letter to Christians in the early church, but it's rooted in deep faith and rich theology. Perhaps more than any other book in the New Testament, James emphasizes the application of Christian belief.

**Watch Session 01 with Matt: James: Brother/Servant (You will need your Small Groups by Lifeway app)**

### Video Teaching Notes:

1. He knows the H\_\_\_\_\_ on your head. He knows all the days that He has for you. In fact, He put you together and put those days together so you might walk in the fullness of joy, bringing the greatest amount of glory to God.
2. The sovereign King of glory is not a T\_\_\_\_\_. He is a giver.
3. God leads us into the fullest possible life by revealing to us who He is.
4. God is so about God that the Bible itself, first and foremost, is about God. It's not about Y\_\_\_\_\_.
5. God makes known to us the path of life.
6. The "Thou shalt Nots" are not God trying to take but God trying to L\_\_\_\_\_ you to something that is going to bring you more joy than your idea of what's going to bring you J\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Salvation and obedience are the two ways God draws us into the fullest life.
8. James was written to encourage Christians in an ever- increasingly hostile environment to live lives dependent on God and not give themselves over to the presumed C\_\_\_\_\_ of the world.

\*\*\*Hairs; Taker; You; Lead; Joy; Comforts.

**Scriptures used in today's session:** James 1:1; John 10:10; Psalm 139:16

- **James 1:1**
- **John 10:10**
- **Psalm 139:13-16**

- **Luke 12:7**
- **Genesis 1:26-27**
- **Psalm 16:11**
- **Romans 1:16 & 10:13**
- **Galatians 3:28**
- **Colossians 3:11**

#### **Conclusion & Remarks:**

1. Trials, suffering and difficulty can be expected. They do not surprise the heart of God. God is not the “ambulance driver” and never shows up late.
2. This is about progress not perfection. NO one will ever “get all the way there.”
3. Riches and comfort will not satisfy the soul.

#### **Notes from Pastor Randall**

- *James was convinced of Jesus’ Lordship after His resurrection.*
- *James wrote this letter in the 40’s AD (About a decade after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension.*
- *The Bible will reference you, but is not primarily about you. It is about God.*
- *Healthy Biblical Theology understands that the “dispersion” includes all Jews and the whole church (all in Christ) who were scattered after a great persecution and fled, not just the Jewish tribes.*

#### **MY PERSONAL STUDY:**

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

#### **Read James 1:1.**

- **How did James describe himself as he opened his letter in James 1:1?**
- **Why is it significant that James, as a Jew, mentioned both God and Jesus?**

James and Jesus were half brothers. They shared an earthly mother, Mary, but James’s biological father was Joseph, while Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. He was the only begotten Son of God. Joseph was Jesus’ earthly father, but he and Jesus weren’t biologically related. James and Jesus, however, were biologically related. In the opening of his letter, James described himself as a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is significant for multiple reasons. First, it is significant that James, the half-brother of Jesus, described himself as Jesus’ servant. This shows his complete devotion to Jesus as Lord. Second, it is significant that James, a Jew, would pair God and Jesus. This was a proclamation by James that Jesus was no less than God Himself.

- **What connotations does the word “servant” have? What does this self-identification reveal about James? What does it suggest about the content of his letter? About his perspective on the Christian life?**
- **Matt highlighted three major themes that will run throughout this study of James: Trials, suffering, and difficulty can be expected. They never surprise God; God desires progress, not perfection, as we follow Jesus; and Riches and comfort will never satisfy the soul. Which of these stand out to you the most and why?**

Progress, not perfection, is James’s message on faith and works. Sanctification is an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in your life that conforms you to the image of Jesus. You hear the Holy Spirit’s voice as you read the pages of Scripture. Our goal is to move closer to being fully alive in Christ by the end of our journey through the Book of James.

#### **Read John 10:10.**

- **How do the concepts of Jesus giving abundant life and of Christians obeying Him as Lord work together?**
- **Do you think of God as being more concerned with either your obedience or your joy? How does your perspective on God affect your daily life?**

The abundant life that Jesus promised is found nowhere and in no one other than Him. It is only by obedience to Him that His followers receive this full life. In our sin, we may feel confined or restricted by the call of God to obedience. Ironically, it is only through this obedience that we receive that which we desire most. The greatest restriction of life is always found in trying to gain fulfillment and satisfaction in our own strength and in things apart from Jesus.

## Read Psalm 139:16.

- **How does believing that God created you and knows everything about you affect your willingness to obey Him?**

God created us and knows every detail about us. Because this is true, He knows what is best for us. We should love and trust God's Word as we recognize that it truly does provide us with the best way to live. The Book of James exhorts followers of Jesus in the best way to live the Christian life.

### APPLICATION

Identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to our lives.

- **Which common struggle in the Christian life most often threatens to steal, kill, and destroy your joy and satisfaction?**
- **On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being spiritually dead and 10 being fully alive in joyful obedience, how would you rate your relationship with God? Explain your rating.**
- **What are your hopes and expectations for studying the Book of James this summer?**
- **What remaining questions or comments do you have regarding this session's video teaching?**

E-mail Pastor Randall with your questions or comments after today's session: [Randall@gsdurham.com](mailto:Randall@gsdurham.com)

**This Week's Companion Reading: James Session 1 from Lifeway:**

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/product-family/james-bible-study>

**Next Week is Session Two: Trials/Temptations - will be sent Tuesday 06.09.20**

### PRAYER

Pray and thank God for the Book of James that gives guidance on the Christian life. Pray that as you study James, you will grow in wisdom and move toward genuine faith expressed through good works.

### COMMENTARY

**James 1:1** 1:1 The use of slave indicates James's humility and total devotion in service to his Lord. As a "slave" of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, James's words bear authority, for he does his master's bidding and speaks as His representative (2Pe 1:20-21). The 12 tribes in the Dispersion refers symbolically to Jewish Christians scattered abroad (see note at 1Pe 1:1-2).

**John 10:10** 10:9-10. In addition to guarding the sheep, the Good Shepherd provides for them—unlike thieves who steal and kill and destroy. Throwing aside the metaphor to reveal spiritual truth, Jesus told the sheep that he had come to give life so they might live it to the full. False shepherds intend to injure the sheep, but that is never the behavior of the true shepherd.

We need to watch carefully the flow between metaphor and spiritual reality here. In verse 9 Jesus is clearly talking about people as spiritual sheep, while verse 10 falls back into the metaphor at the beginning and then talks about spiritual life. The word life in verses 10 and 11 translates the Greek word *zoe*, which we have already discussed at some length. As we move into verse 11, we see the contrast built around this spiritual eternal life. The sheep may have it only because the Good Shepherd gives his own life to make this possible.

**Psalm 139:16** 139:16 The concept of the Lord's book that records the existence of all human beings reinforces God's sovereignty over life and death (69:28; Ex 32:32-33).