

# FAITH WORKS

## A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JAMES

### Lesson 1: Building a Clothesline for the book of James

Before we can our study of the book of James it is important that we give ourselves a solid Biblical clothesline from which we can hang the entire contents of the book of James. On our clothesline we are going to hang important information about the books author, the books audience, the importance of the book, the purpose of the book, and what it means to us today.

### WHO WROTE THE BOOK?

There are actually \_\_\_\_\_ possibilities for who this “James” is:

1. Father of \_\_\_\_\_ (not Iscariot) (Luke 16:16) - This man’s life is too obscure to be considered for authorship.
2. James the Son of \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 10:3) - If he had been the author, he would have probably mentioned his apostleship.
3. James the Son of \_\_\_\_\_ and the brother of \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 4:21) – He was martyred rather early in church history (A.D. 44; Acts 12:2) making it unlikely that he wrote the book.
4. James the brother of \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 13:15; Gal. 1:19)

While James did not specifically identify himself as to which “James” he was (James 1:1), the author is widely considered to be the half brother of \_\_\_\_\_.

### WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

The contents of the book suggest some things about the audience that James is writing to.

1. The readers were in the midst of \_\_\_\_\_ circumstances (1:2-12; 5:10-11)
2. The readers are in \_\_\_\_\_ carelessness (1:22-25; 4:1-11)
3. The readers are in \_\_\_\_\_ confusion (1:13-16)

James wrote this book to these Jewish believers to encourage them to endure and live bold Christian lives in the midst of their trials.

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK?

In *general* terms this book was written to exhort readers to support with their lives what they said with their lips. In *specific* terms James wrote for 12 reasons:

1. To explain the nature of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (1:2-18)
2. To appeal for religious practice (1:19-27)

3. To rebuke \_\_\_\_\_ (2:1-13)
4. To show the necessity of \_\_\_\_\_ as evidence of true faith (2:14-26)
5. To declare the dangers of the tongue (3:1-12)
6. To describe true spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ (3:13-18)
7. To contrast worldliness and \_\_\_\_\_ (4:1-12)
8. To challenge listeners to depend on the will of God for future plans (4:13-17)
9. To warn about the dangers of \_\_\_\_\_ (5:1-6)
10. To reinforce the need for patience (5:7-11)
11. To instruct about \_\_\_\_\_ (5:12-18)
12. To give guidelines about the recovery of the sinning Christian (5:19-20)

### WHY IS THE BOOK SO IMPORTANT?

The pages of the book of James are filled with direct command to pursue holy living. James makes no excuses for those who do not measure up to this holy pursuit. This teaching from James is strikingly similar to the teaching of our Lord in His \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_. Notice these similarities.

1. Mere \_\_\_\_\_ is not enough (2:14-26; cf. Matt. 7:21-23)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ go together (1:22; cf. Matt. 7:24-27)
3. Character is evidenced by \_\_\_\_\_ (3:11-12; cf. Matt. 7:16-20)
4. Warning against judging (4:11-12; cf. Matt. 7:1)
5. Wrong use of \_\_\_\_\_ (5:1-6; cf. Matt. 6:19-24)

The importance of this profound book lies in its profound emphasis. Christians evidence their faith by walking in certain ways and not others.

### HOW DO I APPLY THIS BOOK?

More than any other book in the New Testament, James places the spotlight on the necessity for believers to act in accordance with our faith.

Here are some practical ways you can prepare yourself as we come to this book:

1. By Doing
  - a. Circle the word “brethren” wherever found in the book.
  - b. Circle all the words that deal with speech (e.g., “say,” and “tongue”).
  - c. Underline the word “works” where found in the book.
  - d. Circle all the proper names in the book.
2. By Discussing
  - a. What is the difference between testing and temptation?
  - b. How can the gulf between rich and poor Christians be bridged?
  - c. How many works must a person produce to give evidence of genuine saving faith?
  - d. Give specific ways by which a believer can manifest friendship with the world.