

let's look at the book of james



# Living WHAT YOU Believe



# INTRODUCTION

James, the brother of Jesus, became a leader in the early Church after seeing the risen Christ. He is the likely author of this letter and in it he reaches out to Jewish Christians who had fled persecution that arose in Jerusalem after the stoning of Stephen (Acts 11:19).

No one likes a hypocrite and a strong emphasis in this letter is encouraging Christians not to be one. If you claim to follow Jesus then you should do what He says. This is such a timely message for the Church which often has more to say on issues of our time than it does actions to back them up. To read James and walk away unchanged in our behaviour would be to commit the very folly he aims to challenge.

We've recently seen the effects of families fleeing from persecution in the Middle East and when you run for your life, leaving property, possession and income behind, you end up in a state of poverty and extreme vulnerability. Writing to a group of displaced people who had suffered greatly, James hopes to remind his audience of the transience of all wealth and the true hope and inheritance we have in the Kingdom of God. James emphasises that God's heart is for the poor and the oppressed. He encourages us to wait patiently for the return of Jesus in the face of trials and abuses of power. He strongly warns of the judgement coming upon those who carry them out.

James truly is a wonderful letter in its power, simple teaching and effective metaphors. As we focus on this letter, I pray that the Holy Spirit will convict us deeply, not only of our need to live humbler, more obedient lives before our Lord Jesus, but also of God's deep love and care for the meek and lowly. This includes his distaste of partiality.

Can we be a church who demonstrates the love of Christ in word and deed? For the sake of the Gospel being heard and heeded by our listeners, we must. Oh great God help us to do just that for your glory, honour and praise.

# LIVING WHAT YOU BELIEVE

STUDY 1	<b>Growing through trials</b>	James 1:1-11
STUDY 2	<b>Hearing AND Doing</b>	James 1:12-27
STUDY 3	<b>Living faith loves</b>	James 2:1-13
STUDY 4	<b>Living faith justifies</b>	James 2:14-26
STUDY 5	<b>Taming the troublemaker</b>	James 3:1-18
STUDY 6	<b>Submitting to God</b>	James 4:1-5:6
STUDY 7	<b>Trusting God in everything</b>	James 5:7-20

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## RECOMMENDED READING

James by John Dickson (Aquila, 2006)

James by D Moo (Tyndale, 1985)

The Message of James (Bible Speaks Today) by JA Motyer (IVP, 1985)

The General Epistle of James (Tyndale Series) by RVG Tasker (Eerdmans/IVP, 1961)

# COMA QUESTIONS FOR JAMES

## Context

- What does this passage tell you about the people or situation to which James is writing?
- What clues are there about James and his circumstances?
- What was the main point of the passage immediately before this one? Are there logical or thematic connections to the passage you are reading?

## Observation

- Are there any major sub-sections or breaks in the text? Are there key connecting words (for, therefore, but, because) that indicate the logical flow of the passage? Try to map the flow of the argument.
- What is the main point or points? What supporting points does the author make?
- What surprises are there in the flow of the argument?
- What connections are made between what we believe and the way we live in the passage?

## Meaning

- How does this text relate to other parts of the book?
- How does the passage relate to Jesus?
- What does this teach you about God?
- How could you sum up the meaning of this passage in your own words?

## Application

- How does this passage challenge (or confirm) your understanding?
- Is there some attitude you need to change?
- What changes does this passage call on you to make in the way you live?