

February 2, 2020
The Bridge Bible Fellowship
Pastor Paul S. Brown
James

“James: A Jet Tour”

Structure of James: the coupling of a nominative of address with an imperative or a question.

1:2-15 – “my brethren” > “consider it all joy”

1:16-18 – “my beloved brethren” > “do not be deceived”

1:19-27 – “my beloved brethren” > “know... be”

2:1-13 – “my brethren” > “not in personal favoritism have...”

2:14-26 – “my brethren” > “What use is it?”

3:1-12 – “my brethren” > “Let not many of you become teachers”

3:13-18 – “among you” > “Who is wise and understanding?” (Thematic Peak)

4:1-10 – “among you” > “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts?” (Hortatory Peak – with 10 imperatives in 4:7-10)

4:11-12 – “brethren” > “Do not speak against one another”

4:13-17 – “you who say” > “Come now”

5:1-6 – “you rich” > “Come now... weep”

5:7-11 – “brethren” > “be patient” (plus 4 more imperatives)

5:12-18 – “my brethren” > “do not swear”

5:19-20 – “my brethren” > “let him know”

Outline (William Varner, “James,” Evangelical Exegetical Commentary):

Prescript – 1:1

1. Be Joyful in Trials – 1:2–15
2. Do Not Be Deceived about God’s Goodness – 1:16–18
3. Become a Good Hearer/Doer of the Word – 1:19–27
4. Do Not Show Favoritism – 2:1–13
5. Show Your Faith by Your Works – 2:14–26
6. Be Consistent in Your Speech – 3:1–12
7. ***Follow the Wisdom of God – 3:13–18***
8. ***Become a Friend of God – 4:1–10***
9. Do Not Speak Against One Another – 4:11–12
10. Do Not Plan Presumptuously – 4:13–17
11. You Rich Should Treat the Poor Justly – 5:1–6
12. Wait Patiently for the Lord’s Coming – 5:7–11
13. Do Not Swear but Pray – 5:12–18
14. Convert the Erring Brother – 5:19–20

Theme(s):

- **Wisdom**
- **Maturity**
- **Faith**
- **Two ways.**

So what?

Discussion & Application:

1. Have you been reading the book of James every day? If not, why not? If so, how is it impacting your relationship with God? Your thought life? Your emotional life? Your other relationships?
2. Martin Luther wondered whether or not James should be in our Bibles. He suggested it should not be taught in their Bible schools: "We should throw the epistle of James out of this school, for it doesn't amount to much. It contains not a syllable about Christ. Not once does it mention Christ, except at the beginning. I maintain that some Jew wrote it who probably heard about Christian people but never encountered any. Since he heard that Christians place great weight on faith in Christ, he thought, 'Wait a moment! I'll oppose them and urge works alone.' This he did." He also said that compared to the other epistles, "it has nothing of the Gospel about it." How would you answer these statements by Martin Luther? Where does it mention Christ? Where does it agree with things Jesus said in the Gospels? Where do you see the Gospel in the book of James?
3. What is a "double-minded man" (1:8)? In what ways is a "wise man" the opposite of double-minded? How does James describe this concept of being double-minded in the rest of the book of James?
4. Wisdom literature speaks often of "two paths" (see Psalm 1; book of Proverbs). What does Proverbs 4:14-19 say about the paths of wickedness? What are we supposed to do when we recognize those paths? How are the paths of righteousness different from the paths of wickedness?
5. Read Mt. 7:13-27. How does Jesus describe the two ways (gates, trees, foundations)? How do we discern which way is good and which is bad? How do we stay on the good way? (See also Psalm 1)
6. Read James 3:13-18. There are thousands of different philosophies in the world today, and each one claims to be wise. What does James say about that? If it isn't heavenly wisdom (in Scripture), what is it? What are the characteristics of earthly wisdom? What are the characteristics of heavenly wisdom?
7. Identify some "wisdom" that was passed down through your family that was heavenly and some that was earthly. What should you do with the earthly wisdom that is characteristic of your family (or friends or workplace or school...)?
8. Identify areas where you have turned from worldly wisdom and applied God's wisdom. How did you do it? How hard was it? What benefits have you experienced from being a doer of God's wisdom?
9. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = demonic; 10 = Christ-like), how mature are you in the following areas?
 - Joyful in trials
 - Always believing that God is good
 - Being a doer of the Word of God
 - Treating all people equally
 - A lifestyle that demonstrates genuine faith in Jesus Christ
 - Consistently righteous in your speech
 - Walking in God's wisdom
 - Turning from the world and walking close to God
 - Not being condescending toward or gossiping about others
 - Living every day as if it were your last
 - Treating poor people justly
 - Waiting patiently for the return of Christ
 - Keeping your word; fulfilling your promises
 - Seeking the Lord about everything
 - Pursuing wayward "brothers"