



“Drawing From the Well”

“Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” Isaiah 12:3

Womens Ministry of Calvary Chapel Bible Fellowship

JAMES

Introduction and Background

Lesson 1

Welcome to the

“Drawing from the Well Bible Study”

This is a Joyful Life Bible Study from Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa, modified for the women’s ministry of Calvary Chapel Bible Fellowship with permission.

DAY ONE: Background of James

Before we begin our journey through the book of James I would like to share the purpose of the Bible study structure. First of all, we all have the opportunity to spend time in the Word of God by completing the daily homework, seeking the guidance and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). In order to place the emphasis on the application of what God’s Word teaches us, I would like to make a suggestion. As you complete each day, spend some time and look back at what God has shown you. Using a highlighter, mark one to three questions (could include scriptures, quotes or definitions, etc.) for that day that ministered to you the most so you can share with your group as the Lord leads. Because our goal for the group discussion is **NOT** repeating the homework and it **IS** to share with the other ladies how God is working and ministering to His people, this will be the most conducive way of opening up to one another. The group discussion time is designed to get to know one another and edify one another (Ephesians 4:29). This is done by sharing what God is doing and encouraging others. Then when we come together to worship and the verse-by-verse teaching, your study will be complete. Hopefully, this format will encourage the application of all that we have studied. Gaining facts without application is just “knowledge” (1 Corinthians 8:1) and God’s desire is a growing relationship with each of us! After spending time in prayer, let’s get started...

If you were to draw a profile of a Christian woman in the 21st century, what would she look like? How would she differ from the non-Christian woman? What attitudes, characteristics, and behaviors would identify her as a follower of Christ? The book we have chosen to study this year, James, helps us in a very practical way to do this. This letter (epistle) was written to people “just like us.” They, too, lived in a time of moral decadence, political instability, and social chaos. They experienced failure, disappointments, doubts, and fears but they learned through the inspired teaching of this letter how these could be transformed into something eternally profitable. They were instructed to affirm their love for God and their faith by their attitudes and actions. James probed, pierced, and exposed their carelessness, indifference, and disobedience with love and directness; his intent was to press them to a stronger faith and a deeper commitment. He punctuated his messages with the importance of perseverance and endurance in that critical climate. James reveals one of the greatest truths concerning answered prayer in this letter.

This letter spans the centuries and speaks to us today as powerfully as it did to these first-century believers. It pulls us out of the commercial, competitive, conflicted culture – out of our own complacency and spiritual shallowness or staleness, and challenges us to live the Christian life while we patiently and joyfully wait for the coming of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ!

BACKGROUND OF JAMES:

Author of the letter:

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, (James 1:1) is generally believed to be the brother of Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph. Though this is disputed three men with the name of James mentioned in the New Testament. “The one is James, the son of Zebedee, (Matt 4:21; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13, et al). He was the brother of John, and is usually mentioned in connection with him; (Matt 4:21; 17:1; Mark 5:37; 13:3, et al). The name of their mother was

Salome. Compare Matt 27:56, with Mark 15:40. He was put to death by Herod Agrippa, about 41 A.D. before Christianity (Acts 12:2). He was called the major, or the elder-to distinguish him from the other James, the younger, or the less, Mark 15:40; called also, in ancient history, James the Just.” The other James was a son of Alphaeus or Cleophas; (Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Acts 1:13; Luke 24:18). The name of the mother of this James was Mary, Mark 15:40; and James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, are mentioned as brethren; (Matt 13:55). There is also a James mentioned in Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3; and Gal 1:19, as a "brother of our Lord." (from Barnes' Notes, Copyright (c) 1997).

Assuming the first, that James was the brother of Jesus; imagine what it must have been like to grow up in the same household as Jesus! This James was the oldest of the brothers of Jesus and along with his other brothers was not a believer until he saw Jesus after the resurrection. James later became an overseer of the church in Jerusalem. He was respected as a Christian leader and spoke with great authority at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). The historian, Eusebius, preserved the following account: “James, the brother of the Lord, who, as there were many of this name, was surnamed ‘the Just’ by all, from the days of our Lord until now, received the government of the church with the apostles...He was in the habit of entering the temple alone, and was often found upon his bended knees, so that his knees became as hard as camels’ knees.”

Tradition reports that this James was martyred by stoning in 62 A.D. His final words were the same as those of our Lord Jesus, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Recipients of the letter:

This letter was written to the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad. (James 1:1) Genesis 49 describes the twelve tribes as the twelve sons of Jacob. Throughout history, the tribes of Israel have been scattered among the nations, to be one day gathered again into the land, as we have had the glorious privilege of witnessing in our lifetime. In the days of the early church, which was made up mostly of Jewish believers, Christians were also scattered throughout the Mediterranean world because of persecution. So this letter was intended for all believers.

Date Written:

The author penned this letter sometime between 45 A.D. and James’ death in 62 A.D., 10-30 years after Christ’s resurrection. Several factors indicate that this may have been one of the earliest writings of the New Testament. Some Bible scholars believe this was the first epistle to Christians.

Purpose for Writing:

James confronts his readers with the act that Christianity must not only be believed, it must be **lived**. The evidence of real faith is a changed life. The book of James does not contradict Paul’s statements that our salvation is due to faith and faith alone, but emphasizes what genuine faith will produce. The book of James covers subjects like perseverance, trials, tests of faith, obedience, faith and law, the results of true faith, the tongue, heavenly and earthly wisdom, submission, relationships, source of quarrels, drawing near to God and slander.

DAY TWO: The Word!

1. Spend some time in prayer if you haven’t already. Refresh yourself in the value of studying God’s Word through reading **Psalm 119**. I know, it’s a long chapter, but read it and record all the benefits of God’s Word and you will be blessed – Make sure you highlight any that really minister to you!

- a. Add any other verses you can think of that speak of the benefits of reading the Word.
2. Observe David's desire for God's Word through his prayer in **Psalm 25:4-5**. Write this prayer here personalizing it.
 3. Spend some more time in prayer today and ask God to provide for you special times to be with Him. Thank Him that He desires to spend time with you and reveal Himself to you.
 4. Read the Book of **James** at one sitting just as if you were receiving a letter from a friend. Make notes on any questions you may have.

*“Open my eyes to see
wonderful things from Your Word.”
Psalm 119:18 - TLB*

DAY THREE: Who & Whom?

1. As you read the background information, what did you learn about the author of the book of James?
 - a. Record what **2 Timothy 3:16** reveals about the Author of all Scripture.
2. What does **Matthew 13:55** reveal about the author, James?
 - a. Add any additional information from **Mark 6:3**.
3. James could have opened his letter by writing, James, the brother of Jesus or James, the apostle (**Galatians 1:19**). Instead, according to **James 1:1a**, how does James describe himself?
 - a. In previous studies we have studied this word *dulos* (#1401) in great depth. If this is your first study here at CCBF, use your study tools and look up the definition for this word. For the rest, how would you describe a bondservant in your own words?

- 1) In light of James' earlier unbelief in Jesus what does this description tell you about the change that took place in James' life?
 - 2) Think about the word servant in relation to your life. Write your thoughts here:
4. After his conversion, James, the bondservant of Christ, became a prominent figure in the church. From these verses, what position did James have in the early church?
- a. **Acts 12:17**
 - b. **Acts 15:13-29**
 - c. **Acts 21:18**

*“If you want to be great in God’s kingdom,
Learn to be a servant of all.”*

5. Review the background to James and read **James 1:1**. To whom was the letter of James written?
6. Using your study tools, look up the word *scattered* abroad (#1290) from **James 1:1b** and record your findings here:
 - a. In addition to the twelve tribes of Israel who else was scattered and about what time did this occur according to **Acts 7:59- 8:1**?
 - b. Why is it important to establish that the book of James applies to all Christians?

*“Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,
And apply your heart to my knowledge;
For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within you;
Let them all be fixed upon your lips,
So that your trust may be in the LORD;
I have instructed you today, even you.”
Proverbs 22:17-19*

DAY FOUR: When?

1. According to the background information, give the approximate date of the writing of James.

Challenge: What might be some of the factors that would indicate that James might be one of the earliest writings of the New Testament?

2. Imagine yourself as a Jewish believer. You have been tutored to follow the Mosaic Law. You have been taught that you are the chosen of God. Now you have discovered the grace through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. What questions might you have about how to walk in your newfound faith?
3. If you were a first century Gentile believer, what questions do you think you would want to ask James?
4. The Jewish person had a real problem with anyone that was not a Jew. Jews even referred to Gentiles as dogs. Who did Paul say the Gospel was for in **Romans 1:16**?
 - a. What is God's attitude toward all people in **Romans 2:9-11**?
 - b. What about **Romans 10:12**?
 - c. Think about it! *All men stand level at the foot of the cross!*

Challenge: Read **Acts 12** and record what led to the dispersion of believers. Record your findings here.

DAY FIVE: Where & Why?

1. History does not reveal to us where James was when he wrote this book. However, we do know what city he lived in while he ministered. Where was this according to **Acts 21:17-19**?
2. Referring to the Introduction on page 1 and scanning the book of James, what are some of the subjects covered?
3. Although this book was written almost 2,000 years ago, briefly state how these subjects are relevant to us today.

4. Prayerfully read the book of James. As you read each chapter, make note of key (repeated) words. What key thoughts interest you the most?

Challenge: Go back and re-read each chapter. As you read each chapter list down all the key or repeated words or phrases on a separate sheet of paper. Record all the text has to say about each word or phrase. Then title each chapter according to the main subject.

- 1) Chapter one:
- 2) Chapter two:
- 3) Chapter three:
- 4) Chapter four:
- 5) Chapter five:

- b. Share one verse from your reading that captured your attention. And explain why it caught your attention.

5. What is your greatest desire as you contemplate studying the book of James?

- a. Express that desire in writing and commit it to the Lord in prayer.

6. If you have time, look at other resources such as commentaries or Bible encyclopedia's and learn more about the background of James and the setting in which this letter was written. Go back over your study this week with a highlighter if you have not already done so.

***"The LORD bless you
and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace." Numbers 6:24-26 NIV***