

# James Takeaways

## James Intro and 1—

- Show me—James emphasizes vital, practical Christianity
- Wisdom writing—James emphasizes wisdom as single-minded devotion
- Marks of a mature Christian
  - Patient in testing
  - Practices the truth
  - Power over the tongue
  - Peacemaker, not troublemaker
  - Prayerful amid trials
- Steadfastness in faith provides the atmosphere for spiritual growth
- Indecisiveness in heart orientation negates effectiveness in prayer
- Sin is progressive—enticing, entangling, and enslaving
- Nuggets to extract—1:2-4, 5, 17, 27

## James 2—

- Recognition/honor in community VS Respecters of persons (attuned to worldly status markers)
- **Faith and works**—James emphasizes vital, practical Christianity. He wants to “see the goods”. He brings this perspective to faith. Saving faith that works regeneration in the life of the believer must show up in what that person does. James wants to see faith validated by what Christians do.

When James is placed next to Paul, at first, there seems to be a contradiction (compare James 2:24; Eph 2:8, 9). But not really. James is saying that deeds complete faith; they are the outworking of genuine faith. He is railing against superficial faith that has no wholesome effect in a believer’s life. On the other hand, Paul is combating legalism, the belief that one may earn saving merit before God by one’s good deeds. Consequently, Paul insists that salvation is not by works, but by faith alone. Note the perspectives:

- Paul is emphasizing the root of righteousness; James the fruit of righteousness;
- Paul has Genesis 15 in mind; James has Genesis 22 in the forefront;
- For Paul, faith is *fiducia*; for James faith is *assensus* absent deeds;
- Paul is concerned with how one stands before a holy God; James is concerned with how one walks with and represents a holy God.
- Nuggets to extract—2:8-9, 15-17, 26

## James 3—

- Taming the tongue
  - Cursing and swearing
  - Slander, gossip
  - Wise guy, sarcasm, busting on folks
  - Proper use—encouragement, recognition/honor
- Worldly and heavenly wisdom
- Nuggets to extract—3:9-10, 13, 17

#### **James 4—**

- Worldly attitudes
  - For the world/against the world; In the world, but not of the world
  - Not the cloister, but the closet
  - Not compadre with the culture, but knowledgeable of the culture and desiring its common good.
- Living independently of God
- Nuggets to extract—4:3-4

#### **James 5—Takeaways—**

- Use of wealth/wealth in a highly commercial age
  - We succeed or fail in our stewardship in proportion to how convinced we are that all our lives really do belong to God.

Discipline of simplicity as enhancing our ability to be generous and simplifying the due diligence requirements of our stewardship. Simplicity is not the grandly pious promenade that condemns the possession of wealth, but the earnest desire and discipline to “center down” on God and his concerns in our material lives.

Contentment with our provision. James castigates the misuse of wealth. Paul will speak of a simplicity of lifestyle that will lead to wealth’s proper use and protect people from wealth’s entangling tendencies. In 1 Tim. 6:6-10, Paul warns against covetousness and encourages contentment. We are going to leave it all behind. Paul’s advice here is to live simply (6:6-8), focused on our basic needs. If we have enough, that is sufficient. The desire for riches, the love of money, is a source of all sorts of corruption. Paul warns that many people in that day, and certainly in our day as well, have gone astray for the love of gain. The love of money can lead people to all sorts of evil once it starts to control their lives (6:9-10).

- When suffering—patient perseverance/those emerging from the fires of suffering speak many languages
- Prayerful in all things/Due diligence and dependent reverence
- Humble, merciful, and forgiving in redemptive/restorative situations
- Nuggets to extract—5:13-16