

Outline of the Book of James

The book of James, traditionally attributed to James, the brother of Jesus, is a practical guide for Christian living, emphasizing the importance of living out one's faith through good works, wisdom, and ethical behavior. Below is an exhaustive outline of James, highlighting the dangers facing believers.

I. Introduction (1:1)

- A. Salutation (1:1)
 - 1. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1a)
 - 2. To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations (1:1b)
 - 3. Greetings (1:1c)

II. Trials and Temptations (1:2-18)

- A. The Testing of Faith (1:2-4)
 - 1. Consider it pure joy when facing trials (1:2)
 - 2. The testing of faith produces perseverance (1:3)
 - 3. Perseverance must finish its work (1:4)
- B. Asking for Wisdom (1:5-8)
 - 1. Ask God for wisdom without doubting (1:5)
 - 2. Doubt leads to instability (1:6-8)
- C. The Humble Circumstances of Believers (1:9-11)
 - 1. The humble should take pride in their high position (1:9)
 - 2. The rich should take pride in their low position (1:10-11)
- D. The Blessing of Endurance (1:12)
 - 1. Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial (1:12)
- E. The Source of Temptation (1:13-15)
 - 1. Temptation does not come from God (1:13)
 - 2. Each person is tempted by their own desire (1:14-15)
- F. The Goodness of God (1:16-18)
 - 1. Every good and perfect gift is from above (1:16-17)
 - 2. God chose to give us birth through the word of truth (1:18)

III. Listening and Doing (1:19-27)

- A. Listening and Anger (1:19-21)
 - 1. Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry (1:19)
 - 2. Get rid of all moral filth and evil (1:20-21)
- B. Doing the Word (1:22-25)
 - 1. Do not merely listen to the word, but do what it says (1:22)
 - 2. The blessing of doing the word (1:23-25)
- C. True Religion (1:26-27)
 - 1. Controlling the tongue (1:26)

2. Caring for orphans and widows, and keeping oneself from being polluted by the world (1:27)

IV. Warning Against Favoritism (2:1-13)

- A. The Sin of Partiality (2:1-7)
 1. Do not show favoritism (2:1)
 2. The example of discriminating against the poor (2:2-4)
 3. God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith (2:5-7)
- B. The Royal Law (2:8-13)
 1. Love your neighbor as yourself (2:8)
 2. Breaking one part of the law makes one guilty of all of it (2:9-11)
 3. Speak and act as those who will be judged by the law that gives freedom (2:12-13)

V. Faith and Works (2:14-26)

- A. Faith Without Works Is Dead (2:14-17)
 1. Example of failing to give (2:15-16)
 2. Faith by itself is useless/dead (2:17)
- B. Examples of Living Faith (2:18-26)
 1. Even demons believe, and shudder (2:18-19)
 2. Example of Abraham's faith demonstrated by works (2:20-24)
 3. Example of Rahab's faith demonstrated by works (2:25-26)

VI. The Tongue and Wisdom (3:1-18)

- A. Taming the Tongue (3:1-12)
 1. The power of the tongue (3:1-5a)
 2. The destructiveness of the tongue (3:5b-8)
 3. Inconsistency of the tongue (3:9-12)
- B. Two Kinds of Wisdom (3:13-18)
 1. Wisdom from above versus earthly wisdom (3:13-16)
 2. Characteristics of heavenly wisdom (3:17-18)

VII. Warning Against Worldliness (James 4:1-17)

- A. Friendship with the World (4:1-10)
 1. Causes of conflicts and quarrels (4:1-3)
 2. Friendship with the world is enmity with God (4:4-5)
 3. Humble yourselves before God (4:6-10)
- B. Judging Others (4:11-12)
 1. Warning against slandering and judging others (4:11-12)
- C. Boasting About Tomorrow (4:13-17)
 1. Warning against arrogant planning (4:13-16)
 2. Knowing the good and failing to do it (4:17)

VIII. Warning to the Rich (James 5:1-6)

- A. Misuse of Wealth (5:1-3)

1. Misery coming upon the rich who hoard wealth (5:1-3)
- B. Oppression of Workers (5:4-6)
 1. The cries of the oppressed workers have reached the ears of the Lord (5:4)
 2. Examples of the self-indulgence and sin of the rich, including the murder of the righteous (5:5-6)

IX. Patience and Prayer (James 5:7-20)

- A. Patience in Suffering (5:7-11)
 1. Be patient until the Lord's coming (5:7-8)
 2. Examples of patience: the prophets and Job (5:9-11)
- B. Truthfulness (5:12)
 1. Do not swear by anything; let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no (5:12)
- C. The Prayer of Faith (5:13-18)
 1. Praying in all circumstances (5:13-14)
 2. The power of the prayer of faith (5:15-16)
 3. Example of Elijah's powerful prayer (5:17-18)
- D. Restoring the Wanderer (5:19-20)
 1. Turning a sinner from their error saves their soul and covers a multitude of sins (5:19-20)

Dangers Facing the Believer Highlighted in James

1. Trials and Temptations (1:2-15):

- **Danger:** Misunderstanding the purpose of trials and succumbing to temptation.
- **Application:** Embrace trials as opportunities for growth, seek God's wisdom, and recognize the source of temptation as one's own desires.

2. Failure to Act on the Word (1:19-27):

- **Danger:** Hearing the word without acting on it, leading to self-deception.
- **Application:** Be doers of the word, control your tongue, and practice true religion by caring for the needy and remaining unpolluted by the world.

3. Favoritism and Discrimination (2:1-13):

- **Danger:** Showing favoritism and discriminating against the poor.
- **Application:** Love your neighbor impartially, fulfilling the royal law and avoiding judgment by the law of liberty.

4. Faith Without Works (2:14-26):

- **Danger:** Claiming faith without demonstrating it through actions.
- **Application:** Show genuine faith through good deeds, following the examples of Abraham and Rahab.

5. The Power and Destructiveness of the Tongue (3:1-12):

- **Danger:** Misusing the tongue to harm others, leading to inconsistency and destruction.

- **Application:** Tame the tongue, using it to bless rather than curse, recognizing its potential for both good and harm.

6. Earthly Wisdom and Jealousy (3:13-16):

- **Danger:** Harboring bitter envy and selfish ambition, resulting in disorder.
- **Application:** Seek and exhibit heavenly wisdom characterized by purity, peace-loving, consideration, submission, mercy, good fruit, impartiality, and sincerity.

7. Friendship with the World (4:1-10):

- **Danger:** Engaging in conflicts, pursuing worldly desires, and becoming enemies of God.
- **Application:** Submit to God, resist the devil, and purify your hearts, humbling yourselves before the Lord.

8. Judging Others (4:11-12):

- **Danger:** Slandering and judging others, usurping God's role as the ultimate judge.
- **Application:** Speak truthfully and lovingly, refraining from judgmental attitudes.

9. Arrogant Planning (4:13-17):

- **Danger:** Boasting about future plans without acknowledging God's sovereignty.
- **Application:** Recognize the uncertainty of life, submitting all plans to God's will.

10. Misuse of Wealth (5:1-6):

- **Danger:** Hoarding wealth and exploiting workers, leading to judgment.
- **Application:** Use wealth justly and compassionately, being aware of the coming judgment on the unjust.

11. Impatience in Suffering (5:7-11):

- **Danger:** Losing patience and hope amidst suffering.
- **Application:** Be patient, trusting in the Lord's coming, and follow the examples of the prophets and Job.

12. Neglect of Prayer (5:13-18):

- **Danger:** Failing to pray in various circumstances, missing out on God's power and healing.
- **Application:** Pray in all situations, recognizing the effectiveness of fervent, righteous prayer.

13. Wandering from the Truth (5:19-20):

- **Danger:** Straying from the truth and falling into sin.
- **Application:** Seek to restore those who wander, understanding the importance of bringing them back to the truth.

Well-known Passages from James

[James 1:2-8 ESV] Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that

you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

[James 1:19-27 ESV] Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

[James 3:1-5 ESV] Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

[James 4:4-10 ESV] You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

[James 5:13-16 ESV] Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Conclusion for James

By understanding these dangers and applying the practical wisdom and exhortations in James, believers can cultivate a mature, active faith that impacts their daily lives and relationships, demonstrating the reality of their commitment to Christ.