

## **Book of James**

### **1. James 1:1-27**

1) Observation: Who is the author of James, and who are the recipients of this letter? (1:1)

2) Interpretation: In referring to the recipients of James as the "twelve tribes scattered among the nations," what do the "twelve tribes" symbolize, and why are they "scattered among the nations"?

3) Application:

3.1(God Loving Us): Sometimes, God comes to us through "trials" (1:2, 13). Have you experienced meeting God amidst trials and suffering? When and for what reason?

3.2(God Meeting Us): In the process of those trials, how did God reveal Himself to you? Through the period of testing, how did you encounter Jesus?

3.3(God Refinding Us): While going through the process of trials, experiencing pain and fear, have you practiced "considering it pure joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance" (1:2-4) by demonstrating joy and perseverance?

3.4(God Inspiring US): James encourages Christians who are facing trials and hardships by saying, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt" (1:5-6). Share about seeking God and experiencing His response.

4) Real Life Today: In James 1:22-27, he emphasizes the need to "be doers of the word" (1:22), not just hearers who forget, but those who put it into practice (1:25), and to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world (1:27). As a Christian who has received the Word, what commitments inspire you to live this way and pursue a faithful life?

### **2. James 2:1-26**

1) Observation: James warns us to pay attention to the appearance of the "world" that has entered the "church." What serious issue within the community of faith does James highlight (2:1, 4, 9)?

2) Interpretation: James compares and contrasts "the poor of this world" with "those who are rich in faith" (2:5), examining the relationship between the "world and faith" and "poverty and wealth." In which aspect are you poor and in which aspect are you rich between the "world and faith"?

3) Application:

3.1(God Loving Us): Meditating on the words, "My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism" (2:1), we realize that to become a person who does not discriminate, we need to encounter God and believe in Jesus Christ "first." When was the most recent experience of encountering "God who comes to me"?

3.2(God Meeting Us): If I have displayed the attitude of "showing favoritism and passing judgment with evil thoughts" (2:4), can I confess that such behavior has disappeared after encountering Jesus? Please give specific examples.

3.3(God Refinding Us): James declares, "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead and useless" (2:14, 17, 20, 26), emphasizing that "faith" and "action" cannot be separated and highlighting a "transformed life" (sanctification). Is your faith "living" faith or "dead" faith?

3.4(God Inspiring US): James expresses concern about the distinction between the rich and the poor within the church, where they discriminate against one another and hurt each other with words. How can we eliminate discrimination and hurt caused by words within our church and relationships?

4) Real Life Today: After going through the pandemic, we started to question the essence of the "church" and the mission of being a "Christian." While the love of God within the church has been emphasized, there has been a sense of regret for neglecting love for neighbors outside the church. In light of the statement, "Faith without deeds is dead" (2:26), what kind of transformation is needed for today's believers and the church?

### **3. James 3:1-18**

1) Observation: James states that there is no division in true faith and godliness in areas such as faith and deeds, confession and life, church, and the world. What is the standard of "true faith and godliness" that James highlights? (3:2, 6, 8-10)

2) Interpretation: What is the meaning behind the metaphors James uses, such as "bits in the mouths of horses, rudders of ships, and sparks of a forest fire" (3:3-5)?

3) Application:

3.1(God Loving Us): The statement "no human being can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (3:8) reveals how the tongue of a believer should be. Are you using your tongue well as a believer who has received God's grace and encountered Jesus?

3.2(God Meeting Us): The Message translation says, "You can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue—it's never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer" (3:8). Have you encountered a person who speaks perfectly and witnessed a person who fully controls their life within the church?

3.3(God Refinding Us): James laments the behavior of believers, stating, "Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing" (3:10) and asks, "Can both fresh water and saltwater flow from the same spring?" (3:11). How can you ensure that praise, not curses, and sweet water, not bitter water, come out of your mouth?

3.4(God Inspiring US): James states that a person who possesses God-given "wisdom" brings peace through "good conduct" in their relationships with others (3:13, 17). What wisdom and good conduct are required of believers and the church in this age?

4) Real Life Today: As a believer, both within the church and in daily life, what efforts should you make starting today to become a person who is "faultless in what they say" and "whole"?

#### **4. James 4:1-5:6**

1) Observation: What does James focus on as the reason for "fights and quarrels" among believers or within the church? (4:1-3)

2) Interpretation: What is the meaning behind the "desires" and "adultery" (4:1-4) that James refers to as the reason for becoming "friends with the world, enemies of God" (4:4)?

3) Application:

3.1(God Loving Us): James states that "God gives greater grace" (4:6) and acknowledges that through God's grace, we have been transformed into beings who are friends with God rather than the world. When and how have you experienced this transformation in values and goals, becoming a friend of God instead of the world?

3.2(God Meeting Us): Before encountering Jesus, we were all "friends with the world, enemies of God" (4:4). When did you discover yourself transitioning from being a friend of the world to becoming a friend of God? Was there decisive help from a friend or a fellow member of the church?

3.3(God Refinding Us): "Friends with the world, friends of God, enemies of God" (4:4) are used interchangeably. James looks for the reason behind this transformation in having "double-mindedness" (4:8). As a believer, when do you notice yourself having a "double-minded" posture, harboring affections for both God and the world? What is the first thing you need to let go of to transform from having "double-mindedness" to having a single-mindedness towards God?

3.4(God Inspiring US): James guides believers on what they need to do to grow as God's children, saying, "Draw near to God" (4:8), "Humble yourselves before the Lord" (4:10). What should believers and the church do to be a saint who draws near to God and humbles themselves before the Lord?

4) Real Life Today: James emphasizes the coming of "judgment" and urges believers to discern the will of the Lord and live a life caring for their neighbors (the weak). In this process, the importance of "wealth" is also highlighted (5:1-6). How should believers and the church use the wealth entrusted to them by the Lord, and what should be the criteria for its use?

## 5. James 5:7-20

1) Observation: What are the two keys that believers present to overcome "trials and hardships"? (5:7-12, 13-20)

2) Interpretation: The Greek word "makrothymeó" used in "Be patient" (5:7), "Be patient" (5:8), and "the patience of Job" (5:11) is a compound word composed of "makros" meaning "long" and "thymeó" meaning "to endure." Reflect on the meaning encapsulated in "patience" and "endurance."

3) Application:

3.1(God Loving Us): James states that when we receive faith through God's grace, we will experience "trials and hardships." Have you ever regretted experiencing God's grace because of the trials or hardships you faced?

3.2(God Meeting Us): How did you overcome the trials and hardships that you encountered through your faith? Did you experience God's special grace or the touch of His help during that time?

3.3(God Refinding Us): James emphasizes "patience" by saying, "Be patient until the Lord's coming" (5:7), "Be patient, strengthen your hearts" (5:8), "Take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering and patience" (5:10), and "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial" (5:11). Do you have an experience of overcoming trials and hardships through patience?

3.4(God Inspiring US): James highlights "prayer" as the key to overcoming hardships and trials (5:13-16). In this context, prayer is characterized as "praying together with others in the community" rather than "praying alone for oneself." How often do you engage in "praying together with others in the community"? Have you experienced answered prayers through praying together with others?

4) Real Life Today: James says, "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy" (5:11). Throughout your life, have you experienced the heart of God described by James? Have you shared that heart with others in the community?