

Micah Mobile Ministries has grown from a call of God to reach out into the towns, villages and hamlets of Cornwall. The charity was founded by a deed of Trust on the 31st of August 2001, and received charity status on the 4th of October 2001.

The vision of the ministry is to offer a free Bible to every home in Cornwall. The belief of the Trustees, and the workers is that it is vital that people have opportunity to read the Word of God, and from that to come to a personal relationship with Father God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it is also important that all Christians read, and know God's written word for themselves. For this to be so there is a need for all Christians to read through the Bible for themselves, and allow God to speak to them through His whole word, and not just certain portions of it. In respect of this the ministry has produced this Bible study in James, and three aids to reading through the Bible.

The first method caters for people who wish to read through the Bible in one year, and divides the portions into daily readings, and necessitates reading four chapters a day. This is made up of two chapters from the Old Testament, one Psalm or a chapter of Proverbs, and one chapter from the New Testament. This aid also includes a general explanation of the form of the Bible, and a 'thumb nail' sketch of each book.

The second method enables people to read through the Bible in approximately eight months. It divides the Bible into four sections; that is History, Song, Prophets and New Testament. To complete the reading in the eight months requires the reader to read five chapters of the Bible each day.

The final method requires the reader to read ten chapters a day, and enables the reader to read through the Bible three times in a year; therefore allowing opportunity to grasp the whole picture much more clearly.

For further information please contact:-

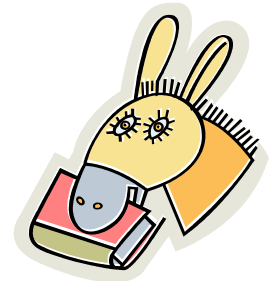
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Christian Living a study in the book of JAMES



This booklet is designed to be used by a group of people who want to study God's word, and then do what His word says. It is not designed as a theological masterpiece, but a practical study.

The group can be made up of two people; or up to possibly twenty people. It is designed to be interactive; so that as one person leads, the rest of the group may join in, and share their thoughts and questions. It is also possible for the 'quieter' people to sit and listen to what is being said, and as the group begins to grow to trust each other; then hopefully all will feel comfortable to join in. The leader is not there to just share all their 'great' thoughts, but to respond to comments, and questions from others in the group. It is not designed for someone to lecture from the front, but for a group to share together. The leader should be a teacher; that is someone who will 'scratch where the group is itching', someone whose purpose is to cause others to grow not to parade their own thoughts.

This book is not the final word on the meaning of the book of James. It is designed for us to share together, learn together, and then work out what we have learned in our everyday lives as Christians. Studying this book has no time limit. Let it take as long or as short as it takes.

I pray that studying the book of James will cause us all to grow in love, respect, and practical living; towards God, and one another.

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UNIT 1.

Ch 1 v 1. Welcome to the book.

This book was written by James; who was thought to be a half brother of Jesus, but he describes himself as a **bond slave**. The Greek word used here for bond slave is also used for an under galley rower.

What are the characteristics of an under galley rower?

- a) When they joined the ship the only way they left was by death. *Philippians 1 v 21.*
- b) They rowed, and stopped, at the command of the slave owner. *1 Corinthians 6 vv 19 & 20*
- c) Their food was provided for them. *Matthew 6 vv 25 - 34*
- d) They were chained to the position. *Psalms 118 v 27*

James was the **bond slave** not only of God, but also of his older brother Jesus - *1 John 4 vv 20 & 21.*

The letter was written to the **Diaspora**, that is, those who had come to faith, and then been scattered. These were people who were no longer able to depend on asking the first disciples/elders of the faith concerning spiritual matters.

What is the first thing James says to them?

Ch 1 v 2. The joy of testing!!!!

God tested, and still tests, people at all times, as testing is the only way to "prove" things; proving through adversity, difficulties. The Greek word for testing means an experiment, attempt, trial, testing and proving.

A.

Genesis 22 vv 1 - 12.

2.

- a) The supremacy of God's position in Abraham's life - *Exodus 20 v 3 & John 21 v 15.*
- b) His obedience to God's command. - *John 14 v 15.*
- c) His faith in God's promises. - *Hebrews 11 vv 17 - 19.*

B. Testing through a direct command.

- a) Learning to obey. - *Exodus 15 vv 22 - 26.*
- b) Obedience had to be learnt - *Exodus 16 vv 4 - 30 . See verse 8 the 'gift of grumbling'.*
Hebrews 5 vv 8 & 9. Do I do what He tells me, do I go where He sends me, do I say what He wants me to say.
see John 4 v 34, John 5 vv 19 & 30, John 6 vv 27, 29 & 38, John 8 v 28, and John 14 v 23.
- c) Humbled to know what was in the heart - *Deuteronomy 8 vv 1-6*
We have a heart faith not a duty faith. The Pharisees did the doing, but Jesus was concerned with the being. What is in my heart will show. - Matthew 15 vv 18 - 20.
- d) The people around us are used by God to see if we will follow the Lord fully - *Judges 2 v 22 to ch 3 v 4.*
- e) A refining work - the work of the Lord in our lives, because He wants to bring out the best. Burdens are laid on us, men rode over our heads, we went through the fire and water. Yet the Lord brought us into abundance. - *Psalm 66 vv 10 - 12.*

C. What of the New Testament?

- a) In the Lord's prayer we are instructed to pray that we would not be led into temptation. - *Luke 11 v 4.*
- b) In the garden Jesus tells His disciples to pray that they would not be overcome by, or overpowered by temptation. - *Luke 22 vv 40 & 46.*

Pages for notes.

26.

f) Fervently, with passion, with heart. God wants zeal - Romans 12 vv 9 - 12, Colossians 4 v 12, 1 Peter 1 v 22 and 1 Peter 4 v 8.

Ch 5 vv 19 - 20. Let the wanderers return.

We have a responsibility towards one another. If we see someone going the wrong way we should not ignore them, but there are ways of dealing with the situation.

Matthew 18 vv 15 - 17.

a) speak to them privately

b) speak to them with a witness - preferably a leader or a godly, older Christian.

c) Then, if there is still no repentance the leaders need to inform the other believers.

This correction must be in gentleness - Galatians 6 vv 1 & 2, and in a desire for the wanderers good, and not just because they have annoyed or angered me, and I want to 'put them right'.

Paul, on two occasions talks of dealing with unrepentant wanderers by the destruction of their bodies that their souls may be saved - 1 Timothy 1 v 20 and 1 Corinthians 5 v 5. These two instances show us how much more important is our eternal welfare rather than our physical life.

Having been used by God to restore the wanderer, then we must not tell others about the restored Christian's failures - Proverbs 10 v 12, and 1 Peter 4 v 8. We will indeed be blessed if we do as Shem and Japheth did in Genesis 9 vv 20 - 27.

3.

c) We are to count it joy when we encounter trials of different types, - James 1 v 2.

d) We are blessed when we endure (persevere, remain, not to run away when under trial). When we have been approved (passed the test), we will receive the crown of life. - James 1 v 12.

e) Trials and difficulties have come to test our faith, to find out in whom we are trusting, which to God is more precious than gold. God wants our faith to be proved genuine, as it will result in praise, glory and honour- 1 Peter 1 vv 6 & 7.

Ch 1 vv 3 & 4. Growth Development.

In a number of places in the Bible there are lists of progression in growth.

1) James 1 vv 3 & 4 - a) tested faith develops perseverance,

b) perseverance brings maturity.

2) Romans 5 vv 3 - 5. - a) suffering brings perseverance,

b) perseverance brings character, c) character brings hope.

3) 2 Peter 1 vv 5 - 7. - a) to faith add goodness,

b) to goodness add knowledge, c) to knowledge add self-control,

d) to self-control add perseverance, e) to perseverance add

godliness, f) to godliness add brotherly kindness, g) to brotherly kindness add love.

Ch 1 vv 5 - 8. Get wise (1)

1. Where is the source of wisdom? *James 1 v 5.*

2. What is the condition for receiving wisdom? *James 1 v 6.*

3. What are the consequences of doubt? *James 1 v 7.*

The greatest book on wisdom, in the Bible, is the book of Proverbs, and one of the main chapters on wisdom is chapter 8.

4. Here wisdom is depicted as a person, and in 1 Corinthians 1 v 24 we are told who that person is.

4. What is the consequence of lack of faith? James 1 v 8.

Ch 1 vv 9 - 11. The upside down world of the Kingdom of God.

In our present world much is made of position and wealth. God sees things very differently. Let us look at what Jesus has to say about these things.

Position

- a) Who will have the blessings of humility? - Matthew 5 v 5.
- b) Who will rule the world? - Matthew 5 v 3.
- c) Who is in the 'know'? - Matthew 11 v 25.
- d) Who is in the number 1 spot? - Matthew 18 vv 1 - 6.
- e) How to be great - Matthew 20 vv 25 - 28.
- f) False position - Matthew 23 vv 5 - 12.
- g) To whom is the good news preached? - Luke 4 v 18.
- h) Who gets the best place? - Luke 14 vv 7 - 11.
- i) Who is forgiven? - Luke 18 vv 9 - 14.
- j) Jesus led by example - Luke 22 vv 24 - 27 & John 13 vv 3 - 5.

Wealth.

- a) Where is your treasure? - Matthew 6 vv 19 - 24.
- b) How to obtain eternal life - Matthew 19 vv 16 - 30.
- c) You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead - Luke 12 vv 13 - 34.
- d) How to be a disciple - Luke 14 v 33.
- e) Spend your money on the things that really matter. - Matthew 13 vv 44 - 46.
- f) What price a soul? - Matthew 16 v 26.
- g) Who gave the most? - Luke 21 vv 1 - 4.

25.

We are reminded that, after all Job had gone through, he was then blessed with a double portion of material wealth. More than that though, he had come to a much greater understanding of who God is. James tells us that, it is because the Lord is compassionate and merciful, He dealt with Job in the way that He did!!! Let us patiently learn to trust the Lord in all His dealings with us.

Ch 5 v 12. Chewing the cud (5).

As we take ten to fifteen minutes to meditate on this verse, let us pray that the truth of it will become a big part of our everyday lives.

Ch 5 vv 13 - 18. Prayer

According to James, when do we pray?

a) when suffering, b) when sick, c) when in sin, d) when God gives us a task.

How do we pray?

- a) With the leaders: we must call for them, not wait for them to come to us. Then, we are putting our faith into action.
- b) With anointing: this is an instruction that Jesus also gave - Mark 6 vv 7 - 13.
- c) In the name of the Lord: our prayer should always be in the name of Jesus only! John 14 v 14, John 15 v 16, and John 16 v 23.
- d) With faith: it's not faith in our faith, but a simple trust that Jesus will do what He has said, and our actions should flow from that.
- e) For one another: there should be nothing between me and another Christian as I pray or my prayer will not be heard.

24.

Patience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit - Galatians 5 v 22, and, as He dwells in us, and fills us, His fruit will develop in us. Jesus is coming back, definitely, without doubt, it's for SURE. We need an attitude of patient waiting in many areas of our Christian life. - James 5 v 7. As we sow into the good soil God has provided, let us water our seeds with prayer. Psalm 126 vv 4 - 6.

How does your garden of patience grow?

- a) Through tribulation - Romans 5 vv 3 & 4.
- b) With hope and perseverance - Romans 8 v 25.
- c) With afflictions, hardship and distress - 2 Corinthians 6 v 4.
- d) Through God's power - Colossians 1 v 11.
- e) With effort - 1 Timothy 6 v 11.
- f) Through following godly men and women's character - 2 Timothy 3 v 10.
- g) In faith - Hebrews 6 v 12.
- h) By doing God's will - Hebrews 10 v 36.
- i) By running the race - Hebrews 12 v 1.
- j) Through having my faith tried and tested - James 1 v 3.
- k) By keeping the word - Revelation 3 v 10.

What is the fruit of the plant of patience in my heart?

No groaning, moaning and complaining about others - James 5 v 9.

Let us give up the gift of grumbling; it's not a godly gift.

James reminds us of the patient endurance of Job and the prophets. The prophets patiently brought the word of the Lord to the people time and time again. You will notice, in James, that certain themes come up again and again. Why is this? It is because we are human and we don't learn everything all at once. God is patient in His dealings with us; therefore let us be patient with one another.

5.

h) How does your garden grow? - Mark 4 v 18 - 19.

i) What are true riches? - Luke 16 vv 10 - 14.

Ch 1 vv 12 - 16. Temptation.

There is a difference between testing, as we saw in verse 2, and temptation, as explained in these verses. Verse 12 explains that God rewards those who endure testing; and the Bible speaks of five crowns of reward.

Crowns.

1. 1 Corinthians 9 v 25.

We need to be disciplined to receive a crown that will last forever.

2. 1 Thessalonians 2 v 19.

A crown of rejoicing made up of those that we have led to Jesus.

3. 2 Timothy 4 v 8.

A crown of righteousness for those who long for Jesus to come back.

4. James 1 v 12.

A crown of life for those who endure under persecution, and love GOD.

Revelation 2 v 10.

A crown of life for those who endure through the devil's persecution.

5. 1 Peter 5 v 1 - 4.

A crown of glory and honour for those pastors who have served well.

God never leads anyone into temptation; that is the work of our enemies, the devil, our old way of doing things and the pressures of this world.

6.

We need not be deceived if we follow what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10 v 13.

- a) Is my temptation special?
- b) Who is faithful?
- c) Will I be able to stand the temptation?
- d) Will I find a way out?
- e) What can I do if I take the way out?

Ch 1 vv 17 & 18. Chewing the cud (1)

It is good to meditate on God's word. Christian meditation never involves blanking or emptying our minds. One explanation for the word meditation is that it is like chewing the cud. We need to be like the cows who eat the grass, and then sit down, regurgitate, and chew the grass all over again.

Sit down and read through these verses, and then read them again; sit quietly for ten to fifteen minutes, and ask God to speak to you from these verses. Jot down any thoughts you have about these verses during this time. Ask God to apply what He has said, to you, to your life,

Then go and do what He has said!!!!

Ch 1 vv 19 - 25. Hear and do

James gives a large NB. He says take note. Please let all of us take note.

- a) Be quick to listen - to God and others
- b) Be slow to speak - let's put our minds in gear before we open our mouths. If we took notice of these four words there would be less offence in His church.
- c) Be slow to become angry - not all anger is sin.

23.

UNIT 5.

Ch 5 vv 1 - 6. The dangers of wealth.

James quickly reminds us that riches do not last for ever - James 5 vv 2 & 3, and this has been previously taught by Jesus - Matthew 6 vv19 - 20.

Where is my treasure? Let's look at the illustration Jesus gave - Luke 12 vv 15 - 21. Let us also remind ourselves that money is NOT the root of all evil, but the LOVE of money is - 1 Timothy 6 vv 6 - 10.

Further to that, we need to owe no man anything - Romans 13 vv 8-10. If someone has worked for us, we must pay them promptly, and Paul reminds us that Christian brothers and sisters, who have fed us with the word of God, are worthy of their hire - 1 Timothy 5 vv 17 & 18, & 1 Corinthians 9 v 11.

Can I live in luxury whilst I have brothers and sisters in the third world who are starving to death? In this area I believe we should be global in our thinking -Galatians 2 v 10 & James 2 vv 15 & 16. Paul teaches that God has equality in mind - 2 Corinthians 8 vv 12 - 15, and that I should not have brothers and sisters living in poverty, whilst I live in luxury. - James 5 vv 5 & 6.

Ch 5 vv 7 - 11.

Patience is a virtue
Possess it if you can
Seldom in a woman
Never in a man!

This little poem that my mother used to say to me, as an impatient child, need not be true.

22.

Ch 4 v 17. Chewing the cud (4).

Let us take ten minutes for God to show us any areas where we could be doing the good, right thing to do, and we are not. Let us open up to the Holy Spirit for Him to show us, and then let us 'go and do' what is right.

7.

If we look at Ephesians 4 v 26, God's word says to be angry but do not sin. Is my anger to do with me, or my indignation at the mistreatment of others?

God wants us to live the right way. He tells us to get rid of moral filth and evil. Let's look at what Paul tells us to do in Ephesians 4 vv 22 - 32, Colossians 3 vv 5 - 10, and the writer of the Hebrews in Hebrews 12 v 1.

James states in verse 21 that we will be able to get rid of the old way, and put on the new way by humbly accepting the word that has been planted in us.

This is a Biblical and physical principle that, that which we sow we shall also reap. Look at what Paul states in Galatians 6 vv 7 - 10; also we are encouraged to be generous in our sowing, 2 Corinthians 9 vv 6 & 7. We must always remember that, as Jesus says in Mark 4 v 26 - 29, we may sow but it is always God who causes the seed to grow, and brings the fruit to harvest.

Ch 1 vv 26 & 27. True and worthless religion.

Worthless religion, according to James, is practised by anyone who cannot control their tongue. We can ruin all that we do by allowing our mouths to run off unchecked. Let us remind ourselves of what James says in James ch 1 v 19.

a) Be quick to listen, b) be slow to speak, c) be slow to become angry.

The Greek word for religion means ceremonial observance; or worship. In other words the services we attend, and the worship we seek to bring to God, are worthless if we are hasty in our speech, gossiping, backstabbing, and unkind in our comments about, or to, others.

8. God hates mixture, and James tells us that pure, (unspoilt, unmixed, uncorrupted) ceremonial observance or worship is to care for the orphan and the widow. God has a heart for the orphan and the widow. Let us not spiritualise this truth, but look practically at what the Bible teaches about this fact.

Who takes care of the orphan and the widow?

- a) Deuteronomy 10 v 17 & 18
- b) Psalm 10 v 12 - 14
- c) Psalm 68 v 5
- d) Psalm 146 v 9

How can we join the Lord in caring for the orphan and the widow?

- a) Exodus 22 v 22
- b) Deuteronomy 24 vv 17 - 21
- c) Deuteronomy 26 v 12
- d) Deuteronomy 27 v 19
- e) Isaiah 1 v 17
- f) Zechariah 7 v 10
- g) 1 Timothy 5 v 3 & 4

Then James states that we must not let the world corrupt us. We have to live in this world, but God tells us not to let the world live in us. It is like the well known statement :- a ship in the water is good, but water in the ship is a disaster!!

Paul in Romans 12 v 2 tells us how to be changed from this world's way of thinking to God's way, by having our minds renewed. Later James writes in James 4 v 4 that anyone who is a friend of the world is an enemy of God.

21.

Ch 4 vv 11 & 12. Judging others (2)

We need to watch what we say about other Christians. We must not slander or speak against another Christian; to do so means that we try and put ourselves in God's place. God is the judge - not us. - *Romans 12 v 19.*

James clearly states that only God is the judge. Jesus clearly tells us not to judge others - *Matthew 7 vv 1 - 5*; and later in this chapter when speaking of false prophets, Jesus tells us to recognise them, but He does not say to judge them - *Matthew 7 vv 15 - 20.*

Paul also teaches the young churches the dangers of becoming judgemental one of another.

- a) Who am I to judge God's servants - *Romans 14 v 4.*
- b) Don't just be negative, that is don't judge, but be positive - *Romans 14 v 13.*
- c) Who is going to do the judging? *1 Corinthians 4 v 5.*

Ch 4 vv 13 - 16. Self confidence.

James reminds the people he is writing to, that life is just a vapour, and we need to remember that this life is temporary - Psalm 144 v 4. Paul in Colossians 3 vv 2 & 3, & Philippians 3 v 20; reminds us where our real life is.

We need to have a complete mind change to see things God's way - Isaiah 55 vv 8 & 9. God has His priority in the eternal - 2 Corinthians 4 v 18.

Let us not decide for ourselves what we are, or are not, going to do; but daily acknowledge that He has control over our every day activities. Once again this requires a humble, submissive attitude; there is no place in God's kingdom for us to have proud, arrogant attitudes - James 4 vv 15 & 16.

20.

We see this principle worked out in Jesus' life; His teaching was always accompanied by action. *Philippians 2 vv 5 -11*.

James then tells us how to get rid of the devil.

1. Submit ourselves to God.

2. Resist the devil.

We must firstly submit to God before we try to resist the devil.

God is ready and willing to meet with us.

a) God responds to wholehearted action - *Deuteronomy 4 v 29 & Jeremiah 29 v 13*.

b) Seeking God brings joy - *1 Chronicles 16 vv 8 - 11*.

c) David instructs his son to seek the Lord. - *1 Chronicles 28 v 9*.

d) God's word through His prophet *2 Chronicles 15 vv 2 - 4*.

e) It is wise to seek the Lord - *Proverbs 8 v 17*.

f) Don't waste time - *Isaiah 55 v 6*.

g) There is a need for a right heart attitude - *Zephaniah 2 v 3*.

There is a right way to come to God.

a) Clean hands and a pure heart - *Psalms 24 vv 3 - 6*.

b) Strength will increase - *Job 17 v 9*.

c) God can make us clean - *Psalms 51 v 10*.

d) Purity brings God's goodness - *Psalms 73 v 1*.

e) The pure shall see God - *Matthew 5 v 8*.

Again James remind us of the need for single mindedness. There can be no mixture with God.

How can we humble ourselves before God?

a) Fasting - *Psalms 35 v 13*.

b) Thinking God's way - *Romans 12 v 3*.

c) Fearing God - *Romans 11 v 20*.

d) Mix with people who are humble - *Romans 12 v 16*.

e) Don't boast? - *James 4 v 10*.

9.

UNIT 2.

Ch 2 vv 1 - 9. No favouritism.

There should be no discrimination in God's kingdom, neither by

a) Wealth - *James 2 vv 1 - 7*.

b) Nationality - *Galatians 3 v 28, 1 Corinthians 12 v 13 & Colossians 3 v 11*.

c) Status - *Galatians 3 v 28, 1 Corinthians 12 v 13 & Colossians 3 v 11*.

d) Gender - *Galatians 3 v 28*.

e) Religion - *Colossians 3 v 11 & Galatians 5 v 6*.

In the book of James it states that we should not show

favouritism to the rich over the poor, but we should also not reverse that, and show favouritism to the poor over the rich.

Again, James states that God chooses those who are, in the eyes of the world, poor, to be rich in faith. We are again faced with the upside down world of the kingdom of God. If we look at *Matthew chapters 5 - 7* we see Jesus' teaching for His disciples at the beginning of His work on earth.

Matthew ch 5 vv 1 - 12. the beautiful attitudes

v3 Blessed (this word means to be extremely happy) are the poor in spirit - those who know they have needs - because then we will go to Jesus, and He will bring us into His kingdom.

v4 If we are sorry for the things that we have done wrong, and are willing to turn away from our way of doing things, then God will forgive us. That will be great comfort.

v5 This beautiful attitude is totally opposite to the world's way of thinking. The world says "push yourself"; " get what you can, can what you get, and then sit on the can!!!!" Jesus says to stay humble, and teachable, and you will receive all that you need.

10.

v6 Jesus says that we will receive all we need when we are more concerned with doing what is the right thing to do, than looking after our own needs.

v7 Those who treat others with care and compassion will receive care and compassion from God. Don't judge, condemn, and set yourself up to "sort out" the rest of the world. Then God will not judge us.

v8 God does not tolerate mixed motives. Those who are sincere and single hearted will see (and know) Him.

v9 God has not called us to start wars either on a global, national, local, or more importantly, personal level; but He has called us to seek to make peace with all those around us. Making peace does not mean we have to compromise our principles; but it does mean that our attitude to others is a desire to stay in fellowship and right attitude with them.

v10 Those who are picked on for following the right way, God's way, are extremely happy. This is a word to those who are picked on because of their love for God; not because they are obnoxious!

v11 How do people pick on us? a) insult us, b) persecute us, c) falsely speak evil against us. All these things because we follow Jesus; again not just because they are just difficult to live with.

v12 According to Jesus where is my reward?

What should my attitude be as I am going through difficulties? Am I alone in this?

This is indeed an 'upside down kingdom' or maybe this is the kingdom which is the right way up!

James finishes this part of his letter by reminding his readers that it is the rich, influential people, those who love their position, who are persecuting Jesus' followers.

19.

To become a Christian does not mean adding my faith onto my present lifestyle, but to have a complete change of life; with my relationship with God as number one priority.

a) God rebukes the nation of Israel for having other gods alongside Him - *Jeremiah 3 vv 6 - 10.*

b) God won't be fooled by us having Him and others - *Amos 5 vv 25 & 26.*

c) Jesus' rebuke to the church at Ephesus was that they had lost their first love; even though they were doing so many things right. *Revelation 2 vv 1 - 7.*

d) John, like James, does not waffle but comes straight to the point - *1 John 2 vv 15 -17.*

e) Jesus declares that no one can serve two masters - *Matthew 6 v 24.* God wants us to put Him first, and depend on Him, in all things.

Ch 4 vv 6 - 10. Humility.

God sets Himself against the proud, but gives more of what is needed to those who come to Him humbly.

a) God warned Pharaoh to humble himself - *Exodus 10 v 3.*

b) If we do not humble ourselves, God in His kindness will sometimes humble us - *Deuteronomy 8 vv 2 & 3.*

c) God's promise to those who humble themselves on behalf of the land - *2 Chronicles 7 v 14.*

d) Pride will destroy us, humility will lift us up - *Proverbs 29 v 23.*

e) The humble can live with God - *Isaiah 57 v 15.*

f) Greatness in heaven is measured by humility - *Matthew 18 v 4.*

g) Treat each other with humility - *1 Peter 5 vv 5 & 6.*

Jesus taught us that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted - *Luke 14 v 11.*

UNIT 4.**Ch 4 vv 1 - 5. Who is my friend?**

James looks at the battle between our old way of living, and the new life of Jesus within us. Paul looks at the same battle in Romans 7 vv 21 - 25.

Someone once described the problem in this way. It is as if there are two trees living in me; one rooted in Jesus, and the other rooted in my old way of doing things. Whichever of those I feed is the one that will bear fruit. If I feed and dwell in Jesus, then the fruit of God's Holy Spirit will be seen in my life - Galatians 5 vv 22 & 23, but if I feed my old way of doing things then that fruit will be produced - Galatians 5 vv 19 - 21. The rest of the section in Galatians 5 vv 16 - 26 tells us how to encourage growth in Jesus, and how to put an end to the old way of life. Jesus, in Luke 9 v 23, reminds us that it is a daily event not a once for all experience to die to the old way of life.

In this section of his letter, James clearly explains why we often don't have the help from God that we should.

a) You don't have because you don't ask God, Luke 11 vv 9 & 10, Mark 11 vv 24 - 26, Matthew 18 v 19, John 14 vv 13 - 15, John 15v7, 1 John 3 v 22 & 1 John 5 v 14.

b) You don't have because you ask with wrong motives.

The wrong motives that James comments on are when we ask just to please ourselves.

James in ch 4 v 4 uses the same accusation as God often used in the Old Testament; that is, of His people being as an adulteress. When we become part of the body of Christ, the church, we are also part of the bride of Christ, and we should be a 'one - man - woman'. The Lord wants us to be wholehearted for Him. He will not stand for us to have other 'gods' in our lives as well as Him.

Ch 2 v 8. Chewing the cud (2)

Let's take fifteen minutes to chew over this verse quietly, and let God speak to us. Make a note of anything that God says to you.

Then let's go and do what He has told us to do!

Ch 2 vv 10 - 11. Law

What is the purpose of the Law, that is the ten commandments? Jesus brought the ten commandments down to two statements.

Matthew 22 vv 34 - 40

a) love God with everything you have got, b) love others the way you love yourself.

Paul says that the purpose of the law was to bring us to Jesus - Galatians 3 v 24. James says that if we have sinned in any area we are therefore law breakers. If we have broken any part of God's law we are guilty of breaking all of it, (do we agree that that statement is true?), but we are relying on God's mercy to save us from the judgement due to us.

Ch 2 vv 12 & 13. Judging others (1)

James says, as Jesus does in Matthew 5 v 7 , that those who show mercy to others receive mercy from God.

12.

Let us consider this principle.

- a) give mercy and you get mercy - *Matthew 5 v 7.*
- b) give forgiveness and you receive forgiveness - *Matthew 6 vv 12, 14 & 15, Matthew 18 vv 21 - 35.*
- c) give judgement and you receive judgement - *Matthew 7 vv 1 - 5 & Romans 14 vv 10 & 13*
- d) do as you would be done to - *Matthew 7 v 12.*
- e) pardon and you will be pardoned - *Luke 6 vv 37 & 38.*

We are revisiting the principle of sowing and reaping.

Ch 2 vv 14 - 26. Faith v Works.

Some people say that it is faith alone that saves us, and often quote Romans 5 v 1, and Titus 3 v 5. Others say that we are saved by the good deeds we do, and these people quote James 2 v 24. If we look at Ephesians 2 vv 8 - 10 we see the two opinions brought together. Paul says that we are saved by grace, and saved through faith, v8. He declares that even the faith we have is not our own, but a gift from God. Verse 9 clearly states that our salvation is not by what we do; otherwise we would be boasting about the good things we do. Then v10 gives us the whole picture. God does the work of salvation in us, and He places us in Jesus. If Jesus lives out of us, we will do good - Acts 10 v 38. In Ephesians 2 v 10, Paul states that we have been created in Jesus to do good works; which God has prepared for us to do. Paul also says in Galatians 6 vv 9 - 10 that we should continually do good to every one; especially fellow Christians.

Looking at this evidence, the truth appears to be that salvation is by grace; through faith, and that is from God, but this should lead us to do good. Jesus, Himself, said in Matthew 7 vv 16 - 18, that if the root is good then the fruit will be good.

17.

NO, because that will never change my heart, which is from where my tongue is speaking. I must choose to draw from the life of Jesus in me, and choose not to feed my old way of living. A fire starved of fuel will soon die, and a tongue starved of evil thoughts, and bad attitudes will begin to 'change it's tune' - Psalm 45 vv 1 - 4.

Ch 3 vv 13 - 16. Get Wise (2)

James says that wisdom and understanding are shown by our good lives, not by our wonderful words. What does James say true wisdom produces? - *James 3 v 13.* Paul, in *1 Corinthians 8 v 1* reminds us that knowledge 'puffs us up', but James here says that true wisdom brings humility.

James again reminds us that the 'fruit' that shows in our lives proves the source of our wisdom. If I am envious of another Christian; or I am always looking to share what I know; or wanting to be noticed, that is not from God's wisdom.

James says those attitudes begin with our natural desires and, if unchecked, will become the desires of our souls, and this can open a door for demonic activity in our lives. James very clearly says that if envy of others, and desire for personal ambition is not checked it will, not may, lead us down the road to mayhem.

Ch 3 vv 17 & 18. Chewing the cud(3)

After some time looking at negative issues let us join James in thinking upon positive truth, and take fifteen minutes to fill our minds with the good, wholesome truths in these two verses, let God speak to us of the good fruits He wants to produce in the gardens of our lives.

16.

Bad use of the tongue:-

- a) Flattery and deceit - *Psalm 5 v 9.*
- b) Curses, lies, threats, evil and trouble - *Psalm 10 v 7.*
- c) Lies, flattery, deception and boasting - *Psalm 12 vv 2 - 4.*
- d) Slander and casting slurs on others - *Psalm 15 vv 2 & 3.*
- e) Evil and lies - *Psalm 34 v 13.*
- f) Where does David say that his speech comes from - *Psalm 39 vv 1 - 3?*
- g) Evil, deceit and slander - *Psalm 50 vv 19 & 20.*
- h) Boasting, deceit, falsehood and harmful words - *Psalm 52 vv 1-4*
- i) Sharp swords - *Psalm 57 v 4.*
- j) Words aimed like deadly arrows - *Psalm 64 v 3.*
- k) Lying - *Psalm 109 v 2.*
- l) Lying and deceit - *Psalm 120 v 2.*

If we look at the list of things that Paul tells us to 'put off', we notice how many are connected to the use of the tongue -

Ephesians 4 vv 25 - 32 & Colossians 3 vv 5 - 10.

James finishes this section with a reminder of the hypocrisy of praising God one moment, and criticising our fellow men the next -

James 3 vv 9 - 12 . He reminds us that what is at the root will

show in the shoot. What is in our heart will come out of our

mouths. I am reminded of Paul's cry in Romans 7 v 24 - 'What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Praise God for Romans 7 v 25 -

'Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord'

Paul also states in *2 Corinthians 5 v 17*, when we are living in Jesus, drawing from the root of Jesus in our new self, we will produce good fruit, and good things will flow out of our mouths.

So how can I tame my tongue? By great self effort? By constantly keeping my mouth closed?

13.

This suggests that everyone born of the Spirit of God will produce the goodness that we see in Jesus.

Let us look more closely at *James 2 vv 14 - 16* with this in mind. James states clearly that if someone says they are a Christian, but they do not do good, we can question whether they have entered into salvation. He states, in *v17*, that faith without action is dead faith. Have we been stillborn? Can we see another person in need, when we have plenty, and do nothing about their need, and then claim to follow the one who laid down His life for sinners? - *Romans 5 v 8.*

In *v 18*, James states that we can see his faith by what he does. We cannot see faith other than by what results from it. It is like the wind that Jesus talks about in *John 3 v 8*. You cannot see the wind, but you can see the effect of it blowing. You cannot see faith, but you should be able to see the effect of it working in your life.

Some people say, 'I believe in God!' James points out that so do the demons, and that does not make them Christians.

James illustrates his point with two examples from the Old Testament; Abraham and Rahab.

a) Abraham's faith is clearly tested by God as seen in *Genesis 22v1.*

Abraham believed God, and was therefore willing to trust God, and do what God had told him to do. Do we believe God to the point of obedience? Is there anything God has asked that I am not willing to do?

14.

b) Rahab told the spies that she believed that God had given the Israelites the land where she was living - *Joshua 2 v 9*. She put her life on the line, in line with her faith. She hid the spies, and then asked them for protection. She was saved because she hid the spies, and followed their instructions - *Joshua 2 vv 12 - 21, and Joshua 6 v 25*.

I am reminded of a story that a friend told me of a man who had travelled through the desert. On arriving at the oasis, tired, thirsty to the point of death, he was offered a drink of water. He spent the next half hour saying how much he believed that if he drank the water he would live, and not die. **Then he died.** He could believe all he liked, but as he had not drunk the water he died of thirst.

James concludes this section of his letter by stating that faith without deeds is dead. Let us make sure that our faith is rooted in Jesus, then we will produce good fruit - *John 15 vv 1 - 17*.

15.

UNIT 3.

Ch 3 v 1. To teach or not to teach.

James warns about the responsibility of teaching others. When we are doing this let us make sure that we also live what we teach. My niece used to use a phrase which should never be true of those who teach God's word; she used to say - 'they're all mouth and no do!' We should not be passing on theological theories, but practical truths.

- a) Practise and teach - *Matthew 5 v 19*.
- b) Why did the disciples ask this question? - *Luke 11 v 1 ?*
- c) Do and teach - *Acts 1 v 1*.
- d) One of the qualities of an overseer - *1 Timothy 3 v 2*.
- e) Teaching should not be just about words - *1 Timothy 6 vv 3 - 5*.
- f) Attitude of a teacher - *2 Timothy 2 vv 23 - 26*
- g) We must all learn from THE TEACHER - *John 14 v 26 & 1 Corinthians 2 v 13*.

Ch 3 vv 2 - 12. Taming the tongue.

James gives two examples of how small the tongue is in size, but how big its effect can be - *James 3 v 3 & 4*.

- a) A bit in a horse's mouth can control the whole animal
- b) A small rudder can steer a large ship

James clearly states that hell, itself, is often the source of the 'fires' that the tongue can set alight by its careless use. Even though man can tame all kinds of animals, very rarely can man tame his own tongue. James declares it to be evil, and full of deadly poison; which is a strong reminder of what *Jeremiah* says about the heart. - *Jeremiah 17 v 9*.