



A GLC  BOOK STUDY
JAMES:
SESSION 4: FAITH THAT WORKS

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OUTLINE

- A. Faith that works is devoted to God.**
- B. Faith that works is devoted to God's people.**
- C. Faith that works is devoted to God's will.**

A. Faith that works is devoted to God.

As we have said from the beginning, James is speaking to a mixed audience and determining who he is speaking to and when is one of the greatest challenges in understanding this book.

- It is a time of transition. (Hebrews 8:13)
- It is a time of persecution. (Acts 8:1)
- It is a time of revelation. (Hebrews 2:1-4)

So we have primarily Jewish communities making the transition from Judaism to Christianity. From the **Old Covenant** to the **New Covenant**.

- Some were saved from their sin. (Justified, righteous)
- Some were seeking salvation from sin.
- Some were still lost in their sin. (Sinners, wicked)
 - Sinner is used **43** times in the NASB.
 - Never used to describe a true believer.

1. Real faith works to resolve conflict with others. (James 4:1)

JAMES: A GLC BOOK STUDY
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2. Real faith works to resolve conflict within ourselves. (James 4:2–3)

3. Real faith works to resolve conflict with God. (James 4:4)

Having established that James has professing Christians and not true disciples of Jesus Christ in mind greatly helps us with the next verse.

- One of the most difficult verses to interpret in the Bible.
- Many godly men disagree.
- However if you recognize that James is calling unbelievers to repentance in this passage it gets a lot clearer.

Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us”? (James 4:5)

Or it can be translated...

“Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “The spirit which He has made to dwell in us lusts with envy”? (James 4:5)

Now James is not quoting from any particular verse here, he is referring back to many passages that teach us about the fallen nature of man.

- He is simply pointing out that the Bible warns everyone about the fallen nature of man and how powerful it is.
- But God offers grace to all those who truly want it.

*But He gives a **greater grace**. Therefore it says, “**GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.**” (James 4:6)*

God is always offering grace to His enemies but in order to receive that grace a person must humble themselves because God is the enemy of the proud.

- The word “antitasso” is used in warfare and speaks of open hostility and resisting with force. God opposes the proud!
- But God’s unmerited favor or grace is freely given to the humble.

The final four verses are one of the clearest and most powerful calls to repentance in the New Testament.

- There were professing Christians in the early church, who were well aware of the gospel message.
- But they were really His enemies, friends of the world.

Unbeliever	Believer
They are hearers only.	They are doers of the world.
They possess a dead faith.	They possess a living faith.
They have worldly wisdom.	They have divine wisdom.
They are driven by lust.	They are driven by a new nature.
They are friends of the world.	They are friends of God.
They are proud.	They are humble.

James now introduces 10 commands that sum up and reveal the true components of saving faith:

a. Submit therefore to God. (James 4:7)

b. Draw near to God. (James 4:8a)

c. Cleanse your hands. (James 4:8b)

d. Cleanse your hearts. (James 4:8c)

e. Your sin should make you miserable. (James 4:9a)

f. Your sin should make you mourn. (James 4:9a)

g. Your sin should make you weep. (James 4:9a)

h. Turn your laughter to mourning. (James 4:9b)

i. Turn your joy to gloom. (James 4:9b)

j. Humble yourself before God. (James 4:10)

i. Real Repentance

ii. Real Faith

B. Faith that works is devoted to God's people.

If our faith is real it will show up in the way we speak about each other. Our tongue will betray our heart and a person that is always speaking evil has a heart filled with pride.

- We have just learned that God will only extend grace to the humble.
- These people are born again and have received a new heart.
- So James immediately returns to the one area that will betray your heart over and over again. Your speech!

*Do not **speak against** one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. (James 4:11)*

The Greek word is “katalaleo” and it means to speak against, speak down to, defame or slander. Sometimes translated as backbiting because it implies that the person isn't there to defend themselves.

- For the unbeliever, slander is a way of life, it tears down others and exalts you.
- God hates it. (Proverbs 6:16-19, 10:18)
- The term devil “diabolos” means to slander or falsely accuse.

What James is NOT saying!

It is very popular today for church going people to play the “don't judge” card when people point out sin in their lives. So let's be clear! We are commanded to confront sin in each other. (Matthew 18:15-19)

- We are to confront sin personally. (Galatians 2:11, 6:1)
- We are to confront sin publically. (Acts 5:1-11, 1 Corinthians 5:4)
- We are to confront sin forcefully. (2 Thessalonians 3:14, Titus 3:10)
- The difference here is the righteous intent. Acting to bring your brother or sister in Christ to repentance and restoration. (1 Peter 4:8)

1. Real faith works to change how we view other believers. (James 4:11)
2. Real faith works to change how we view the law. (James 4:11)

God's Law of Love

Do not worship any other gods	Love is loyal
Do not make idols	Love is faithful
Do not treat God with disrespect	Love is respectful
Set aside a day for worship	Love is devoted
Honor your parents	Love is submissive
Do not murder	Love is protective
Do not commit sexual sin	Love is pure
Do not steal	Love is selfless
Do not lie	Love is truthful
Do not covet	Love is content

3. Real faith works to change how we view God. (James 4:12)

C. Faith that works is devoted to God's will.

The final five verses deal with a simple yet important truth. Real faith is not only devoted to God and His people, it is also devoted to His will.

- The true disciple of Jesus Christ follows Him. (John 10:27)
 - He came to do the will of the Father. (John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38, 17:4)
 - So if our faith is real it will be seen in how devoted we are to His will.
1. Real faith does not disregard God's will. (James 4:13-14)

2. Real faith does not deny God's will. (James 4:16)

“It matters not how strait the gait, how charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.”

WILLIAM HENLEY (INVICTUS)

3. Real faith does not disobey God's will. (James 4:17)

4. Real faith is dependent on God's will. (James 4:15)

What is God's Will?

- a. God's will is that you be saved. (1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9)
- b. God's will is that you be filled with His Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)
- c. God's will is that you be set apart for Him, pure. (1 Thessalonians 4:3)
- d. God's will is that you be submissive to authority. (1 Peter 2:13)
- e. God's will is that you be thankful for everything. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
- f. God's will is that you be just, kind and humble. (Micah 6:8)
- g. God's will is that you be willing to suffer. (1 Peter 3:17)

Remind ourselves...

- A. Faith that works is resilient in trials.
- B. Faith that works is resisting temptation.
- C. Faith that works is responding to truth.
- D. Faith that works is vindicated by love.
- E. Faith that works is vindicated by works.
- F. Faith that works is manifested in speech.
- G. Faith that works is manifested in wisdom.
- H. Faith that works is devoted to God.
- I. Faith that works is devoted to God's people.
- J. Faith that works is devoted to God's will.

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!

Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed **you fail the test?**”

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5

Discussion Questions

1. Define what “friendship” with the world means. Why do you think God gave this command to choose between loving Him or loving the world? Can there be a middle ground? Please discuss. (Read Matthew 6:24 and 1 John 2:15-16)
2. Have you been the object of gossip and slander? Have you yourself gossiped and slandered anyone? What steps can you take to avoid these sins of the tongue? (Read Proverbs 6:19, 28; Proverbs 26:22)
3. Is James (in verses 13-16) opposed to planning for the future? How would you reconcile that with these verses, Proverbs 16:3, 9; and Proverbs 3:5-6?