




**A GLC  JAMES:  
BOOK STUDY  
SESSION 5: FAITH THAT WORKS**

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**JAMES: A GLC BOOK STUDY**

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## VITAL TO REMEMBER

James is writing primarily to Jewish communities. Many are saved but some are not 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 revelation. (Hebrews 2:1-4)
- It is a time of persecution. (Acts 8:1)

## OUTLINE

- A. Faith that works is humble.**
- B. Faith that works is enduring.**
- C. Faith that works is truthful.**
- D. Faith that works is prayerful.**
- E. Faith that works is evangelistic.**

### A. Faith that works is humble.

In chapter 5 James turns his attention to the suffering of the righteous. He wants to remind them how real faith deals with persecution.

- Throughout the books of the Old Testament declarations of judgment were directed at wicked people living among the righteous.
- Now under the control of the Holy Spirit and in true Old Testament prophetic style, James launches a scathing condemnation of the rich.
- He is of course talking to the wicked, unbelieving rich.
- Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 16:13

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In New Testament times you were considered wealthy if you had more than you needed for each new day.

- Churches the world over are filled with wealthy people that profess to love Jesus Christ and are consumed with a love for money. Many that claim to be shepherds of Christ's people, rob and exploit them in Jesus name.
  - It is difficult to say whether James has the wicked rich in society in mind or wealthy unbelievers inside the local church.
  - Either way His righteous children were suffering to great degree and God is very angry.
1. Real faith does not hoard wealth. (James 5:1-3)

**Weep:** *Is a term used of wailing for the dead, this is not repentance over sin. It is the bitter cry of the hopeless.*

**Howl:** *Refers to uncontrollable grief that is expelled as a scream or a loud cry.*

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2. Real faith does not steal wealth. (James 5:4)

3. Real faith does not waste wealth. (James 5:5)

4. Real faith does not ruthlessly acquire wealth. (James 5:6)

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## B. Faith that works is enduring.

In verses 7-11 James turns from the negative example of the wealthy wicked to three positive examples designed to show us how real faith endures in times of suffering.

- All people endure suffering in this fallen world. (Job 5:7)
- But Christians endure a kind that unbelievers don't. (Acts 14:22)
- They are required to suffer for Jesus Christ.
- Acts 14:19-22

Part of being a true follower of Jesus is sharing in His sufferings and suffering for righteousness sake.

- In verses 1-6 he gives **words of condemnation** to the wicked rich that persecute the righteous poor.
  - In verses 7-11 he gives **words of comfort** to the righteous poor that are being persecuted by the wicked rich.
  - He calls them to patience, "makrothumeo" better translated long suffering.
1. Real faith endures by looking beyond the suffering. (James 5:7-8)

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2. Real faith endures by looking at the coming judgment. (James 5:9-10)

3. Real faith endures by looking forward to glory. (James 5:11)

- God allowed Job to suffer to prove that he had saving faith.
- God allowed Job to endure suffering to strengthen his faith.
- God allowed Job to suffer because it revealed invincible faith.
- God allowed Job to endure suffering so that He could reward his faith.





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#### D. Faith that works is prayerful.

Very few commentaries make sense of this passage and it is widely used today to promote false doctrine concerning healing. Once again we need a couple of keys to really unlock the verses for us.

- This passage is about prayer and not about healing. In every verse prayer is mentioned.
- The context is still suffering at the hands of wicked people.
- The Greek words used are important and the English words do not always convey the meaning as clearly as they should.

The context is the environment of thought that the passage of scripture exists in and it is essential to understand the Bible properly.

- James is writing to the early church.
- They are suffering persecution at the hands of wicked men.
- This is another test that will prove their faith is genuine.
- They are to face the suffering with humility and not resist.
- They are to face the suffering with endurance and not give in.
- They are to face the suffering with truthfulness and not lie to escape.
- They are to face the suffering with prayer and not give up.
  - Bodies are beaten.
  - Minds are crushed.
  - Spirits are broken.

*James is addressing casualties of persecution NOT sick people!*

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1. Faith that works seeks comfort in prayer. (James 5:13)

2. Faith that works seeks restoration through prayer. (James 5:14-15)

These next two verses have caused much distress in the body of Christ because people refuse to take the time to properly understand them. We must not abandon our principles of hermeneutics here as many do.

- The Bible is an ancient book and in order to properly understand what James is saying we need to close some gaps.



a. Language Gap

The word translated “sick” is the Greek word “astheneo” and it comes from a root word meaning without strength or powerless. It is often translated weak or sick in the New Testament.

- The golden rule in hermeneutics is that the context determines which is used.
- Because the context is suffering through persecution and not sickness and disease the word here should be translated weak and not sick.
- The word is used this way many times and harmonizes perfectly with the rest of Scripture. (Acts 20:35, Romans 4:19, 8:3, 14:1-2)
- 2 Corinthians 12:10

### Is healing guaranteed?

No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. (1 Timothy 5:23)	<b>NO</b>
Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. (2 Timothy 4:20)	<b>NO</b>
because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. (Philippians 2:26)	<b>NO</b>
And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)	<b>NO</b>

#### b. Historical Gap

In the time of James they did not have medicine like we do today. They used wine and oil as medicine.

- The term anoint or "aleipho" is never used of ceremonial anointing with oil.
- From a root word meaning "to grease" it is literal translated "to oil."
- The medicinal practice of rubbing or massaging oil into the wounds of those that have been hurt physically.
- Isaiah 1:6
- Ancient shepherds would pour oil on the heads of the sheep to produce a cooling effect in the heat.
- They would also check each sheep for wounds and rub oil into them to cleanse and promote faster healing.
- Psalm 23:5

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3. Faith that works seeks fellowship in prayer. (James 5:16-18)



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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.
- K. Faith that works is humble.
- L. Faith that works is enduring.
- M. Faith that works is truthful.
- N. Faith that works is prayerful.
- O. Faith that works is evangelistic.

**“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

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## Discussion Questions

1. List the attitudes (verses 1-6) for which James criticizes the rich. Does James indicate that wealth itself is evil? Think of specific ways on how you can honor God with all that He has given you (little or much).
2. Based on our study today, a true follower of Christ must share in His sufferings and will suffer for righteousness' sake. How should a believer respond during trials and persecution? (Read Matthew 5:10-16, 2 Timothy 3:12-14, and 1 Peter 4:12-16)
3. What lessons from this book study have you started applying in your life? Briefly share any challenges or positive results you've encountered while doing so.

