

JAMES - Wisdom for living in the world

Read James 1:1.

1. a) In this **first verse only**, what (if anything) do we find out about who wrote this letter, who they wrote it to, and why?
b) Does this make it feel instantly relevant to you? Why or why not?

Read John 7:1-5 and Mark 6:1-6.

2. James does not open his letter proudly declaring he is Jesus' physical brother. How did James react to Jesus during His earthly ministry?

Read Acts 12:16-17, Acts 15:12-21, Acts 21:17-19.

3. In the early days of the church, where was James living and what was his role?

Read Galatians 1:13-20 and Galatians 2:9-10.

4. When Paul became a Christian, what was James' role within the early church? What was James' focus and priority for Christians?

Read James 1:1 again.

5. How does James introduce himself to other Christians? What other titles or experiences could he have boasted about? Why do you think he chose this particular introduction?
6. What about you? What are you most proud of in your Christian life? How would you want to be known to other Christians? How can you live your life so that this is immediately obvious, before you even open your mouth?

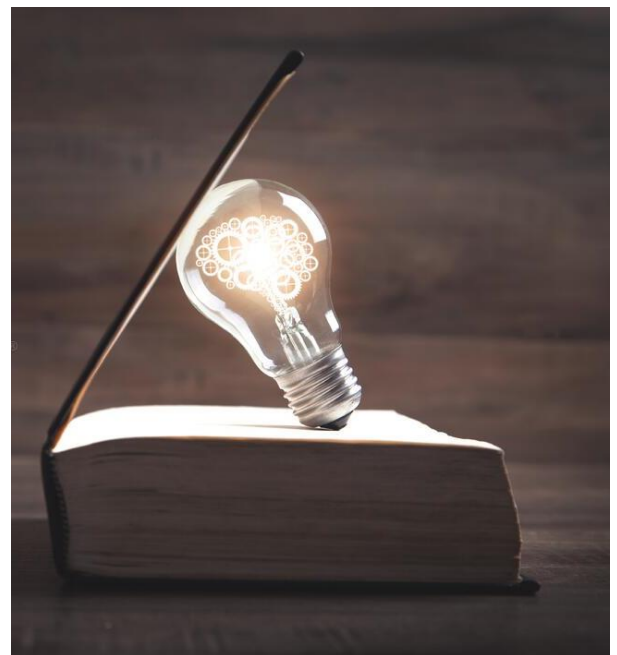
Flick through the titles of the chapters in James.

The style of James' letter makes it very punchy. He uses lots of commands and examples to explain how to live as a Christian. Unlike one of Paul's in-depth letters, focussing on a specific issue with a specific group of people, James talks about general and broad issues to the "twelve tribes", by which he means all Israel, the whole people of God, the whole church.

James writes more in the style of Old Testament 'Wisdom' literature, like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. This makes it a bit different to the Gospels or other letters and we will need to be humble if we want to hear God's voice speaking to us clearly through it!

Read Proverbs 9:10 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

7. When you are studying the Bible, or reading it generally, what is your attitude to what it says? Do you find the Bible 'useful'? What prevents you from knowing God and being equipped by Him through his Word?



PRAYER

Thank God for Christ's amazing rescue on the cross and his resurrection, that it changes how we relate to God, just like it changed everything for James. Confess the times you have denied Jesus. Ask God's forgiveness for when you have boasted in your own achievements, not Christ's.

Ask God's Holy Spirit to humble your heart and open your eyes every time you read God's word. Ask him to grow in you that respect and honour for God and to come to know him more, and be equipped by him, each time you hear or read his Word.