



James: *Wisdom for the Christian Faith*

James 1:1-18: *Wisdom for Trials*

Introduction

James as a whole

1. Genre

“Even though James begins with an epistolary salutation, the rest of the book does not have the format of an epistle but rather is a collection of wisdom sayings, much like the genre of wisdom literature as seen in the OT.¹”

“James has been variously considered an epistle, a sermon (to be read aloud in the churches), a form of wisdom literature, a diatribe, and a moral exhortation. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and there are elements of all these forms in James.²”

2. A Christ-less, Gospel-less Book?

“St. James’s epistle is really a right strawy epistle, compared to these others [Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Peter, and 1 John], for it has nothing of the nature of the gospel about it.³”

It is not Christ-less. It is not gospel-less. It is wisdom for the Christ-centered, Gospel-centered soul.

3. Sermon on the Mount Part 2?

James		Matthew	
1:2	Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds	5:11-12	Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

¹ ESV Study Bible, Olivetree Edition

² Reformation Study Bible, Olivetree Edition

³ <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-gospel-of-james>



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1:17	Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.	7:11	If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!
1:22-24	But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.	7:24-26	Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.
2:5	Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?	5:3-5	Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
3:12	Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.	7:16	You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?
4:4	You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.	6:24	No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.
5:2	Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten.	6:19-20	Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.



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5:12	But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.	5:34-35	But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.
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Author and Recipients of the book of James

❖ James 1:1

1. Who is this James?

- ❖ Galatians 2:9—when **James** and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

2. Who are these twelve tribes?

- ❖ Romans 9:6-8—For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.

What we MUST believe about trials

❖ James 1:2

1. Trials are the universal experience of the Christian
2. Trials come in all sorts of shapes and colors
3. We are to count it all joy

❖ James 1:3-4

4. Trials are to be seen as a “testing of our faith” that produces in us “steadfastness”
5. The “steadfastness” produced in us by these trials overtime brings about real maturity and holiness

❖ James 1:5-8



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6. God graciously provides wisdom to endure trials for his true people of faith
7. God will not be treated like some genie in a bottle for the wicked to command
 - ❖ Isaiah 59:2—*but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.*

❖ **James 1:9-12**

8. Economic status means nothing

What we must NEVER believe about trials

❖ **James 1:13-14**

1. Don't think temptations come from God...they come from you!
 - ❖ Romans 7:23—*I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.*

❖ **James 1:15**

2. Don't think that giving into temptation has no effect on your spiritual life

*"Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it while you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin **or it will be killing you.**"⁴*

"Where sin, through the neglect of mortification, gets a considerable victory, it breaks the bones of the soul (Ps. 31:10; 51:8), and makes a man weak, sick, and ready to die (Ps. 38:3-5), so that he cannot look up (Ps. 40:12; Isa. 33:24); and when poor creatures will take blow after blow, wound after wound, foil after foil, and never rouse up themselves to a vigorous opposition, can they expect anything but to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and that their souls should bleed to death (2 John 8)?⁵"

❖ **James 1:16-18**

⁴ Owen, John; Kelly M. Kopic; Justin Taylor (2006-10-16). *Overcoming Sin and Temptation* (Foreword by John Piper): Three Classic Works by John Owen (p. 50). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

⁵ Owen, John; Kelly M. Kopic; Justin Taylor (2006-10-16). *Overcoming Sin and Temptation* (Foreword by John Piper): Three Classic Works by John Owen (p. 54). Crossway. Kindle Edition.



REFORMATION
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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3. Don't believe the lies that the enemy whispers into your ear in the midst of trials

(1) *God is mean and stingy*

(2) *God is treacherous and untrustworthy*

❖ Malachi 3:6—*For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.*

(3) *God has abandoned you and left you for dead*

❖ Hebrews 13:5—*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

(4) *God will not finish what he started*