

JAMES MERCY TRIUMPHS BETH MOORE

with articles by

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VIEWER GUIDES WITH ANSWERS

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JAMES MERCY TRIUMPHS

viewer guide | session one

I Corinthians 15:1-8

Our journey with James does not begin in the letter he wrote but with a plan God wrote. Part of God's infinite genius appears in how such humanness can play into the divine story.

“Then He appeared to James” (I Cor. 15:7).

1. Jesus appeared to those who needed to see Him most.

Consider several we know by name from this and other accounts.

John 7:1-9

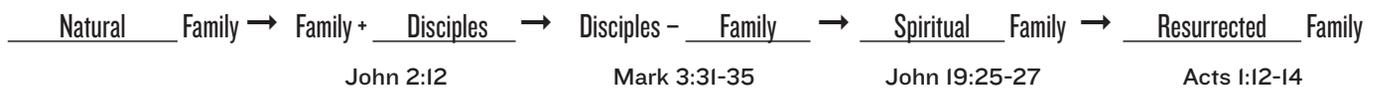
“Jesus’ brothers said to him” (v. 3, NIV) is one of two quotes attributed to or involving Jesus’ brothers in the Gospels. Consider recent events in John 6:60-66.

The only other direct quote from Christ’s collective natural family is Mark 3:21 (NIV), “They said, ‘He is out of his mind.’”

2. James enters the scene as an unbeliever.

3. Jesus radically _____ restructures _____ the idea of _____ family _____.

Consider what seems to be the progression:



1 Corinthians 15:9-10

4. By the _____ grace _____ of God _____ James _____ became what _____ James _____ became.

“without effect”—Greek *kenos* (pronounced “kay-NAHS”)—

“_____ empty _____, vain, ineffective, _____ useless _____ ... The basic meaning of this word is empty, lacking content, or _____ hollow _____.”

5. The power of the _____ resurrection _____ means that nothing but the _____ tomb _____ is meant to be _____ empty _____.

JAMES MERCY TRIUMPHS

viewer guide | session two

James 1:1

We spent all of week 1 getting to know the man, James. Today we open our Bibles to the message of James where our attentions will be fastened for the next five weeks. Read James 1:1.

1. What James 1:1 doesn't say about the writer is as telling as what it does. Servant (Greek *doulos*)—"a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"
2. The letter of James is addressed to the "twelve tribes scattered among the nations" (NIV). Points of particular significance:
 - The Greek word translated "scattered" is literally "in the diaspora."
 - (See Acts 8:1,4.)
 - James is the Old Testament name Jacob.¹
 - Greek transliteration of James: Jacobus.
 - Hebrew transliteration of James: Ya'aqov.
 - James wrote this letter not as "a Jewish Christian" ... but a Christian Jew. ... He was writing with full hope that the Jews as a whole would turn to Christ."²

"The Epistle was penned in the days when Christianity and synagogue were not yet divorced, when Jerusalem was still as Jesus knew it and was, further, still the center of Christianity as a religion and as an organization."³

3. James might have been the first book of the New Testament written.

“The Epistle of James can take its natural place, alongside other literature in the process of formation in the second decade of the Christian mission, as the first surviving document of the church.”⁴

4. James was one of the last New Testament books to be admitted into the canon.⁵

“Canon”—rule or standard

5. James draws straight from the well of Jesus’ teachings more than any other New Testament author.⁶

6. The message of James can be captured in two words: LIVE IT.

7. Our lesson’s conclusion is James’ salutation: (Greek *chairein*)
Joy to you!

Let Beth know at lproof@lproof.org if you memorize the Book of James.

1. Ralph P. Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: James* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), 5.
2. James B. Adamson, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 51.
3. James B. Adamson, *James: The Man and His Message* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 49.
4. John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1976), 139.
5. Adamson, *James*, 6.
6. Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 7.

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viewer guide | session three

John 16:20-24

On week 2, day 1 of our homework, we saw the exhortation of James to “consider it a great joy . . . whenever [we] experience various trials” (Jas. 1:2). Today we will widen our scope on joy by studying a concept in Christ’s own teaching in John 16:20-24.

Two terms from John 16:20-24 are going to preoccupy our attentions today:

Joy ↔ Anguish
(Greek *chara*) (Greek *thlipsis*)

The word “anguish” is often used to convey the added element of mental distress.

Consider two examples:

- pain + anxiety = anguish
- suffering + dread = anguish

The etymology of the word “anguish” (Latin *angere*) includes the meaning “to choke.”

Consider the similarity in the Greek definition of “anguish” in John 16:21:

Greek *thlipsis*—from *thlibō*—“to crush, press, compress, squeeze. *Thlipsis* conveys the picture of something being crushed, pressed, or squeezed from a great weight. It is used to denote grievous physical affliction, or mental and spiritual distress.”¹

1. Anguish and joy can coexist (Jas. 1:2).

Also compare Romans 9:1-5 to 2 Corinthians 7:4-7.

2. Anguish and joy can trade places.

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me ... to provide for those who mourn in Zion; to give them a crown of beauty instead of ashes” (Isa. 61:1-3).

3. The source of anguish can morph into joy (John 16:20).

Compare Psalm 30:11. Hebrew *hapak*—“to turn, ... convert, change. ... Frequently used in connection with the acts of God.”²

4. Mental anguish can be like the mind in labor (Ps. 55:1-5, see v. 4).

Hebrew *hiyl*—“to turn in a circle, twist, revolve; to writhe, travail (in childbirth), bear a child. ... The main idea is that of writhing in pain, which is particularly associated with childbirth. Also denotes ... suffering torment, ... experiencing anguish or distress.”³

5. Anguish is meant to lead to a birth (John 16:20-22).

1. *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1996), 1632.

2. *Ibid.*, 1512.

3. *Ibid.*, 1515.

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viewer guide | session four

A wonderful part of taking a book of the Bible at this pace is the luxury of mining treasures out of single words or phrases. We are going to return to segments from this week's homework and draw out two phrases that could offer riches beyond what we'd recognize on the page.

Part One: Revisit James 1:25—“ looks intently ”

Greek *parakupto*—“The verb has the basic meaning of ‘ stoop down ’ but comes to be applied especially to the action of ‘ looking by bending over .’ ”¹

Consider two other places this word is translated in the New Testament:

- John 20:11
- 1 Peter 1:12

Note particular wording in the following translation: “The one who peers into the perfect law of liberty and fixes his attention there, and does not become a forgetful listener but one who lives it out—he will be blessed in what he does” (Jas. 1:25, NET).

Part Two: Read James 2:1-9. Focus on verse 1— “ our glorious Lord Jesus Christ ”

- James 2:1—*The New International Commentary of the New Testament* translation of the phrase: “the Lord Jesus Christ, our Glory .”²

Consider the following excerpts:

“The Lord Jesus Christ is the divine glory. . . . Jesus is the very embodiment of the divine glory made present in the world. Like the Shekinah to the people of God in the Old Testament and the Immanuel who is Jesus, the very glory of God is embodied in the person of Christ. An interchangeability between Christ and glory is observable here.”³

Dr. C.H. Dodd writes of the “well-known maxim of *Pirqe Aboth*: ‘When two sit and there are between them words of Torah, the Shekinah rests between them.’ ”⁴

- James 2:1—*The New International Commentary of the New Testament* translation of the entire verse: “Do not try to combine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Glory, with the worship of men’s social status.”⁵

Reread James 2:3. Reflect on a literal translation of the Greek:

“while you say to the poor man: ‘Stand there,’ or ‘Sit here under my footstool.’ ”⁶

Concluding thought: Faith and favoritism don’t mix.

1. Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 93.
2. James B. Adamson, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 101.
3. Kurt A. Richardson, *The New American Commentary*, vol. 36, *James* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 109.
4. C. H. Dodd, *New Testament Studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), 60.
5. Adamson, *New International Commentary*, 101.
6. Ibid.

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viewer guide | session five

James 3:13-18

For those of us who were willing, the opening pages of week 4 sketched James' signature verses across our hearts. Long after our journey is over, you and I will know its mission was accomplished if we're still willing to ask ourselves the prying question: When it comes to my faith, what good is it? (2:14,16).

The key word pops up again in James 3:13, offering us a prime opportunity in today's session to pose a philosophical question:

What is the good life ?

1. One that saves us from ourselves (v. 14).

In preparation for the next point, consider James 3:17 in the New King James Version: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

2. One with a track record of yielding (v. 17).

Compare the wording of Matthew 27:50 (NASB, ESV)—"Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His Spirit." The Greek word *aphiemi* means "to send forth."

Keep in mind a vital difference in motivation: we yield out of wisdom from above, not out of fear below.

3. One that is full of mercy (v. 17).

Mercy morphs into depression when we take God's responsibility instead of our possibility.

Glance back at James 2:16. Consider the wording of the New Living Translation: "Good-bye and have a good day."

Consider the following quote:

"It is not the form of the statement that is reprehensible, but its functioning as a religious cover for the failure to act."¹

4. One that is full of good fruit (v. 17).

Reflect on a rich statement written by Dr. James B. Adamson: "Fruit is both an end and a beginning, the crown of one process and the germ of the next being present in the seed."²

1. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 37, *The Letter of James* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press/Doubleday, 1995), 239.

2. James B. Adamson, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 157.

JAMES MERCY TRIUMPHS

viewer guide | session six

Part One will center on a troubling verse purposely saved for this session. Part Two will encourage us in our journey with one another.

Part One: James 4:9-10

When is it appropriate to turn our joy into gloom?

- When we've consciously traded the joys of the Lord for the highs of the world. "Whoever decides to be the world's friend makes himself God's enemy" (Jas. 4:4, NET).

- When we don't take God seriously.

"Or do you think the scripture means nothing when it says ..." (Jas. 4:5, NET).

- When we're arrogant in or about our sin.

- When ridiculing sincere believers is our idea of hilarious.

Part Two: James 4:11

Premise: In a religious pop-culture where we hear so much and see so much, cynicism is one of our top risks. Five top reasons not to get cynical:

1. Jesus is still flagrantly changing lives.
2. Real people are doing the real thing all over the real world.
3. The appetite to study Scripture is increasingly ravenous.
4. Some long-standing barriers are breaking down.
5. God will kick your tail.

JAMES MERCY TRIUMPHS

viewer guide | session seven

James 5:7-11

Our homework leading up to today's session has centered entirely upon the 5th and final chapter of James. Today we will return to several portions of the chapter that call for extra emphasis.

Let's give this session a specific title drawn from verse 7:

Between the Rains

According to James, what do we do when we find ourselves in this particular season?

1. Accept the beauty of the process.

2. Actively acknowledge God's faithfulness.

“Every reference to ‘early and later rains’ in the OT occurs in a context affirming the faithfulness of the Lord.”¹

Compare Deuteronomy 11:13-14 and Hosea 6:3.

3. Avoid a caustic undercurrent (vv. 8-9).

The key word *grumble* is especially captured in the “unexpressed feeling of bitterness or the smothered resentment that may express itself in a groan or a sigh.”²

4. Ignite fresh resolve through the stories of others (v. 10).

hupodeigma—a model

“See, we count as blessed those who have endured” (v. 11).

5. Ask of God like much is at stake (vv. 17-18).

In verse 17 “a man just like us” (NIV)—

Greek *homoiopathes*—“It means, literally, ‘to be of like feeling / passion’ but has the sense of ‘like nature.’”³

Let’s conclude with a glance at the original story in 1 Kings 18:41-46.

1. Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 223.
2. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, *Hebrews-Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 202.
3. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 37, *The Letter of James* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press/Doubleday, 1995), 336.

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JAMES MERCY TRIUMPHS

viewer guide | session eight

James 5:19-20

Today we close our journey together through the life and Book of James. As a tribute to his message and ministry, we'll return to the last sentence that dripped from his passionate pen.

Note 5:19 in the ESV: “My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back ...”

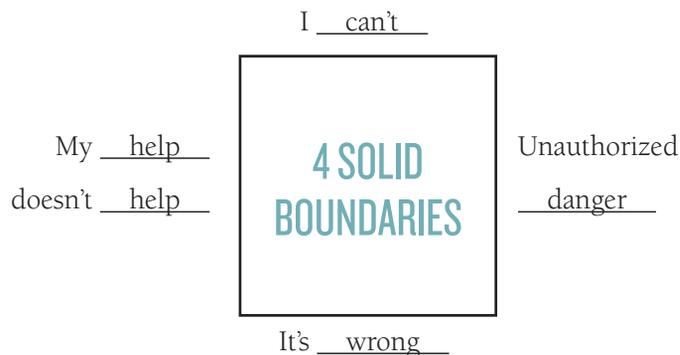
1. Anyone can wander.

wander—Greek *planethe*

2. God watches for someone willing to bring him or her back.

Caution: Our narcissistic culture makes it easy to twist the concept of boundaries into a practice Jesus didn't teach.

Consider the following:



Nehemiah 9:20-22 (Message) concludes with a beautiful guideline:

“You gave them your good Spirit to teach them to live wisely. You never stinted with your manna, gave them plenty of water to drink. You supported them forty years in the desert; they had everything they needed; their clothes didn’t wear out and their feet never blistered. You gave them kingdoms and peoples, establishing generous boundaries.”

3. Anyone + Someone = A Win for Everyone

Series conclusion ...