

First Presbyterian Church
of Granada Hills

God's Word ~~Action~~ⁱⁿ

Lent
2022



Welcome

Lent is the Church's season between Epiphany and Easter in which we as the Church, in both joy and sorrow, proclaim, remember, and respond to the atoning death of Jesus. One of the ways we do this, proclaim, remember, and respond, is reflected in our commitment to being Jesus' disciples.

This Lent we will be studying the book of James. James, the brother of Jesus, is known for his practicality. He seeks to lay out for us the implication of following the risen Jesus. Each week we will be looking at James' specific directions for facing the many everyday challenges that come up when we take our discipleship seriously.

May the studies in this year's Lenten Book encourage you as well as challenge you in your walk with our Lord.

Jim Sillerud – Pastor

You are encouraged to read pages 3 through 8 before Ash Wednesday (March 2) to gain a deeper understanding into the meaning of Ash Wednesday and how to best prepare your heart for this special season of the Church year.

Each week offers several **Bible studies** and a **musical selection** that will assist you in your devotional time with the Lord. The lyrics have been provided for you along with a YouTube access to the song. You are encouraged to take a few moments to ready your heart to hear what God desires to say to you.

Also included is a “**Prayer and Fasting**” page which serves as a guideline if you feel God leading you toward a special fast during the Lenten season. In addition, a suggestion of who and for what to pray for each day of the week has been provided for you to deepen your prayer life and lift up God’s people throughout the world. Daily, Jesus moved and ministered in a spirit of prayer to have the power and guidance He needed to fulfill His Father’s will.

In addition, you are encouraged to participate in the “**One Another**” activities located at the end of each Bible study. These pages will serve as a guideline to help you put God’s Word into action as you serve His people in need. Please take a moment and look ahead so you can plan your devotional Bible study time accordingly.

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Introduction to James

Our Lenten series this year will be based on the lessons of the Apostle James. James, Hebrew name Jacob, was the church leader to the Messianic or Christian Jews in Jerusalem for 20 years. James was the half-brother of Jesus and he had sisters and at least three brothers besides Jesus. (See Matt.

13:55, Mark 6:3 and Galatians 1:19.) James and the other brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him as Savior and Lord during the years of Jesus' public ministry (John 7:2-8). However, we learn from Acts 1:13-14 that James had become a committed believer sometime before the Day of Pentecost. James' life was transformed into one of service for Christ. Notice at the beginning of his letter that he does not identify himself saying "I am Jesus' brother." That would have been name-dropping, something he condemns. He simply refers to himself as "a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."

For a deeper dive on James, check out The Bible Project Video on our Lent Playlist on YouTube at www.youtube.com/c/FirstPresbyterianChurchofGranadaHills, scroll down to "Playlists" and click our Lent 2022 playlist.

The practical letter of James was written for the purpose of driving home the point of living out God's truth and treating others as they would treat themselves. Thoughts, words, and deeds are the ingredients of a person's daily living. As we enter into the Lenten season, the challenge will be to ask ourselves what kind of thoughts and deeds should a Christian, who wants to honor Christ, have?

As you do the weekly lessons, you are encouraged to observe what is being said, interpret what God is saying to you through the writer, and apply the truths that you read.

Observation– What Do I See?

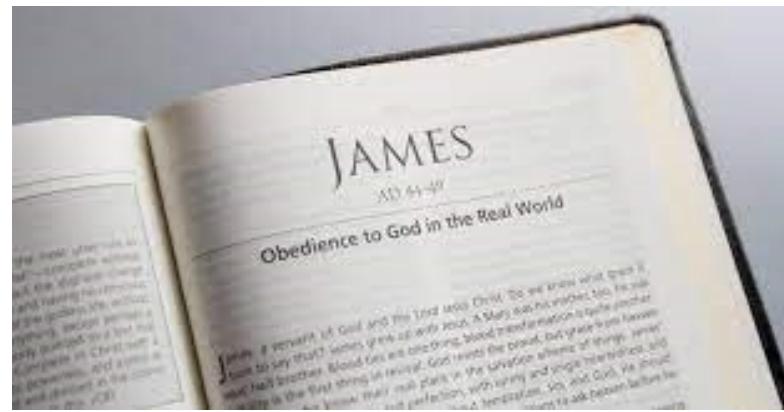
Read carefully and inspect the scripture paying special attention to detail. What is the context, the theme, the main point? (Hint: To gain a deeper understanding of the scripture, read it in several translations.) Ask the Lord to open your eyes to what He wants you to see. *"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your law."* (Psalm 119:18)

Interpretation– What Does It Mean?

When you are reading scripture ask questions and look for answers. Observe what is repeated for emphasis. Read carefully and prayerfully asking the Holy Spirit to help you understand God's truth. *"Give me understanding and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart."* (Psalm 119:34)

Application– How Does It Work?

Knowledge without application falls short of God's desire for His children. Your heavenly Father wants you to apply what you learn so that you will change and grow and implement the lessons into your daily living. God cares deeply about your relationship with Him and with others. Observe passages that expose sin, promises, commands, and examples to follow. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."* (2 Cor. 5:17)





Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is taught in the Bible.

It adds focus to your prayers by helping you concentrate on God more fully.

It fuels more passionate prayers by combining a great burden with real sacrifice.

Fasting can give you additional strength that you can miss when you just pray.

Look at a few examples from both the Old and New Testaments:

Moses fasted before he received the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 34:28)

The Israelites fasted before a miraculous victory. (2 Chronicles 20:2-3)

Daniel fasted in order to receive direction from God. (Daniel 9:3)

Nehemiah fasted before starting a major building project. (Nehemiah 1:4)

Esther fasted with her people to seek God's protection. (Esther 4:15-16)

Joel fasted to instruct the people to return to the Lord. (Joel 2:12)

Jesus fasted during His victory over temptation. (Luke 4:2)

The first Christians fasted during-decision making times. (Acts 13:2-3)

*The Lord utters His voice before His army; His camp is indeed very great,
For mighty is one who carries out His word.*

*The day of the Lord is indeed great and very awesome,
And who can endure it? "Yet even now," declares the Lord,
"Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping, and mourning;
And tear your heart and not merely your garments."*

*Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate,
Slow to anger, abounding in mercy and relenting of catastrophe. Joel 2:11-13*

The three main reasons for Christian fasting fall under Biblical mandates, spiritual disciplines, and health benefits. Lent is a time to fast but it is also a time to add. The purpose and goal of fasting is to draw closer to the Lord. It is denying yourself of pleasurable things like food, technology, television etc... It is letting go of something self-satisfying to honor your Lord. Fasting develops spiritual strength, including resisting temptation. Adding practices such as additional prayer and Bible study along with living out God's Word in action, will also draw you closer to your Father's heart and His will for you.

Is the Lord guiding you toward a “**fast?**” If so, from what will you fast and with what frequency?

What could you “**add**” to your Lenten journey that will draw you closer to your Lord?

GUIDELINES AND WARNINGS FOR FASTING

1. “We can turn fasting into an end unto itself, rather than a means to an end.

It can become merely an external practice without an internal passion and be reduced to a habit without heart.”

(Pastor Lance Witt)

2. “Remember that fasting is not "earning" an answer to prayer. God cannot be blackmailed by human effort. God wants to answer our prayers and He answers out of grace.

Fasting simply prepares us for God's answer.” (Pastor Rick Warren)

3. If you are fasting from food, only do it in a healthy manner and if your health allows it at this time.

On the next page is a Lenten Sacrifice written by Father John Catoir. It is provided to help guide you toward living in obedience to Christ and developing peace in your heart.

Suggestions for a Lenten Sacrifice

Why not increase your capacity for joy
by giving up the things that force joy out of your soul?

- ◊ GIVE UP resentment and become more forgiving.
 - ◊ GIVE UP hatred and return good for evil.
 - ◊ GIVE UP complaining and be more grateful.
 - ◊ GIVE UP pessimism and become more hopeful.
 - ◊ GIVE UP worry and become more trusting.
 - ◊ GIVE UP anger and become more patient.
 - ◊ GIVE UP pettiness and become more noble.
- GIVE UP gloom and become more joyful.

Lent: Discovering Joy in a Solemn Season
By Fr. John Catoir

In Spiritual Unity and Harmony Let Us Pray...



James 5:16-18 "...the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."

The power of prayer cannot be underestimated. We all have experienced its transformative nature by sharing ourselves with God through the power of the Holy Spirit. During this Lenten season, a schedule has been created so that we can approach God together in the sacred practice of prayer. While we may not necessarily be together physically, we can pray harmoniously, in Spirit. Each day of the week for the next six weeks, you are encouraged to lift up the special need(s) indicated below. This can be done with your study group, family members and in the privacy of your own personal time with the Lord. Let us pray...

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| SUNDAY | Pray for Christian unity , one flock-one Great Shepherd <i>"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity."</i> <i>Psalm 133:1</i> |
| MONDAY | Pray for the evangelization of all those who have not yet heard and accepted the Good News about Jesus. <i>"God our Savior, desires all to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."</i> <i>1 Timothy 2:4</i> |
| TUESDAY | Pray for your enemies . Think of the person who has most hurt you or who most annoys you and spend several minutes each day praying for them. <i>"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."</i> <i>Matthew 5:44</i> |
| WEDNESDAY | Pray for a heart of forgiveness ; then pray a prayer of forgiveness for someone you are harboring unforgiveness toward. <i>"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."</i> <i>Ephesians 4:32</i> |
| THURSDAY | Pray for peace in the world. <i>"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."</i> <i>Matthew 5:9</i> |
| FRIDAY | Pray for our troops, first responders and health care providers and for others in harm's way. <i>"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."</i> <i>Ephesians 6:18</i> |
| SATURDAY | Pray for an awakening of the Spirit in the congregation at First Presbyterian that reaches out to others in God's love. <i>"Your inner life will increasingly have more of the fruit of the Spirit: love joy, peace, patience kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."</i> <i>Galatians 5:22-23</i> |

Anywhere Is a Place of Prayer

If God Is There

I have prayed on my knees in the morning,
I have prayed as I walked along,
I have prayed in the silence and darkness
And I've prayed to the tune of a song-
I have prayed in the midst of triumph
And I've prayed when I suffered defeat,
I have prayed on the sands of the seashore
Where the waves of the ocean beat-
I have prayed in a velvet-hushed forest
Where the quietness calmed my fears,
I have prayed through suffering and heartache
When my eyes were blinded with tears-
I have prayed in churches and chapels,
Cathedrals and synagogues, too,
But often I've had the feeling
That my prayers were not getting through,
And I realized then that our Father
Is not really concerned where we pray
Or impressed by our manner or worship
Or the eloquent words that we say...
He is only concerned with our feelings,
And He looks deep into our heart
And hears the "cry of our soul's deep need"
That no words could ever impart...
So it isn't the prayer that's expressive
Or offered in some special spot,
It's the sincere plea of a sinner
And God can tell whether or not
We honestly seek His forgiveness
And earnestly mean what we say,
And then and then only He answers
The prayer that we fervently pray.

-Helen Steiner Rice



March 2

Ash Wednesday

James 1:1-16

As we approach the season of Lent, we first begin our journey with Ash Wednesday. This day marks the beginning of Lent. Ash Wednesday also prepares us for a season of reflection, repentance, and discipline.

When we reflect on our lives, we realize that we need to make more room for God's Word. Look at the example Scripture provides for readers in Matthew four. When Jesus was about to end His forty-day fast, the evil one tried to use a strategy of temptation to discredit Jesus. However, at the end of their conversation, Jesus tells the adversary, "Away with you, for it is written, worship the Lord your God and Him only." In doing this, Jesus demonstrates for us an example of how to live out God's Word. Therefore when we reflect on Ash Wednesday, we are declaring our focus on God's Word so that we may experience transformation during the Lenten season.

Transformation also occurs when we repent of our trespasses. In an Ash Wednesday sermon, you will hear a call for repentance. Repentance is valuable because it provides us space for confession. In John chapter eight, scribes and Pharisees brought a woman they caught in adultery before Jesus. Look then at the most crucial aspect of this story. Jesus tells the crowd, "*Let anyone who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.*" We found that all the people walked away. Jesus then tells the woman, "*Go your way and do not sin again.*" We find confidence in Jesus' words for us today. Repentance is not about feelings of guilt and shame. Repentance is God's transformative power strengthening you to live out forgiveness in the world.

Ash Wednesday is also a time when we embrace discipline. Discipline is our response to reflection and repentance. In other words, it is our resolve to understand God's Spirit in our hearts. After Ash Wednesday services, you will find worship participants with ash marks on their foreheads in the shape of a cross. Often made from burnt palm branches, the ash markings indicate that one acknowledges mortality. Ashes represent death and repentance. Scriptures teach us that the body is composed of dust (Genesis 2:7). Spiritual discipline helps us live out what we believe. It helps us trust wholeheartedly in the Triune God who heals our disease, covers our weaknesses, and gives us life anew in Christ.

Therefore, as we gather this Ash Wednesday, we gather to reflect on our lives in Christ, repent from the weight of sin, and seek God's gracious gift of discipline. We desire to draw closer to God that we may experience transformation.





March 2

Ash Wednesday

James 1:1-16

NRSV

Salutation

¹ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:
Greetings.

Faith and Wisdom

² My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; ⁴ and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵ If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. ⁶ But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; ^{7, 8} for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

Poverty and Riches

⁹ Let the believer who is lowly boast in being raised up, ¹⁰ and the rich in being brought low, because the rich will disappear like a flower in the field. ¹¹ For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the field; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. It is the same way with the rich; in the midst of a busy life, they will wither away.

Trial and Temptation

¹² Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³ No one, when tempted, should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; ¹⁵ then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved

The Message

I, James, am a slave of God and the Master Jesus, writing to the twelve tribes scattered to Kingdom Come: Hello!

Faith Under Pressure

²⁻⁴ Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

⁵⁻⁸ If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get His help, and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believably, without a second thought. People who "worry their prayers" are like wind-whipped waves. Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.

⁹⁻¹¹ When down-and-outers get a break, cheer! And when the arrogant rich are brought down to size, cheer!

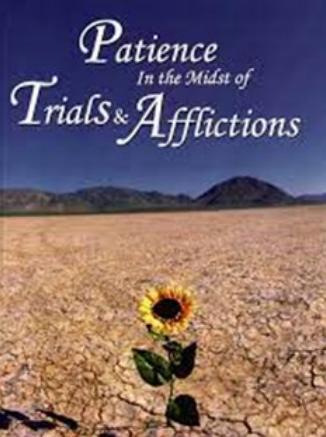
Prosperity is as short-lived as a wildflower, so don't ever count on it. You know that as soon as the sun rises, pouring down its scorching heat, the flower withers. Its petals wilt and, before you know it, that beautiful face is a barren stem. Well, that's a picture of the "prosperous life." At the very moment everyone is looking on in admiration, it fades away to nothing.

¹² Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.

¹³⁻¹⁵ Don't let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, "God is trying to trip me up." God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one's way. The temptation to give in to evil comes from us and only us. We have no one to blame but the leering, seducing flare-up of our own lust. Lust gets pregnant, and has a baby: sin! Sin grows up to adulthood, and becomes a real killer.

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ So, my very dear friends, don't get thrown off course. Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light. There is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle. He brought us to life using the true Word, showing us off as the crown of all His creatures.

Ash Wednesday



Faith and Patience in the Trials James 1:1-6

What might be some of your own trials or tribulations that you are experiencing in your life? _____

What spiritual disciplines and steps are you taking as you respond to these challenges?

According to **James 1:2**, you have a choice in your attitude. What kind of attitude should you have when you experience various trials? _____

Dr. Viktor Frankl, a prisoner in the Nazi concentration camp, said "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms-to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Vs. 3 What is "tested?" _____

The Greek word for testing comes from the Greek term *dokimos*, which means "approval." It is a word found on the undersides of many ancient pieces of pottery unearthed by archeologists in the Near East. This mark meant that the piece had gone through the furnace without cracking; it has been approved. (From: Charles Swindoll-*James Practical and Authentic Living*)

Vs. 3 What does testing produce? _____

Endurance comes from a combination of two words that, put together, literally mean "to abide under."

Abide means to remain stable or fixed; to continue in a place.

In another translation, it says that testing of your faith produces patience.

Vs. 4 What positive qualities or effect does enduring the trials produce?

What does **Hebrews 6:11-12** say will happen to those who exercise faith and patience?

What does Hebrews remind us not to become? _____

How does a person become spiritually “sluggish?” _____

What does **James 1:5** say you should do if you are lacking wisdom and discernment?

How will God respond? _____

Many of our Biblical ancestors suffered from doubt. Think of Abraham who did not wait for Isaac to be conceived before taking things into his own hands, or Moses who lacked confidence in leading the Israelites out of Egypt. In the New Testament, Peter began to sink into the sea as his faith diminished and “Doubting Thomas” doubted the witness of the resurrected Christ. The readers of this letter from James must have been suffering in a season of doubt for James to write so strongly on the issue.

One can become plagued with doubt. Remember what Luke writes of Jesus in Luke 12:22-24: He said to His disciples, *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. How much more value are you than the birds!”*

Biblical faith is not “blind faith.” Rather, it is an active trust that’s dependent on a historical event that can be investigated. Write out the Christian definition of faith from **Hebrews 11:1** below:

**Faith treats the things hoped for as a fact and places confidence today
in what has been promised for the future!**

What do we risk when we pray without faith?

Our God Is Wise

James 1:2-8

*Our God is wise! As wise as He is mighty!
Permitting only what He knows is best!
Lean not upon your feeble understanding;
Trust in the Lord, and in His wisdom, rest!
He has the love and power to deliver
When He does not, it's time to realize,
that God is ever working for His Glory.
What God permits, is infinitely wise!*

If goodness was the only attribute of Jesus;
If He was love alone, and nothing else beside,
The world would not be filled with sickness, sin, and sorrow;
All suffering and pain could not be justified!
But, God is wise enough to harvest good from evil;
He can, with ease, the course of wickedness reverse;

He can allow the things He hates because of wisdom;
By wisdom, God can wring the blessing from the curse!

When trials test your faith and crowd you unto Jesus,
It is not added strength or patience that you need,
If you would have the joy that only God can give you,
It is for wisdom that the Lord would have you plead.
If you lack wisdom you will not discern His purpose;
Entreat Him early for the wisdom from above.
By His wisdom you will comprehend His goodness;
And by wisdom, you will suspect His love!

-Ed Miller

My Promise Is All You Need

David Wilkerson

Sometimes the moments of our lives that seem like they should be our brightest can bring us the greatest tribulation and testing trials. Faith, especially at these times, is very demanding. It demands that once we hear God's Word, we obey it. It doesn't matter how big our obstacles may be, how impossible our circumstances. We're to believe God's Word and act on it. The Lord says, "My promise is all you need."

Like every generation before us, we also wonder, "Lord, why am I faced with this test? It's beyond my comprehension. You've allowed so many things in my life that don't make sense. Why is there no explanation for what I'm going through? Why is my soul so troubled, so filled with great trials?"

How does the Lord answer our cries? He sends His Word, reminding us of His promises. He says, "*Simply obey me. Trust My Word to you.*"

Please don't misunderstand me. Our God is a loving Father. He doesn't allow His people to suffer indiscriminately. We know He has at His disposal all the power and willingness to make every problem and heartbreak go away. He can merely speak a word and rid us of every trial and struggle.

Yet, the fact is that God isn't going to show us how or when He'll fulfill His promises to us. Why? He doesn't owe us any explanation when He has already given us the answer. He's given us everything we need for life and godliness in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is all we need for every situation life throws at us, and God is going to stand on the Word He has already revealed.

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus stood up before a synagogue and read from the book of Isaiah, "*'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'* ... And He began to say to them, '*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*'" (Luke 4:18-19, 21).

We have that promise today. We have had healing for our broken hearts, liberty from our captivity and new sight given to us. We simply must hold to Jesus' promise by faith.

Take a few minutes to [listen to the song on YouTube](#)
(www.youtube.com/c/FirstPresbyterianChurchofGranadaHills) and read the lyrics below:

Is He Worthy

Do you feel the world is broken? (We do)
Do you feel the shadows deepen? (We do)
But do you know that all the dark won't stop the light from getting through? (We do)
Do you wish that you could see it all made new? (We do)

Is all creation groaning? (It is)
Is a new creation coming? (It is)
Is the glory of the Lord to be the light within our midst? (It is)
Is it good that we remind ourselves of this? (It is)

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave
He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave.

Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
Of all blessing and honor and glory
Is He worthy of this?
He is

Does the Father truly love us? (He does)
Does the Spirit move among us? (He does)
And does Jesus, our Messiah hold forever those He loves? (He does)
Does our God intend to dwell again with us? (He does)

Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave
He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave
From every people and tribe
Every nation and tongue
He has made us a kingdom and priests to God
To reign with the Son

Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
Of all blessing and honor and glory
Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
Is He worthy of this?
He is! He is!
Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
He is! He is!
He is worthy! He is worthy!
He is!

James 1:17-25

NRSV

¹⁷ Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸ In fulfillment of His own purpose He gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

Hearing and Doing the Word

¹⁹ You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹ Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

²² But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³ For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴ for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵ But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

The Message

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ So, my very dear friends, don't get thrown off course. Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light. There is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle. He brought us to life using the true Word, showing us off as the crown of all His creatures.

Act on What You Hear

¹⁹⁻²¹ Post this at all the intersections, dear friends: Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue, and let anger straggle along in the rear. God's righteousness doesn't grow from human anger. So throw all spoiled virtue and cancerous evil in the garbage. In simple humility, let our gardener, God, landscape you with the Word, making a salvation-garden of your life.

²²⁻²⁴ Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the Word go in one ear and out the other. *Act on what you hear!* Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are, what they look like.

²⁵ But whoever catches a glimpse of the revealed counsel of God—the free life!—even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action.



Lent—Week 1, Day 1

Hearers of God's Word

James 1:17-18

According to James, from whom do “*generous acts of giving*” derive? _____

How does James describe God in Vs.17-18? _____

Why do you think James referred to God as the “*Father of Lights?*” What comes to your mind?

Illustration from Pastor Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations

The sun is light twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. All year long, all decade long, all century long, the sun just keeps on shining. The problem, however, is that the earth gets dark. How can there be all that light and the earth still gets dark? It's because the earth turns. The earth gets dark because the earth is spinning on its axis. Therefore the side that faces the sun gets light and the side that is facing away does not.

If there is darkness in your life, it's not because God, the Father of Lights, is turning; it's because you are turning. He is the Father of Lights and in Him, there is no shadow. There is no darkness in God because God is faithful, He is consistent. Just like the sun, He is always shining and in His light, there is no shifting or moving shadow. We just have to make sure we are turned toward Him.

James writes about God's purpose. Look up **Matthew 12:7** and write down God's desire for you.

Mercy is a noun in action! It is demonstrating compassion or forgiveness toward someone.

The meaning of compassion is to recognize the suffering of others and then taking action to help.

What initial thoughts come to mind when you read “*in fulfillment of His purpose?*”

Matthew 16:24-26 What does Jesus say a person needs to deny in order to follow Him?

According to Ephesians 6:5-7, how are we to draw near to God?

PSALM 90:1-9

God's Eternity and Human Frailty - A Prayer of Moses, the man of God

*1 Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever You had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.*

3 You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals."

4 For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.

5 You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning;

6 in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

7 For we are consumed by Your anger; by Your wrath we are overwhelmed.

8 You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your countenance.

9 For all our days pass away under Your wrath; our years come to an end like a sigh.

James wrote that “*in God there is no variation or shadow due to change.*”

In Hebrews 13:8 it states “*Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*”

How do you feel, knowing that God never changes? _____

When have you experienced the unchanging love of God in your life? _____

How has the faithfulness of God shaped your life? _____

God Is Good

James 1:17

God is good, and, like a fountain
God is ready to impart
Rushing, gushing floods of goodness
From His nature; from His heart!
Praise Him as this truth is dawning;
By your heart is understood;
God is making you like Jesus!
God is faithful! God is good!

Neither Satan nor Sabeans
Have on Job, the slightest claim
God has given; God has taken!
Blessed be His holy Name.
Joseph's brothers tried to sell him,
Work such evil as they could
But the LORD sent him to Egypt;
Turned their evil into good!

What is formless void and chaos?
What is evil? What is night?
God is good, His rule is order;
God is good, His reign is light!
God makes everything redemptive;
He can never be withheld
All things are unwilling servants.
God is sovereign! God is good!

God can, by His Power and Wisdom
Rule or overrule at will;
Work all things, for good, together;
All His purposes fulfill!
Every child shares His promise
Nothing good will He withhold
Fire and furnace serve His purpose;
Everyone comes forth as gold!

-Ed Miller

Lent—Week 1, Day 2

Receivers of God's Word

James 1:19-21

What three steps does James encourage you to take when you interact with others?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Looking at the way we receive God's Word, what type of mental attitude should you have?

Write down what the prophet Isaiah said in **Isaiah 6:5** when his eyes had seen the "King, the Lord of Armies."

This is the same cry that Moses had when he hid his face because he was too afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3:6). We are to come to God with the right moral attitude, to read with humility-allowing it to change us, and to have a teachable heart.

The problem isn't that people are hard of hearing as much as it is that they are hard at listening! Jesus constantly rebuked the Pharisees by asking "*Have you not heard?*" We cannot listen if we are talking and we cannot learn from others if we don't learn how to listen. This includes listening to God.

David Mathis, executive editor for Desiring God.org, challenges his readers by asking: "Who Really Has Your Ear? Whose Words Are Changing You? Who's In Your Head? In our day of striking media saturation and consumption, we will do well to remember the profound shaping, world-changing power of words. It's not a matter of whether words are shaping us but whose. Whose voice? For many, the fight for faith in this generation - to not only survive but thrive as a Christian - is about not just what we see, but perhaps just as pressing is what we hear and to whom we listen."

"To answer before listening—that is folly and shame."

-Proverbs 18:13 NIV



STOP for a minute - LISTEN!

Be silent before the Lord and listen to the words "Linger" by Gateway Worship, lyrics are on the next page. You can find "Linger" on our Lent Playlist on YouTube at www.youtube.com/c/FirstPresbyterianChurchofGranadaHills.

Linger

I don't want to hurry
No, I don't want to move
You are my sanctuary, my upper room
So I'll linger here with You

Push through the fear of silence
'Til time has been removed
You are my sanctuary, my upper room
So I'll linger here with You

My dwelling place, where I am safe
My refuge from the storm
Open my heart, to hear Your heart
To love You more and more
I won't move
I'll linger here with You

Keep me present in this moment
There's more You want to do
You are my sanctuary, my upper room
So I'll linger here with You

My dwelling place, where I am safe
My refuge from the storm
Open my heart, to hear Your heart
To love You more and more
I won't move
I'll linger here with You
I'll linger here with You
I'll linger here with You, Lord

I want to go deeper, I want to go further
I want more of You, Lord
I want to go deeper, I want to go further
Than I've ever been before
I want to go deeper, I want to go further
I want more of You, Lord
I want to go deeper, I want to go further
Than I've ever been before
I want to go deeper, I want to go further
I want more of You, Lord, oh-ohhh
I want to go deeper, I want to go further
Than I've ever been before
I want to go deeper, I want to go further
I want more of You, Lord, oh-ohhh
I want to go deeper, I want to go further
Than I've ever been before

My dwelling place, where I am safe
My refuge from the storm
Open my heart, to hear Your heart
To love You more and more
My dwelling place, where I am safe
My refuge from the storm
Open my heart, to hear Your heart
To love You more and more
I won't move, no, I won't move
I'll linger here with You
I'll linger here with You

James' readers are also instructed to be "slow to speak." The acronym for the word "think" from the well known phrase "Think Before You Speak" helps make James' point:



What does Colossians 3:16 say about how you are to receive the Word of Jesus?

James encourages his readers to "*be slow to anger.*" The Word of God cannot take root in a heart overrun with anger. In preparation of having a clean heart, James says to do two things:

1. What do you need to put aside or get rid of? _____

2. What do you need to welcome? _____

Why do you need to do this? _____

James doesn't deny that people can get angry but he encourages us to "think" first and be slow to anger. If anger gets out of control it will not produce the heart of God in you. There are times that anger serves to alert us to things to which we need to pay attention. Jesus got angry about injustice and so should we! The feeling of a righteous anger can be used to do something positive. Paul reminds us in scripture, "*Be angry, and yet do not sin.*" (Eph. 4:26) Sin is incompatible with receiving and doing God's Word. It can prevent the Word from reaching a person's heart. God desires righteousness.

In thinking about the challenges of listening carefully, speaking slowly, and controlling anger, what might be your struggle? _____

Lent—Week 1, Day 3

Doers of God's Word James 1:22-25

James challenges his readers to not just be hearers but to put God's Word into action!

What does **Colossians 3:17** say? _____

What do you think Mother Teresa meant when she stated, "*Love cannot remain by itself – it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action, and that action is service.*?"

James uses the metaphor of a person looking in a mirror and has an incorrect perception of himself. In the New King James Version (NKJV) it says:

"For if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was."

"In this classic metaphor, God's Word is compared to a mirror. But unlike a mirror, which only reflects outward appearance, the Scriptures reveal our inner character. The hearer James describes promptly forgets what both reflect; while the effectual doer, on the other hand, gives careful attention to the Scriptures, responds positively, applies what is heard and, thus, is genuinely fulfilled." (From: Charles R. Swindoll - *James: Practical and Authentic Living*)

How are you reflecting real Christianity?



How can you know when you are an effectual doer of God's Word? _____

The person who merely glances in the mirror and then forgets will have an incorrect perception of self.
The person who glances at God's Word will have an incorrect view of God and of self.

Why is it important to study God's Word and not just "glance" at it?

Write out Psalm 119:11 _____

James challenges his readers to:

PREPARE ~ RECEIVE ~ APPLY

How can you best **prepare** yourself to be a doer of God's Word? _____

How can you best **receive** God's Word? _____

How can you best **apply** God's Word? _____

GOD'S WORD SHOULD BE:

- * WELCOMED IN MY HEART
- * RECEIVED WITH EAGER ANTICIPATION
- * READ WITH A DESIRE TO PUT ITS WORDS AND COMMANDS INTO PRACTICE



One Another Intro

Putting God's Word Into Action

"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples." John 13:35

The day after Jesus fed a crowd of 5000, He was asked, *"What must we do to be doing the work of God?" and Jesus replied, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him with whom He has sent"* (John 6:29). Our Christian walk begins with faith in Jesus Christ offered to us through His atoning work on the cross. Then, just as a tree that is nourished produces good fruit, so the believer who grows *"in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Peter 3:18), will begin to produce fruit from a faith that James says is borne out in good deeds. As we live out the Gospel, the fruit we bear becomes a part of our witness for Christ and God's love for all.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom."

James 3:13

"Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us." 1 Peter 2:11-12

To encourage a life that reflects the love imbued upon us by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, we offer this **One Another** exercise as a component of living out your Christian walk in community. Each week, examples are provided for a **One Another** category wherein you can commit to certain actions to enact. In addition, space is provided to be creative and find your own ways to put God's grace into action!

One Another—Week 1

Accept One Another

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."
Romans 15:7

IDEAS

Invite a new person into one of your groups or committees.

Strive to understand someone from a different generation.

List the many examples of Jesus' acceptance of others.

Share those examples with a friend.

Search your heart for where acceptance is lacking and pray that God instill it in your heart.

You can list more ideas here:



James 2:1-13

NRSV

Warning against Partiality

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord, Jesus Christ? ² For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, ³ and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," ⁴ have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that He has promised to those who love Him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? ⁷ Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

⁸ You do well if you really fulfill the Royal Law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁹ But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. ¹¹ For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹² So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

The Message

The Royal Rule of Love

¹⁻⁴ My dear friends, don't let public opinion influence how you live out our glorious, Christ-originated faith. If a man enters your church wearing an expensive suit, and a street person wearing rags comes in right after him, and you say to the man in the suit, "Sit here, sir; this is the best seat in the house!" and either ignore the street person or say, "Better sit here in the back row," haven't you segregated God's children and proved that you are judges who can't be trusted?

⁵⁻⁷ Listen, dear friends. Isn't it clear by now that God operates quite differently? He chose the world's down-and-out as the kingdom's first citizens, with full rights and privileges. This kingdom is promised to anyone who loves God. And here you are abusing these same citizens! Isn't it the high and mighty who exploit you, who use the courts to rob you blind? Aren't they the ones who scorn the new name—"Christian"—used in your baptisms?

⁸⁻¹¹ You do well when you complete the Royal Rule of the Scriptures: "Love others as you love yourself." But if you play up to these so-called important people, you go against the Rule and stand convicted by it. You can't pick and choose in these things, specializing in keeping one or two things in God's law and ignoring others. The same God who said, "Don't commit adultery," also said, "Don't murder." If you don't commit adultery but go ahead and murder, do you think your non-adultery will cancel out your murder? No, you're a murderer, period.

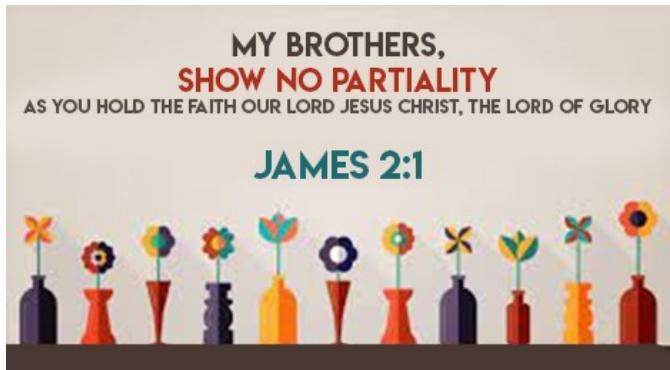
¹²⁻¹³ Talk and act like a person expecting to be judged by the Rule that sets us free. For if you refuse to act kindly, you can hardly expect to be treated kindly. Kind mercy wins over harsh judgment every time.

Lent—Week 2 Day 1

Respecting Others

James 2:1-6

What words does James use to describe his readers in 2:1?



From those words, how would you describe James' relationship to his readers?

James challenges his readers by providing an “example” of how they are to treat others. He says believers are called to love everyone equally just as God does. He called his letter recipients “*judges with evil thoughts*” because they were making distinctions among themselves and treating the rich more favorably than the poor.

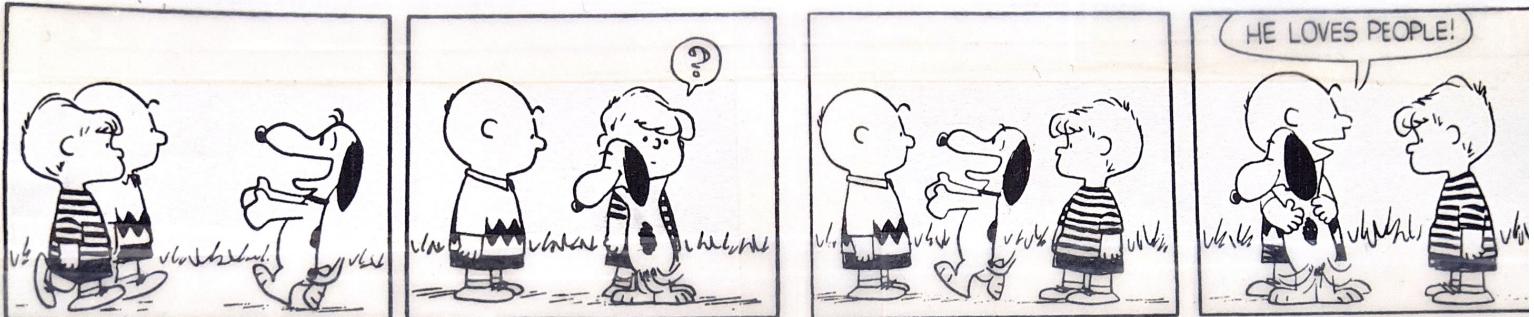
Are there certain groups of people you might be tempted to elevate? _____

What would James say to such attitudes and behaviors? _____

Name three ways you might show value to the poor in the community.

James warns his readers who belong to Jesus not to copy the attitudes and actions of the world. Believers are called not to show partiality or pre-judge a person, but to love as God loves.

In the Peanuts cartoon below, what is the main message portrayed?



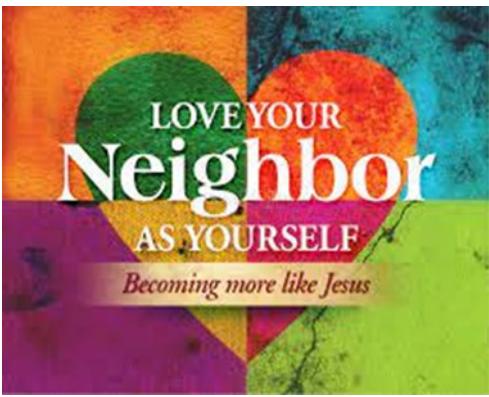
James uses the word “oppress” (Greek word katadunatsteuo) in Vs 6 to describe how badly the believers were being treated by the rich. In the NIV it says “*But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of Him to whom you belong?*”

Name a few ways you can suspend your judgements and show grace to all.

According to Psalm 10:12-14, how will God respond to those who are afflicted and oppressed?



Lent—Week 2 Day 2



Loving Others

James 2:7-13

The Royal Law or Rule of the Scriptures is to

*Love your neighbor
as yourself.*

Matthew 22:39

As you observed in the first lesson, James addressed those who are showing partiality and made distinctions among themselves. He said they had become “*judges with evil thoughts.*” In the court of law, a “judge with evil thoughts” is one who has decided the case beforehand. This is an unjust judge. Likewise, those who show partiality have pre-judged a person and are showing prejudice.

James presents his case against prejudice in a tightly constructed passage. First, he introduces a principle in verse 1, then he illustrates it in verses 2-4, explains it in verses 5-11 and finally applies it in verses 12-13.

The Setting was a man who entered the assembly dressed in fine clothing. In contrast, another man entered wearing dirty clothing, appearing to be poor.

The Response was that if you take notice and pay special attention to the outer appearance and escort the one wearing the finer clothing to the front and deny the poor man a seat anywhere except for in the back, you have demonstrated prejudice and made a judgement between the two.

Note: According to Matthew 23:6, there were “chief seats” in the synagogue, places of honor in which the Pharisees loved to sit.

The Motive was challenged by what was done and why it was done. Distinctions were made and discrimination was based on outer appearances.

Prejudice is wrong and is inconsistent with God’s methods. One of God’s characteristics is His complete impartiality. God looks at the heart not at the outer appearances.

How would you define prejudice? _____

Note: Prejudice stems from a Latin noun that emphasizes a pre-judgment of someone, causing us to form an opinion without knowing all the facts. It is a bias or preconception.

People can be guilty of prejudging a person or showing prejudices. Some people are prejudiced against the uneducated or those who are divorced. Others show partiality towards a certain race, financial or social status. The list goes on. Write down an example where you have possibly struggled with forming a prejudice or pre-judgment against someone.

Vs. 5-7, the Message states that "*God acts quite differently. He chose the world's down-and-out as the kingdom's first citizens, with full rights and privileges.*" Who did He say the kingdom is promised to?

James explains that it makes no sense for the rich to be given favor over the poor. In God's "*right side up*" kingdom He has chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that He promised to those who love Him.

James goes on to say that a person would do well to live by the Royal Rule of the Scriptures: "*To love others as you love yourself.*"

What does it mean to "*love others as yourself?*" _____

James' mention of "*mercy*" is tied to his mention of "*love*" in verse 8. To show mercy is to show love to your neighbor, which is the "*Royal Law.*" Being merciful is an act that shows thankfulness for all God has done. At times, it can be challenging and difficult to show mercy to others, especially when you have been deeply wounded. But even this is made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling inside you.

Have you encountered a situation when you have shown mercy to someone who has hurt you?

_____ . If yes, how have you shown mercy? If not, why might this be? _____



"There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1

GOD'S MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGEMENT!

Lent—Week 2 Day 3

God's Mercy

Grace is when God gives us what we don't deserve.

Mercy is when God doesn't give us what we do deserve.



What does **Ephesians 2:3-6** mean when it describes God's mercy as being rich?

According to the prophet **Micah 7:18**, what does God do for those who come to Him?

What does the prophet Isaiah in **Isaiah 30:18** say God longs to do for you? _____

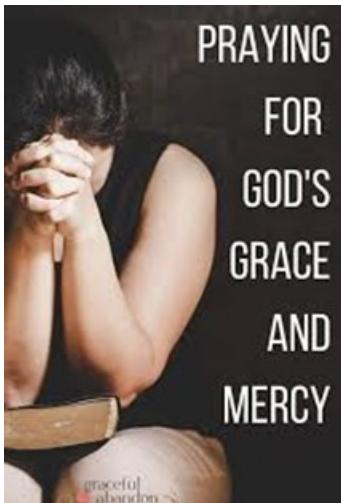
Isaiah goes on to say the Lord is a God of justice. What are you "called" to do? _____

According to **Romans 12:1**, what are you "called or urged" to do? _____

2 Corinthians 12:9 What is made "sufficient" in you? _____

What is made perfect in your weakness? _____

Why are you called to boast about your weakness? _____



Write out **Psalm 51:1-2** in your own words as a prayer to God.

Take a few minutes to [listen to the song on YouTube](#)
(www.youtube.com/c/FirstPresbyterianChurchofGranadaHills) and read the lyrics below:

God Moves In a Mysterious Way

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm

Deep in unsearchable mines
Of never-failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs
And works His sovereign will

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings, yeah, in blessings
And in blessings on your head

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense
But trust Him for His grace
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face

His purposes will ripen fast
Unfolding every hour
The bud may have a bitter taste
But sweet will be the flower

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain
For God is His own interpreter
And He will make it plain

One Another—Week 2

Putting God's Word Into Action

Offer Hospitality *to One Another*

"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." 1 Peter 4:9

IDEAS

- Be welcoming to everyone you encounter.
- Help out with one of the church functions.
- Offer to fill in as an usher one Sunday.
- Invite someone you know to a church function and plan to sit with them and introduce them.
- Treat someone to lunch.
- Offer to bring someone to church who is homebound.

You can list more ideas here:

James 3:1-12

NRSV

Taming the Tongue

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.² For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle.³ If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies.⁴ Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.⁵ So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire!⁶ And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell.⁷ For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species,⁸ but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison.⁹ With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God.¹⁰ From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.¹¹ Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water?¹² Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

The Message

When You Open Your Mouth

¹⁻² Don't be in any rush to become a teacher, my friends. Teaching is highly responsible work. Teachers are held to the strictest standards. And none of us is perfectly qualified. We get it wrong nearly every time we open our mouths. If you could find someone whose speech was perfectly true, you'd have a perfect person, in perfect control of life.

³⁻⁵ A bit in the mouth of a horse controls the whole horse. A small rudder on a huge ship in the hands of a skilled captain sets a course in the face of the strongest winds. A word out of your mouth may seem of no account, but it can accomplish nearly anything—or destroy it!

⁵⁻⁶ It only takes a spark, remember, to set off a forest fire. A careless or wrongly placed word out of your mouth can do that. By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell.

⁷⁻¹⁰ This is scary: You can tame a tiger, but you can't tame a tongue—it's never been done. The tongue runs wild, a wanton killer. With our tongues we bless God our Father; with the same tongues we curse the very men and women He made in His image. Curses and blessings out of the same mouth!

¹⁰⁻¹² My friends, this can't go on. A spring doesn't gush fresh water one day and brackish the next, does it? Apple trees don't bear strawberries, do they? Raspberry bushes don't bear apples, do they? You're not going to dip into a polluted mud hole and get a cup of clear, cool water, are you?

Lent—Week 3, Day 1

Teachers and The Tongue James 3:1-12

Vs. 1-2 In the New Testament, there were teachers who failed at their responsibility. There were some teachers who tried to turn the teachings of Christ into a new Judaism. In Vs 1, James alludes to this with a warning for teachers.

In what ways can someone create a mistruth about the Gospel?

In verse 2, James states, “For all of us make many mistakes.” William Barclay mentions that the word James uses means *to slip-up*. He also points out to readers that sin is often not deliberate but the result of a *slip-up* when we are off our guard.

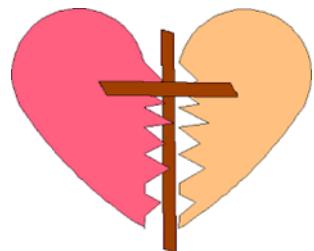
Can you identify a time in your life when you made a mistake or had a slip-up when speaking to someone?

What are some practical ways in your life that can help you avoid a slip-up?

When a person sins, they have not broken their relationship with God, but have interrupted their fellowship with Him. They have asserted their freedom by acting as if they were not one with Him and acting in their independent selves, going their own way instead of God’s way. However, with open confession and true repentance the fellowship can be restored. God settled the sin question over 2,000 years ago in the atoning death of His Son. Through Him sins are no more. Confess and move on or as someone once said, “*Leave the past under the blood, leave the future with God, and get walking!*” (Paraphrased From: *The Spontaneous You* by Norman P. Grubb)

*“Keep my steps steady according to Your promise,
and never let iniquity have dominion over me.”*

Psalm 119:133



Lent—Week 3, Day 2

Vs. 3-5 James says that if we can control the tongue, we can control the whole body; but if the tongue is uncontrolled, the whole life is set in the wrong way.

Why is this important and how does this affect peoples' lives?

James uses some unique illustrations to describe the seriousness of words.

What are the three illustrations? 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

How do they apply to the usage of the tongue and what do you think of them?

Connect the dots. Why would James begin this topic with teachers and transition into talking about the tongue? _____

According to **Psalm 52:4**, what is the tongue capable of doing? _____

How is the tongue described in **Psalm 57:4**? _____

According to **Matthew 15:10-11, 17-19**, Jesus tells us the culprit that controls the tongue.

What is it? _____

So...

every time James uses the word *tongue* in the passage,
think *heart*!



Translation analysis. In Vs 5, the word boast is used. In Greek the word is **Auchei**. This means to wound, provoke or stir up strife. The NRSV translates the phrase as “*boast of great exploits*.” The NIV reads “*makes great boasts*.” The ESV uses the phrase “*boast of great things*.”

Which translation do you prefer when analyzing verse 5? Is there another translation you prefer and why?

Read Psalm 73:1-9

A Psalm of Asaph.

- ¹ Surely God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
- ² But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold.
- ³ For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
- ⁴ They have no struggles;
their bodies are healthy and strong.
- ⁵ They are free from common human burdens;
they are not plagued by human ills.
- ⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace;
they clothe themselves with violence.
- ⁷ From their callous hearts comes iniquity;
their evil imaginations have no limits.
- ⁸ They scoff, and speak with malice;
with arrogance they threaten oppression.
- ⁹ Their mouths lay claim to heaven,
and their tongues take possession of the earth.

James 3:6

“The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.”

How does **Psalm 73:9** speak to **James 3:6**? What can you infer about these texts?

Illustration: On October 8, 1871, Mrs. O’Leary’s cow kicked over the lantern at 8:30 p.m. That led to the Great Chicago Fire. It left 100,000 people homeless, 17,500 buildings destroyed, 300 people dead, and 40 million dollar’s worth of damage done. All because a cow kicked over a lantern. One match can burn down a house. The tongue is like a match. It sets things aflame. - Dr. Tony Evans

Lent—Week 3, Day 3

Vs. 7-8

James says that people have mastered the art of taming animals but cannot tame the tongue.

Why is it easier to train an animal than it is the tongue?

A Story:

I took my dog Cupcake on a walk at a local park. Recording her without her leash seemed to be a good idea. In the video, viewers will hear the words, "What type of dog does not run away when you take off the leash?" Soon after ending the recording, Cupcake ran away from my attempt to put her leash back on! Taking off the leash was a horrible mistake. Saying those silly words came back to bite me. Tears jumped from my face while walking through the entire neighborhood. Where is Cupcake? The question raced through my mind. Perhaps she is at the nearest animal shelter. The attempt to find her there was unsuccessful. Missing dog posters flooded the grounds of the public park. Eventually, Cupcake was found; she hid at the High School not far from the public park. It took six hours to find her. Perhaps she was in the mood for a game of hiding and seeking. When reflecting on taming animals and the tongue, I did a poor job at both that day. —Stephen Robertson



Vs. 9-10

With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.

James intended for these words to capture the reader's attention. The same is true for us. These words call us to self-reflect and examine the condition of our hearts.

In what ways can these verses help you in your life? _____

How do you overcome situations when people hurt you with words? _____

Vs. 11-12: "Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or grapevine figs? No more than salt water can yield fresh."

James uses an illustration that calls the reader to be consistent.

Identify some areas in your life where you would like to be more consistent. _____

How does this text speak to those areas in your life? _____

How can we as a community be in prayer with you in regard to these areas identified?

Take a few minutes to [listen to the song on YouTube](#)

(www.youtube.com/c/FirstPresbyterianChurchofGranadaHills) and read the lyrics below:

Order My Steps

Order my steps in Your Word dear Lord,
Lead me, guide me everyday,
Send Your anointing, Father I pray;
Order my steps in Your Word,
Please, order my steps in Your Word.

Humbly, I ask thee to teach me Your will,
While You are working, help me be still,
Satan is busy, God is real;
Order my steps in Your Word,
Please, order my steps in Your Word.

Bridle my tongue let my words edify,
Let the words of my mouth be expectable in
Thy sight,

Take charge of my thoughts both day and night;
Order my steps in Your Word,
Please order my steps in Your Word.

I want to walk worthy,
My calling to fulfill.
Please order my steps Lord,

And I'll do Your blessed will.
The world is ever changing,
But You are still the same;
If You order my steps, I'll praise your Name.

Order my steps in Your Word.
Order my tongue in Your Word.
Guide my feet in Your Word.
Wash my heart in Your Word.
Show me how to walk in Your Word.
Show me how to talk in Your Word.
When I need a brand new song to sing,
Show me how to let Your praises ring,
In Your Word ,

Please order my steps in Your Word,
Please order my steps in Your Word.

Please order my step in Your Word.
Please order my tongue in Your Word.



One Another—Week 3

Putting God's Word Into Action

Encourage *One Another*

"Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace."

-2 Corinthians 13:11

"But the Israelites encouraged one another...." -Judges 20:22

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

-1 Thessalonians 5:11

"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness." -Hebrews 3:13

"....not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another." -Hebrews 10:25

IDEAS

Send cards to those in your parish.

Pray for those on Prayers for the People.

Reach out to your deacon and see if they have any needs with which you can help.

Tell the church staff members how much you appreciate them (smile).

Give your Bible Study leader a note of thanks.

Visit someone who is feeling sad or lonely.

You can list more ideas here:

James 4:1-10

NRSV

Friendship with the World

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? ²You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁴Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you suppose that it is for nothing that the scripture says, "God yearns jealously for the spirit that He has made to dwell in us"? ⁶But He gives all the more grace; therefore it says,

"God opposes the proud,
but gives grace to the humble."

⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and He will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

The Message

Get Serious

¹⁻² Where do you think all these appalling wars and quarrels come from? Do you think they just happen? Think again. They come about because you want your own way, and fight for it deep inside yourselves. You lust for what you don't have and are willing to kill to get it. You want what isn't yours and will risk violence to get your hands on it.

²⁻³ You wouldn't think of just asking God for it, would you? And why not? Because you know you'd be asking for what you have no right to. You're spoiled children, each wanting your own way.

⁴⁻⁶ You're cheating on God. If all you want is your own way, flirting with the world every chance you get, you end up enemies of God and his way. And do you suppose God doesn't care? The proverb has it that "He's a fiercely jealous lover." And what He gives in love is far better than anything else you'll find. It's common knowledge that "God goes against the willful proud; God gives grace to the willing humble."

⁷⁻¹⁰ So let God work His will in you. Yell a loud *no* to the Devil and watch him make himself scarce. Say a quiet *yes* to God and He'll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Quit playing the field. Hit bottom, and cry your eyes out. The fun and games are over. Get serious, really serious. Get down on your knees before the Master; it's the only way you'll get on your feet.

Lent—Week 4, Day 1

Worldliness

James 4:1-4



In James 4:1, James addresses “*conflicts and disputes.*” The Greek word for conflicts means “individual battles.”

In your experience, what can cause a personal “conflict or dispute”

among believers? _____

According to James 3:1 and James 4:11, whom is James talking to when he says the words, “*among you?*”

Three times in 4:1-2, James explains that those who seek to get what they want through their own sinful devices rather than asking the Lord, are frustrated in the process. What are the three sinful methods the people practiced to obtain what they wanted?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The first problem is *murder!* The inability to get what they wanted had driven some of them to murder. You may think, well thank goodness I am not guilty of that! I have never murdered anyone. However, although you may not identify with murdering someone in a literal sense, murder can also mean assassinating someone’s character with murderous and hurtful words. Jesus said thinking and doing hateful things amounted to murder.

To what does 1 John 3:15 say is equal to “*hating your brother?*” _____

The second problem James tackles is “*coveting,*” wanting what someone else has. Since some of the Jewish people were not able to get what they wanted, they continued to quarrel and fight. Unfortunately, the group of people to whom James wrote look a lot like people today. The Hebrew word translated “covet” is chamas (חֲמָס) which is commonly translated into English as “covet,” “lust,” and “strong desire.”

How would coveting something hurt or damage your relationship with people, God and yourself?

The third problem James mentions is “*fighting amongst themselves.*” Ask yourself if you have ever been guilty of (or struggled with) fighting or wanting your own way.

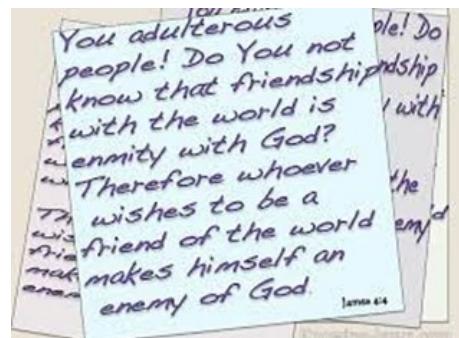
How does fighting dishonor God? _____

James 4:2-3: James then approaches the subject of prayer. What are the two problems that James points out in the Christian's prayer life?

How would you describe your own prayer life? _____

"James then uses marital language to rebuke those who have let their love for the world replace their love for Christ. Their unfaithful behavior has placed their relationship with God in such jeopardy that they are called "adulterers." Although this terminology is a bit shocking for today's readers it wasn't for the readers of his day. Because of their Jewish background, they would have associated the words with the many Old Testament passages that use the metaphor of marriage to depict God's relationship with Israel." (Dr. David Jeremiah – *Study Bible*)

James 4:4: The NSRV uses the word "*adulterers*." How does the Message clarify the understanding of that word? _____



James is concerned about these new Jewish (Messianic) Christians adopting or cultivating a lifestyle that resembles "*friendship with the world*."

What does **1 John 2:15-17** say about loving the world?

Note: "James calls out a challenge to people who have turned their hearts away from God and fallen in love with the world. When James speaks of "the world," he means the world system or world order, consisting of people whose beliefs, values, and morals are in opposition and rebellion to God's." (GotQuestions.org)

Lent—Week 4, Day 2

Worldliness—A Heart Divided

James 4:5-6

Lent Jeopardy Game

First Presbyterian Church of Granada Hills

Use your NSRV Bible to look up answers!
Keep your own score and post on our [Facebook Group](#) when finished!

CLICK HERE TO START

Lent Jeopardy

Play our Lent Jeopardy game at fpcgh.org/lent.
Play with your small group or by yourself!

It is clear that God's love is serious for humankind. God calls us not to place anything before Him.

List three reasons why idolatry and friendship in the world can interrupt a consistent relationship with God.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

There are two important teachings for James. These are the teachings of Jesus and the book of Proverbs.

Vs 6 is a direct reference to **Proverbs 3:34**. In this, we see that God gives favor and grace to the humble.

Why do you think James uses this reference to communicate with his readers? _____

Think about a time in your life when God showed you grace. Describe some of your emotions, thoughts, and reactions.

Cross Reference: Peter also references Proverbs 3:34 in 1 Peter 5:5 “*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*”

Lent—Week 4, Day 3

Worldliness James 4:7-10

Vs. 7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

One of the key themes we focus on during Lent is fasting. Fasting is a way to reject the desires of the body and seek the will as well as the presence of God. The truth is that we all face temptation especially when we want to grow closer to God. James tells his readers to resist the evil one and he will leave them. There are three important themes that come up in verse 7. They are:

1. Temptation is inevitable
2. Resistance is the key
3. The evil one cannot stay where God is



Vs. 8: "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

James makes it clear for his readers, if you resist the evil one, then you must draw near to God. What does it look like to draw near to God?

How do prayer, scripture reading, and worship draw you closer to God?

Vs. 9-10: "Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you."

In these verses, James concludes his thought by using a call back to verses 5-6. In Jewish teaching, repentance is a way of reconciliation. It is a call to submit to God and seek God's grace. Notice in these verses that James calls his readers to "submit," to "draw near," and to "humble" themselves. Submitting, drawing near, and humbling are all parts of surrendering to God.

In the old hymn "I Surrender All" written by Judson W. Van De Venter (1855-1939) he shares the following testimony. "For some time, I had struggled between developing my talents in the field of art and going into full-time evangelistic work. At last the pivotal hour of my life came, and I surrendered all. A new day was ushered into my life, I became an evangelist and discovered down deep in my soul a talent unknown to me. God had hidden a song in my heart and touching a tender chord, He caused me to sing." (From: *Amazing Grace* by Kenneth W. Osbeck – *366 Inspiring Hymn Stores for Daily Devotions*)

Van De Venter had extensive evangelistic work both at home and abroad. Billy Graham is one of many who claim that he had greatly influenced their lives and ministry. Take a few minutes to [listen to the song on YouTube](#) and read the lyrics below:

I Surrender All

All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.

All to Jesus I surrender, humbly at His feet I bow;
worldly pleasures all forsaken, take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus I surrender, make me, Savior, wholly Thine;
let me feel the Holy Spirit-truly know that Thou art mine.

All to Jesus I surrender, Lord, I give myself to Thee;
fill me with Thy love and power; let Thy blessings fall on me.

Chorus: I surrender all, I surrender all, all to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.



Is there something you need to surrender to the Lord today?

If so, write your prayer of surrender to Him below:

"I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." Ephesians 3:16-17a



One Another—Week 4

Putting God's Word Into Action

Promote Harmony With *One Another*

"Live in harmony with one another." -Romans 12:16

IDEAS

Make a new friend.

Welcome a visitor to the church.

Reach out with kindness to someone you have been ignoring or avoiding.

Share affirming words to others and about others.

Approach differences with grace, striving to understand more than be understood.

Accept the ideas of others with a spirit of good will, as coming from one's own uniquely formed experiences and sense of values.

Search Scripture for "One Another" examples and see how harmony is encouraged in the church body.

Offer a Christ-like heart to others.

You can list more ideas here:

James 4:11-17

NRSV

The Message

Warning against Judging Another

¹¹ Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹² There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?

Boasting about Tomorrow

¹³ Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money." ¹⁴ Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.

¹¹⁻¹² Don't bad-mouth each other, friends. It's God's Word, His Message, His Royal Rule, that takes a beating in that kind of talk. You're supposed to be honoring the Message, not writing graffiti all over it. God is in charge of deciding human destiny. Who do you think you are to meddle in the destiny of others?

Nothing but a Wisp of Fog

¹³⁻¹⁵ And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, "Today—at the latest, tomorrow—we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and make a lot of money." You don't know the first thing about tomorrow. You're nothing but a wisp of fog, catching a brief bit of sun before disappearing. Instead, make it a habit to say, "If the Master wills it and we're still alive, we'll do this or that."

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ As it is, you are full of your grandiose selves. All such vaunting self-importance is evil. In fact, if you know the right thing to do and don't do it, that, for you, *is* evil.

Lent—Week 5, Day 1

ARE YOU THE JUDGE? JAMES 4:11-12

James has been addressing conflicts among Jewish believers that were the result of living according to the world's wisdom. Similar conflicts can occur among believers today.

In Vs. 5-10 James has already given you three actions that correctly position you to address conflict:

1. Take a step *toward* God – “Draw near to God **and He will draw near to you.**”
2. Take a step *against* the devil – “Resist the devil **and he will flee from you.**”
3. Take a step *against* ourselves – “Humble yourself **and God will lift you up.**”

Once you are correctly position with God you are ready to take a step *toward* other people. (Note that the first three steps are “do” instructions but this next step is a “*do not*” command.)

Vs. 11 What two things does James tell you *not* to do toward others?

When you slander and judge others, what are the results?

Slandering others can include questioning someone’s authority, spreading hurtful lies, or saying unkind words.

James’ readers had both a familiarity and high respect for the Old Testament Law. He seems to be reminding them of God’s law in **Leviticus 19:16**. What does this law command?

This verse in Leviticus is found just before the “*love your neighbor as yourself*” (Leviticus 19:18) command James quoted earlier in his letter.

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**



What do you think James means by, "Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it?"

James' point is that to disobey the Law by judging another person is a way of putting yourself above the Law. If you are going to be a doer of the Law, just be a doer. Don't be a volunteer judge of how others are doing.

"There is only one Lawgiver and Judge. The One who is able to save and destroy. But you, who are you to judge your neighbor?" (Vs.12)

James urges Christians to walk in humility in our relationship with God and with each other. God is the only judge our neighbors need.

As you read the illustration below, ask yourself how God would want the young man's friends to react to his straying away from the Lord. How does the one friend differ from his other friends in how he responds?

Illustration: Author and teacher Howard Hendricks tells the story of a young man who strayed from the Lord but was finally brought back by the help of a friend. When there was full repentance and restoration, Dr. Hendricks asked the Christian man how it felt when he was away from God. The young man said that it seemed like he was out at sea, in deep water, deep trouble, and all his friends were on the shoreline hurling biblical accusations at him about justice, penalty, and wrong. But there was one Christian brother who swam out to get him and would not let him go. He said he fought him, but his friend pushed aside his fighting, grasped him, put a life jacket on him, and took him to shore.

He then said because of his persistence he was the reason he was restored.

Rather than the young man judging his friend, he demonstrated love and compassion. How might you express compassion to someone you know who is experiencing depression, loneliness or forgiveness that you can reach out with God's love today?



Lent—Week 5, Day 2

Doing God's Will James 4:13-17

"Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin."



It can be very easy to respond to the words of Scripture philosophically without allowing it to penetrate you and change the way you live. One might enjoy pondering the big ideas and weighing out the meaning, but if all you do is think about it, you will never become a "*doer of the Word.*" (James 1:22). Failure to act is, in itself, an act. Believers are not meant to avoid evil, but you are morally obligated to do what you know is good.

Considering the subject of Vs.13-17, what is the "*good we ought to do?*" (Vs. 17)

What do you think causes people who know the will of God to deliberately disobey it?

There is an arrogance in planning for your own success without acknowledging that you are dependent on God. What does Psalm 127:1 say about this?

Think back to James 4:6. What has James (quoting Proverbs 3:34) already said about pride?

By failing to include God in your plans, you attempt to be the god of your own lives and act as if God does not exist. God will lovingly but jealously oppose you when you do so. But He will not reject you. Instead, He calls you to humble yourself, repent of the sin of self-reliance and yield to His good will. According to Vs. 14, in what do you lack assurance? _____

What is James' advice in Vs. 15 for those who want to follow God's Will?

James goes on to say if you know the right thing to do and you don't do it, it's called _____

Lent—Week 5, Day 3

Boasting About Tomorrow James 4:13-17

James warns of a businessman who has life all planned out. He seems to know where he is going, how long he will be there, what he will do, and what the outcome will be. Altogether it seems like a well-thought-out plan; however, in Vs. 16 how does James refer to this type of thinking?



Do you think James is saying that it's wrong to plan ahead? _____

What does **Proverbs 24:27** say about planning ahead?

What is missing from the businessman's plan?

Readiness is a good thing. James is not against planning for the future, but he does warn us against the type of thinking that "keeps God for Sunday morning" and leaves Him out of the rest of the week. He warns that omitting God from our plans is behaving as if we control the outcome.

In **Luke 12:16-20** Jesus told a parable about a man who thought he knew his future. This man had his future all planned out! He thought he knew exactly what the next season of his life was like. But how did Jesus end the parable in verse 20?

Scripture uses word pictures to help us understand the fragility of life. How is life described in the following verses?

Psalm 144:4 _____

1 Peter 1:24 _____

We have no way of knowing what our future holds, but we know "The One" who *does* know!
What assurances do you find in the following verses?

Jeremiah 29:11? _____

Colossians 1:17? _____

It used to be common practice among Christians to write the initials "D.V." (the abbreviation of the Latin phrase *Deo Volente*, "if God wills.") at the end of a letter that included future commitments. This custom is out of fashion today, but an acknowledgement of who holds our plans in His hands could be a beautiful testament to those with whom we come in contact throughout the week. Of course, these words should not become a formula we just say, but should invoke in us the seriousness that our lives are totally in God's hands and are subject to His perfect will.

The apostle Paul was a man who understood that his plans could change at any moment. His missions were often interrupted (**2 Corinthians 11:24-27**). Yet Paul made a habit of submitting his plans to the Lord's will. In **Acts 18:21** and **Romans 1:10** what phrase does Paul use in communicating his future plans?

Paul uses this same phrase in **Romans 15:32** and **1 Corinthians 4:19**. His life depended on allowing God to direct his steps.

How easy is it for you to involve God in your planning? What are some things you could do this week to actively turn to Him for your future?

PRAYER:

Lord, forgive my boasting, self-pride and presumption about tomorrow. May my life be a humble testament that my future is in Your hands. Help me to glory only in Your saving love and keeping power.

In Jesus' name,
AMEN

Faith IS NOT KNOWING
WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS,
BUT KNOWING
who holds the future.

Take a few minutes to [listen to the song on YouTube](#)
(www.youtube.com/c/FirstPresbyterianChurchofGranadaHills) and read the lyrics below:

Take My Life

Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice and let me sing always, only for my King.
Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee.
Take my silver and my gold not a might would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use every power as You choose.

Here am I, all of me.
Take my life, it's all for Thee.

Take my will and make it Thine it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own; it shall be Thy royal throne.
Take my love, my Lord I pour at your feet its treasure store
Take myself and I will be ever, only all for Thee,
Take myself and I will be ever, only all for Thee.

Here am I, all of me.
Take my life, it's all for Thee.

(Take my life, Lord take my life. take all of me)

Here am I, all of me.
Take my life, it's all for Thee.



One Another—Week 5

Putting God's Word Into Action

Forgive One Another

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
-Ephesians 4:32

*"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone.
Forgive as the Lord forgave you."* -Colossians 3:13

IDEAS

Search Scripture for passages on God's forgiveness.

Identify how lack of forgiveness might impact your witness for Christ.

Ask yourself what would happen if you forgave? Then ask what will happen if you don't forgive?

List those people you need to forgive and take them into prayer; ask God to help you.

List those from whom you desire forgiveness and take this to prayer as well; ask God to help them be forgiving toward you.

Ask for God's healing power over the hurts you have experienced.

Name our biblical ancestors who had to forgive and be forgiven. How did God work in their lives? What do we learn from them? What do we learn from Jesus and the forgiveness he showed others, including the cross?

You can list more ideas here:



In Summary

For our Lent study we traversed through the letter of James. James, being a serious Jew, puts a lot of emphasis on the living out of your life for Jesus Christ and not just the believing in His name. Being the earthly brother of our Lord, James saw and heard first hand how the Savior lived. Chapter two is the famous section where James declares, "faith without works is dead being by itself" (vs 17). He also said, "faith without works is useless (vs 20) and incomplete (vs 22). He caps it off by saying that if you know the needed thing to do and you do not do it, you are in sin (4:17)! How does James relate this to practical living? The Apostle gives us a blueprint for this in 1:19-20:

"You know, my beloved brethren. But let every one be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

The letter starts with a few introductory comments concerning suffering as a useful testing of the believer's faith. James right away says there is something the Christian can do about this: We can pray for wisdom in knowing how to deal with our suffering. Pray without doubting (vs 6-8). Whether you are rich or poor, God will hear us (vs 9-11). Finally, James wishes his readers to know that God allows trials in our lives for our benefit. He does not enact temptations on us which promote sinful living (vs 13-16). No! God is the giver of every good gift (vs 17).

James gets to his points. First when we hear the Word of God, we need to do something about it. "Put aside all filthiness," (a strong word in the Greek) and take in, receive, or really hear the instruction of what the Spirit is telling you (vs 21). James says to be a "doer of the word and not just a hearer of it. Don't be someone who looks in a mirror and then forgets how they look when they walk away from it (vs 22-24)! No, do not forget the law of liberty by standing still! " DO what you know the Word is saying to you (vs 25)! If it means helping widows and orphans, do it (vs 26-27)!

James proceeds to give an example of an effectual hearing by talking on how to treat others in the assembly (2:1-12). He tells them emphatically, "listen" to what he is saying (vs 5). He alludes to or quotes the Old Testament to bring home his points (vs 6-12). They are to hear and then be doers of what he is telling them—"and so act."

After giving his readers the good example of hearing and doing, James gets to his second point: being slow to speak (chapter 3). He describes the hurtful way of speaking as destructive, inflammatory and demonic. He pulls no punches. Not taming the tongue can set fires that comes from Hell (vs 6-8). All manner of poisonous evil can come from this (vs 8). However, James can hope for something better right in the middle of his graphic description of verbal sin (3:1-12) He reminds the Christians that they can be wise in the use of their words (vs 13-18). They can once again ask for wisdom knowing that God will give it to them in the word of truth (1:17-18).

Finally, James gets to his last teaching point. This one is about being slow to anger (Chapter 4). The apostle simply tells these Hebrew-Christians to watch out for their coveting, their selfishness and their hostility (their anger!) toward others. They are acting like the pagans, who do not know Jesus. They have become friends of the world which really means that they have become hostile to God (vs 4). But again, the Spirit will have nothing of this (vs 6). He wants these Christians back! So he gives them grace to see the error of their ways and implores them to do something. They are to submit (vs 7), draw near (vs 8), repent (vs 9), and humble themselves (vs 10) before God. Their anger will not bring them anything of good from the Lord (1:20), but their allegiance to Him will bring them great reward!



In Conclusion

What a blessing to have shared in God's Word during this Lenten Season of 2022.
May the powerful words of James encourage and enrich your life as you place
God's Word in Action.

Take a few minutes to [listen to the song on YouTube](#)
(www.youtube.com/c/FirstPresbyterianChurchofGranadaHills) and read the lyrics below:

I Will Rise

There's a peace I've come to know
Though my heart and flesh may fail
There's an anchor for my soul
I can say "It is well"

Jesus has overcome
And the grave is overwhelmed
The victory is won
He is risen from the dead

And I will rise when He calls my name
No more sorrow, no more pain
I will rise on eagles' wings
Before my God fall on my knees
And rise I will rise

There's a day that's drawing near
When this darkness breaks to light
And the shadows disappear
And my faith shall be my eyes

Jesus has overcome
And the grave is overwhelmed
The victory is won
He is risen from the dead

And I will rise when He calls my name
No more sorrow, no more pain
I will rise on eagles' wings
Before my God fall on my knees
And rise I will rise

And I hear the voice of many angels sing,
"Worthy is the Lamb"
And I hear the cry of every longing heart,
"Worthy is the Lamb"

And I will rise when He calls my name
No more sorrow, no more pain
I will rise on eagles' wings
Before my God fall on my knees
I will rise



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Special thanks to our team: Stephanie Deach, Rik Faigh, Debby Fairbanks, Helen Magana, Sue O'Connor, Marilyn Rios, Stephen Robertson, Pastor Jim Sillerud, Gary Ventimiglia, and all of the church office.

Lent Calendar

March & April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Pray for Christian Unity (pg 7)	Pray for evangelization (pg 7)	Pray for your enemies (pg 7)	Pray for forgiveness (pg 7)	Pray for peace (pg 7)	Pray for troops, first responders, and health care providers (pg 7)	Pray for the awakening of the Spirit (pg 7)
Read the Intro to the Lent Study and Ash Wednesday pages starting this week		1 of March Lent Devotional-Luke 22:39-46	2 Ash Wednesday 7 pm service Imposition of ashes from 7:45 to 9 am and 11:45 to 1 pm	3 Lent Devotional-Luke 22:45-52	4	5
6 First Sunday of Lent All Church Lent Breakfast and Craft between services	7	8 Lent Devotional-Luke 22:53-62	9	10 Lent Devotional-Luke 22:63-71	11	12
13 Second Sunday of Lent	14	15 Lent Devotional-Luke 23:1-12	16	17 Lent Devotional-Luke 23:13-35	18	19
20 Third Sunday of Lent	21	22 Lent Devotional-Luke 23:35-43	23	24 Lent Devotional-Luke 23:44-53	25	26
27 Fourth Sunday of Lent	28	29 Lent Devotional-Luke 24:1-12	30	31 Lent Devotional-Luke 24:13-27	1 of April	2
3 Fifth Sunday of Lent	4	5 Lent Devotional-Luke 24:28-35	6	7 Lent Devotional-Luke 24:36-43	8	9 Rise Up with Jesus Family Event
10 Palm Sunday	11	12 Lent Devotional-Luke 24:44-53	13	14 Maundy Thursday	15 Good Friday 7 pm service	16
17 Easter Services at 6, 9 & 11 am		<i>Holy Week begins</i>				