# NT Survey – James Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School www.valleybible.net

## Introduction

We have begun looking at the "general epistles". All of these letters, with the exception of Hebrews, are named after the author. Hence the name of this book is "James" or "The Letter (Epistle) of James".

#### Author

The question is: "Which James?" There are four men named James in the NT.

- 1. James, the Less, the son of Alphaeus, mentioned in Matt 10:3; Acts 12:2.
- 2. James, the father of Judas (not Iscariot), from Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13.
- 3. James, son of Zebedee and brother of the Apostle John (Matt 4:21).
- 4. James, the half-brother of Jesus (Mark 6:3).

James, the Less, and James, the father of Judas, are not considered as the author because they were not well enough known in the early church to have been recognized by only their first names. James, the son of Zebedee and brother of the Apostle John (Matt 4:21), was martyred by the sword under Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:2) in AD 44, before most scholars believe this letter was written.

That leaves the James who is the half-brother of Jesus who was also the brother of Jude (Matt 13:55) who wrote the letter of Jude. His authorship has been confirmed by a study of vocabulary and style comparing the Epistle of James with the letter James wrote to the church in Acts 15, after the Council at Jerusalem. They are identical.

James did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah before the resurrection (John 7:2-5). His conversion came when Jesus appeared to him after the resurrection (Acts 1:14; 1 Cor 15:7). When James recognized the risen Lord, he became a new man, "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1). He was known by the early church as "James the Just" because he showed great sensitivity to God, the Apostles, and other believers. He was recognized for his piety, and his prayer life. Eusebuis, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, says he was called "Camel Knees" because of the calluses he developed while kneeling to pray. James was important in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 2:12). Paul named him as a "pillar" of that church along with Peter and John (Gal 2:9). He was a leading figure in the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), writing the decision that was circulated among the other churches. According to the history written by Josephus in the first century, James was accused of heresy and stoned to death by the high priest and Sadducees in AD 62.

#### Date

Several factors indicate that the letter was written early in church history. There is no mention of the important Council of Jerusalem (ca AD 49). Only elders are mentioned indicating early organizational structure. These factors and the use of the Greek words for "brethren" and "synagogue" indicate a date of AD 45-49, making it the earliest NT book.

## Audience

The use by James of "the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad" (1:1) indicates that the readers were Jewish Christians living outside of Jerusalem. He uses "brethren" which is a common term among first century Jews. He also makes more than forty allusions to the OT and more than twenty to the Sermon on the Mount. See this comparison of James and Matthew: 1:2 (5:10-12); 1:4 (5:48); 1:5 (7:7-12); 1:9 (5:3); 1:12 (7:14); 1:20 (5:22); 1:22 (7:21-27); 2:5 (5:3); 2:13 (5:7); 2:13 (6:14-15); 2:14-16 (7:21-23); 3:6 (5:22); 3:10-12 (7:15-20); 3:17-18 (5:9); 4:4 (6:24); 4:10 (5:3-5); 4:11-12 (7:1-5); 5:2-3 (6:19-20); 5:10 (5:12); 5:11 (5:10); 5:12 (5:33-37). The Greek word translated "assembly" (2:2) is the word for "synagogue." All these facts suggest that he wrote to Jewish believers who had left their native homeland. They were most likely scattered, first, as the result of Stephen's martyrdom in AD 30-34 (Acts 7), then due to increasing persecution under Herod Agrippa I in AD 44 (Acts 12).

### Theme

The theme of James is "Tests of a Living Faith". True saving faith is a faith that demonstrates its validity; it works. James lays out tests of a living faith by which we may know that we are saved; these are tough questions that must be asked. James challenges us to give evidence of our faith through a consistent and righteous life-style.

True saving faith results in a changed life that will bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance.

<sup>17</sup>Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. 2 Cor 5:17

<sup>6</sup>For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil 1:6

The saved sinner loves Jesus and will therefore seek to keep Jesus' commands.

<sup>8</sup> and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls. 1 Pet 1:8-9

<sup>3</sup>By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup>The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 1 John 2:3-4

The Scriptures teach that it is possible for a believer to sin and to sometimes sin very badly. However, extended periods of carnality exhibit evidence that the individual never really had saving faith. And a denial of Christ is evidence that salvation never took place.

<sup>33</sup>"But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. Matt 10:33

<sup>19</sup>They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. 1 John 2:19

Scripture contains many inscrutable truths which, on the surface, seem to be contradictory or inconsistent and not able to be reconciled with each other by finite minds. ... As believers, we are kept secure in Christ by God's sovereign decree; yet we must persevere. We can live a holy life only through the power of the Holy Spirit; yet we are commanded to obey. As James has pointed out in the first chapter of his letter, we will endure trials; yet we must endure them. We will receive the Word; yet we must receive it. We will be gracious to the needy without partiality; yet we must be gracious to them without partiality. We will produce good works; yet we must produce them. Where there is genuine living faith and spiritual transformation, those things, and many others, both will be the result and must be the result. MacArthur NT Commentary – James

### **Outline**

- I. Introduction (1:1)
- II. The Tests of a Living Faith (1:2-5:18)
  - A. The Response to Trials Test (1:2-12)
  - B. The Response to Temptation Test (1:13-17)
  - C. The Response to the Word Test (1:18-27)
  - D. The Partiality Test (2:1-13)
  - E. The Works Test (2:14-26)
  - F. The Tongue Test (3:1-12)
  - G. The Wisdom Test (3:13-17)
  - H. The Friendship with the World Test (4:1-10)
  - I. The Slander Test (4:11-12)
  - J. The Dependence Test (4:13-17)
  - K. The Patient Endurance Test (5:1-12)
  - L. The Prayer Test (5:13-18)
- III. Conclusion (5:19-20)

### Summary

### Introduction (1:1)

1:1 – James begins by calling himself a "bond-servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ." This was not always the case for James. However, once he encountered the risen Jesus, James accepted Him for who He is: Savior and Lord.

*Doulos* (**bond-servant**) depicts a slave, a person deprived of all personal freedom and totally under the control of his master. Absolute obedience and loyalty to his master (who provided him with food, clothing, and housing) was required of every *doulos*. In contrast to the *andrapodon*, who was made a slave, the *doulos* was born a slave. James had become a *doulos* by his new birth through faith in Jesus Christ. MacArthur NT Commentary – James

The one who has repented of their sin and accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior has exercised saving faith. James wants to make sure his readers do not delude themselves into thinking they have exercised saving faith when they had not. Therefore, he will go on to provide his readers the tests of true saving faith. Since not all "faith (or belief)" saves (James 2:19), it is important to understand what true saving faith is. True saving faith is not merely giving mental assent to the facts of the gospel, but encompasses:

### Grace and Faith

<sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through **faith**; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup>not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Eph 2:8-9

# Repentance and Faith

<sup>1</sup>Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of **repentance from dead works and of faith toward God**, Heb 6:1

<sup>21</sup>solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ**. Acts 20:21

## **Follow**

<sup>27</sup>"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they **follow** Me; <sup>28</sup>and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. John 10:27-28

### Believe and Obey

<sup>36</sup>"He who **believes** in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not **obey** the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36

## Deny Self, Die to Self, and Follow

<sup>23</sup>And He was saying to them all, "**If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.** <sup>24</sup>"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. <sup>25</sup>"For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup>"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Luke 9:23-26

### Forsake All

<sup>33</sup>"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does **not give up all his own possessions**. Luke 14:33

## Confess Jesus as Lord and Believe

<sup>9</sup>that if you **confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; <sup>10</sup>for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. Rom 10:9-10

❖ Am I sold out completely to Jesus?

## The Tests of a Living Faith (1:2-5:18)

Those that have been made new in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) have true saving faith; a living faith; a faith that works; a faith that is demonstrates itself true; a faith that is progressing in sanctification.

1:2-12 – The Response to Trials Test – All people will experience trouble in their lives: a financial crises, unemployment, personal serious illness or that of a family member, chronic illness or painful handicap, death and grief, bereavement, heartache, criticism, loneliness, ostracism, the victim of crime, etc. This should not be surprising (Job 5:7; 14:1). Believers will have particular trouble in the world (John 16:33; 2 Tim 3:13; Acts 14:22). The true believer responds to trials in a way much different than the world. The world "grits their teeth and gets through it". True believers "endure."

<sup>2</sup>Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, <sup>3</sup>knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup>And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4

- consider (hegeomai) is a command calling for action. It denotes deliberate and careful judgment stemming from external proof, not subjective judgment based on feelings.
- joy (chara) is the deep-down sense of well-being that abides in the heart of the person who knows all is well between himself and the Lord. It is not an experience that comes from favorable circumstances, but even occurs when those circumstances are the most painful.
- when (hotan) carries the idea of not just of possibility but inevitability.
- encounter (peripiptō) has the idea of falling into, usually unexpectedly.
- various (poikilos) means various kinds or modes, diversified, manifold, many colored. It stresses
  the diversity not the quantity of trials.
- trials (peirasmos) means trial or temptation. Depending on the context, it may either mean difficult times or that which entices to sin (e.g., Matt. 6:13; 26:41; 2 Pet. 2:9 and James 1:13).

So... When the inevitable varieties of trials fall upon us out of the blue, we should evaluate the truths from God's Word concerning trials and joyfully accept them; looking expectantly for how we may glorify God in the trial and how He will change us.

❖ Is this how I go through trials?

If we have trouble understanding and applying the truths of Scripture, we have only to humbly ask God and He will generously give us that wisdom. We must ask in faith without doubting; without being double-minded (v5-8).

<sup>6</sup>And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that **He is** and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. Heb 11:6

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. <sup>16</sup>Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Heb 4:14-16

<sup>8</sup>Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. James 4:8

❖ Where do I go during difficult times? How do I ask the Lord for my needs?

Trials fall on all, the poor and the rich. God is impartial. All believers must rely on the Lord during trials (v9-11).

The bottom line is... We will all experience trouble in this life – this side of glory. God is sovereign over this trouble. God is God and will do as He wills in allowing or causing His children to experience difficulty. The truth of Scripture is that difficult times are for His glory and our good (Isa 45:5-7, 9; Rom 9:19-24) – so that God's purpose of sanctification will be accomplished in us.

Those who face trials with perseverance receive a crown of life from God – a reward that will eventually glorify God (Rev 4:9-11). (see notes on 2 Timothy)

1:13-17 – The Response to Temptation Test – In the midst of difficult times, we may think that it is too unbearable and we should just give in to desperation, sorrow, anger, blasphemy, etc. James addresses that in this test. The true believer deals with enticement to sin differently than the world.

Since trials develop maturity, which is good, someone might think that temptation (meaning a solicitation to sin and is the same word used for trial in 1:2) comes from God. The Bible never allows us to blame others for our sin, especially not God.

<sup>20</sup>**The person who sins will die**. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself. Ezek 18:20

When a temptation presents itself we have a choice (Rom 6) to obey or disobey God. We tend to think of "temptation" as coming from outside us. James says that it comes from within, from the heart. People are tempted when they are carried away and enticed by their own lust (their own desire to feed the flesh). Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin. This is why we have no one to blame but ourselves – not someone else; not Satan; and especially not God.

❖ Whom do I blame for my sin?

Great hope in the midst of the battle with sin is that God provides the believer with everything needed to choose to obey.

<sup>2</sup>Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; <sup>3</sup>seeing that **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us** by His own glory and excellence. <sup>2</sup> Pet 1:2-3

<sup>12</sup>Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. 1 Cor 10:12-13

❖ Do I battle sin with the resources God has given me?

The thought that God tempts his children is a lie. The truth is: "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow (v17)."

1:18-27 – The Response to the Word Test – The most precious gift from God is salvation brought about by "the word of truth". Because true believers have this precious gift, they have a desire to be doers of the Word. This is a characteristic of a true believer.

Another characteristic of a true believer is that they desire to put off sin. As an example, James uses anger (perhaps because anger could be something that is being dealt with when in trials). The anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

The true believer humbly puts off sin and receives the Word implanted. They are doers of the Word. Someone who professes Christ, but is not a doer of the Word deludes themselves. The effectual doer of the Word is blessed. Evidence of becoming an effectual doer is bridling the tongue, love for people, and a zeal for purity.

❖ Am I a doer of the Word?

- 2:1-13 The Partiality Test True believers do not hold their faith in their glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. It is not our doing that we have a personal relationship with our Creator, therefore, we are not better than anyone else.
  - \* How do I view unbelievers and other believers?

Who are people to whom we could show partiality – people who live a certain way; people who were/are certain types of sinners; people easy/difficult to love; people in certain jobs; etc? The particular case that James uses is of poor/rich.

God is impartial, therefore, the one who follows Christ (who has true saving faith) should be impartial as well. James warns of making distinctions among other believers and becoming judges with evil motives. Someone who shows partiality fails to have their values determined by the Word of God (v3-11).

❖ From where do I determine my values?

One who shows no mercy demonstrates that he never responded to the great mercy of God.

2:14-26 – The Works Test – James moves on to the "works test". True saving faith demonstrates that it is a real, living faith. Conversely, a non-working, non-fruit producing, spurious faith is a dead faith. Genuine faith cannot fail to bring forth works.

An example of dead faith is speaking kind words to those in physical need without giving them what is needed for life (v15-16). "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself" (v17).

If someone's "faith" does not produce good works, it is no better than the belief of the demons who "believe that God is one". That kind of faith is "useless." (v18-20).

• Does my faith work?

James gives two examples from OT history that demonstrate that faith produces works – Abraham and Rahab. Paul said that Abraham's faith saved him and moved him to obey God (Rom 4). James says the same thing.

Rahab demonstrated her faith in the Lord God of Israel by protecting Joshua's spies. God's grace changed her and she married Salmon, a descendant of Judah. She became the father of Boaz, the father of Obed, that father of Jesse, the father of David. A Gentile harlot, saved by God's grace, became the ancestor of the Messiah.

<sup>11</sup>When we heard *it*, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for **the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath**. Josh 2:11

<sup>31</sup>By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace. Heb 11:31

<sup>1</sup>The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham: <sup>2</sup>Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. <sup>3</sup>Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram. <sup>4</sup>Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon. <sup>5</sup>Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse. <sup>6</sup>Jesse was the father of David the king. Matt 1:1-6

True saving faith works.

3:1-12 – The Tongue Test – Those that exercise true saving faith have a sanctified heart and therefore a sanctified tongue, yet we are called to maintain a sanctified heart and tongue.

<sup>20</sup>And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. <sup>21</sup>For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, <sup>22</sup>deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness. <sup>23</sup>All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." Mark 7:20-23

All believers stumble in many ways, yet evidence of salvation is progressing in sanctification in regard to what we say (what comes out of the heart) – the tongue. Teachers of God's word will incur a stricter judgment because they are protecting God's people (Heb 13:17).

<sup>17</sup>Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, **for they keep watch over your souls** as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. Heb 13:17

The tongue is vital because it controls the whole body (v 3). Just as a tiny bridle controls a big horse, or a relatively small rudder controls a gigantic ship, the tongue controls the direction of our lives. It can be destructive as a fire (v5-6), stubborn and untamable (v7-8), and inconsistent in blessing and cursing (v9-12).

<sup>9</sup>With it we bless *our* Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; <sup>10</sup>from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, **these things ought not to be this way**. James 3:9-10

James says that no one can tame the tongue (on their own); it is restless evil and full of deadly poison. Only those that are consistently filled with the Spirit can produce Christ-like words from hearts that are given over in worship (Eph 5:18-21; Col 3:16-17).

- ❖ How am I doing with my tongue? What am I trying to accomplish with my tongue?
- 3:13-17 The Wisdom Test True saving faith produces godly wisdom, yet those that are saved must strive to demonstrate godly wisdom (v13). Wisdom can be thought of as properly and effectively applying truth to everyday life or being skilled in living righteously.

Worldly wisdom is "earthly, natural, demonic" and demonstrates itself in "jealousy and selfish ambition ... disorder and every evil thing" (v14-16). But God's wisdom found in God's Word applied to the heart of God's people by the power of the Holy Spirit produces righteous living that is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy" (v17). Godly wisdom produces a cycle of fruit/harvest of righteousness which is sown by those who have peace with God and with other believers.

- ❖ Where do I get wisdom?
- 4:1-10 The Friendship with the World Test True saving faith separates us from the world, yet those that are saved must strive to put off friendship with the world (v4). Continuing, habitual friendship with the world is evidence of unbelief. Quarrels, conflicts, lust, murder, envy, fighting, all indicate an artificial faith. There is no middle ground: friendship with the world = hostility toward God! To drive home this point, James summarizes an OT teaching on the jealousy of God.
  - <sup>3</sup>"You shall have no other gods before Me. <sup>4</sup>"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not worship them or serve them; for **I**, **the LORD your God**, **am a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup>but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. Ex 20:3-6
  - ❖ Am I living in friendship with the world?

God tolerates no rivals and wants complete commitment from His children, but He also provides the grace to put off friendship with the world. James ends this section with a rapid succession of imperative appeals for us to put off friendship with the world.

<sup>7</sup>Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. James 4:7-10

Be completely submitted to God, dependant on God, humble before God, broken over sin, and committed in the battle against sin.

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to **abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul**. <sup>12</sup>Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation. 1 Pet 2:11-12

- ❖ Am I battling sin?
- 4:11-12 The Slander Test A person whose life is characterized by habitual slander (speaks against) and condemning judgment displays a lack of love (James 2:8) and therefore is not demonstrating true saving faith. Those who habitually engage in such behavior cast doubt on the genuineness of their faith.
  - ❖ Do I speak against people?
- 4:13-17 The Dependence Test A characteristic of true believers is a surrender to God's sovereignty having a proper view of life in light of eternity (v14). By making plans without recognizing our dependence on God; to disregard God's will is tantamount to saying, "I am the sovereign ruler of my own life." Acknowledging our dependence on God affirms His sovereignty over all aspects of life (v15). Boasting of our own ability to rule our life is evil (v16). Those that know God's moral will and affirm that it is right yet chose to disobey are in sin (v17). Continuing in that sin is an indication of the lack of true saving faith.
  - ❖ Am I living in total dependence on the Sovereign God?
- 5:1-12 The Patient Endurance Test James levels harsh warnings against the wealthy who value the dishonest accumulation of material goods over honesty and justice (v1-3). He accuses them of dishonesty (v4), living in luxury (v5), and criminal injustice (v6). The bottom line is that "Lord of Saboath", The Lord of Hosts, The Lord Almighty is not oblivious nor unconcerned about those abused and will punish injustice. What then is expected of the genuine faith believers?

James presented three illustrations to encourage a life-style of faithful perseverance. Those who possess true saving faith will persevere in patience until the coming of the Lord:

- 1. A farmer that plants seeds and waits for rain to produce a healthy crop (v7).
  - You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup>Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.
- 2. The OT prophets who spoke boldly and patiently suffered (v10).
  - We count those blessed who endured.
- 3. Job, the quintessential example of endurance (v11).
  - The outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

In times of stress, a believer may be tempted to use God's name in a careless, irreverent way.

❖ Do I patiently endure?

- 5:13-18 The Prayer Test A life lived in prayerful dependence on God is an indication of possessing true saving faith. James encourages believers to pray always:
  - 1. In times of suffering (v13).
  - 2. In times of joy (v13).
  - 3. In times of battling sin (v14-16).

The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah is given as the example.

❖ Do I give the day over to the Lord in prayer (thoughts and transitions to prayers)?

## Conclusion (5:19-20)

Within the professing body of believers there are those that possess true saving faith and those that do not. Those that do will exhibit characteristics of a changed life and yet we are also called to strive to show those characteristics. A professor who strays from the truth does not have confidence that he is truly saved. If a brother turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death because his faith will be proven real.

## **Homework**

Read 1 and 2 Peter.