

Reading Plan

1. Read the book of James once per week in one sitting
2. Challenge: Read the book of Proverbs, in addition to James, once per week

Mark Your Bible / Memory Work

- [James 2:1](#)
- [James 2:5](#)
- [James 2:10](#)
- [James 2:17-18](#)
- [James 2:26](#)

[James 2:1-4](#) - The Sin of Partiality

1. “My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.” ([Jm. 2:1](#))
 - a. “My brethren”
 - i. Signifies a change in subject matter
 - b. “have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons”
 - i. The charge is not to profess Christianity (the faith) while at the same time, showing partiality toward the outward appearance or worldly position of people
 - ii. Such behavior is hypocritical and goes against the very spirit of Christianity
 - iii. Christ did not behave this way ([Lk. 20:21](#))
 - iv. God is no respecter of persons ([Acts 10:34](#); [Rm. 2:11](#))
 - v. Notice the exalted nature of Christ, the Lord of glory ([Phil. 2:9-11](#))
2. “For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;” ([Jm. 2:2](#))
 - a. assembly (*ho* G3588 *synagoge* G4864 soon-ag-o-gay´) properly “a bringing together” (*sun*, “together,” *ago*, “to bring”) (Vine 614)
 - i. Would be recognized by James’ audience as a Jewish place of religious gathering
 - ii. In this context, it would be an assembling of the church
 - b. “a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel”
 - i. Implication is a rich person
 - ii. Dressed in expensive clothing and accessories
 - iii. This clothing arrangement was meant to draw attention

- c. “poor man in vile raiment”
 - i. Likely a beggar who depended on others for survival
 - ii. Dressed in filthy or dirty clothing, likely cheap
 - d. The rich man and the poor man were on opposite ends of the physical prosperity scale yet they are of equal value in the Lord’s eyes ([Gal. 3:28](#))
3. “And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:” ([Jm. 2:3](#))
- a. Partiality is here shown to the rich man
 - i. He receives a seat in a good place
 - ii. First class
 - b. gay (*ho* G3588 *lampros* G2986 lam-pros´) splendid, magnificent (Thayer 371)
 - i. Translated as “goodly” in [Jm. 2:2](#)
 - c. The poor man is not shown the same courtesy as the rich man
 - i. He is placed in a position of shame and dishonor
 - d. “under my footstool”
 - i. In a position of submission
 - ii. Like saying, “under my feet” as if I am better than you
4. “Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?” ([Jm. 2:4](#))
- a. partial (*diakrino* G1252 dee-ak-ree´-no) “to separate,” discriminate, hence, “to be at variance with oneself, to be divided in one’s mind” (Vine 177)
 - i. Reminds one of the double-minded man of [Jm. 1:8](#)
 - ii. This is prejudice
 - iii. Only the outward appearance has been taken into account
 - iv. God looks on the heart ([1 Sam. 16:7](#))
 - b. judges (*krites* G2923 kree-tace´) of one who passes, or arrogates to himself, judgment on anything (Vine 336)
 - c. “of evil thoughts”
 - i. ASV translates this “with evil thoughts”
 - ii. Their judgment was not right but evil
 - iii. We are to judge righteous judgment which excludes judging according to appearance ([Jn. 7:24](#))

James 2:5-7 - Rich and Poor Contrasted

1. “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” ([Jm. 2:5](#))
 - a. “Hearken”
 - i. Listen up!
 - b. “my beloved brethren”
 - i. James loved the brethren (cf. [Jn. 13:34-35](#); [1 Jn. 2:10](#), [3:14](#), [23](#), [4:7](#), [11-12](#), [21](#), [5:2](#))
 - c. Some of the most faithful people are those that are poor materially
 - i. Why?
 - ii. It is difficult for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God ([Mk. 10:23-25](#))
 - iii. Example: Rich man and Lazarus ([Lk. 16:19-31](#))
 - d. Not many prominent people heed the call ([1 Cor. 1:26-31](#))
 - i. Called by the Gospel ([2 Th. 2:13-14](#))
 - ii. We must be “poor to the world” and “rich in faith”
2. “But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?” ([Jm. 2:6](#))
 - a. have despised (*atimazo* G818 at-im-ad´-zo) deprive someone of honor or respect, to dishonor/shame (BDAG 148)
 - i. Prejudice is serious business with God
 - b. Do...oppress (*katadynasteuo* G2616 kat-ad-oo-nas-tyoo´-o) to exercise harsh control over one, to use one’s power against one (Thayer 331)
 - i. The rich have the means to oppress and evidently were doing so
 - ii. Why? Did not like the message!
 - c. draw (*helko* G1670 hel´-ko) a person forcibly and against his will (our *drag, drag off*) (Thayer 204)
 - d. the judgment seats (*kriterion* G2922 kree-tay´-ree-on) the place where judgment is given; the tribunal of a judge; a bench of judges (Thayer 362)
 - i. In other words, Christians were drug into court by the rich
 - ii. Saul of Tarsus was putting Christians in prison ([Acts 8:3](#); [9:1-2](#); [22:4-5](#); [26:9-11](#))

3. “Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?” ([Jm. 2:7](#))
 - a. Do...blaspheme (*blasphemeo* G987 blas-fay-meh´-o) in relation to transcendent or associated entities slander, revile, defame, speak irreverently/impiously/disrespectfully of or about (BDAG 178)
 - i. Displays a lack of reverence and respect
 - ii. In the context, blasphemy is directed toward the name of Christ i.e., Christians
 - iii. The Jews were envious and blasphemed ([Acts 13:45](#))
 - b. Jesus was reviled on the cross ([Mt. 27:39-44](#))
 - c. James illustrates to his brethren the foolishness of giving preference to the very individuals that persecute the cause of Christ

[James 2:8-13](#) - The Royal Law

1. “If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:” ([Jm. 2:8](#))
 - a. ye fulfil (*teleo* G5055 tel-eh´-o) to carry out the contents of a command (Thayer 619)
 - b. royal (*basilikos* G937 bas-il-ee-kos´) of or belonging to a king, kingly, royal, regal; Hence metaphorically principal, chief (Thayer 98)
 - c. “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”
 - i. Taught under the Old and New Law ([Lev. 19:18](#); [Mt. 22:37-39](#), [7:12](#))
 - d. well (*kalos* G2573 kal-oc´) do what is right, act rightly, do well (BDAG 505)
2. “But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.” ([Jm. 2:9](#))
 - a. Showing partiality to others (respect to persons) is here defined as sin
 - b. convinced (*elencho* G1651 el-eng´-kho) to bring a person to the point of recognizing wrongdoing, convict, convince someone of something, point something out to someone (BDAG 315); to convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted (Thayer 202)
 - i. It is a shame to behave this way
 - ii. Christ died for all ([2 Cor. 5:13-15](#))
 - c. “the law” = the Law of Moses (cf. [Jm. 2:11](#) with [Ex. 20:13-14](#); [Dt. 5:17-18](#))
 - i. The Jews could not appeal to the Law of Moses for it too condemned showing partiality

- ii. James is about to show how any violation of the Law of Moses caused one to transgress and thus become guilty
- 3. “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.” ([Jm. 2:10](#))
 - a. shall keep (*tereo* G5083 tay-reh´-o) to persist in obedience, keep, observe, fulfill, pay attention to, especially of law and teaching (BDAG 1002)
 - b. offend (*ptaio* G4417 ptah´-yo) to lose one’s footing, stumble, trip; sin in one respect (only) (BDAG 894)
 - c. he is guilty of all (*ginomai* G1096 ghin´-om-ahee *enochos* G1777 en´-okh-os *pas* G3956 pas) pertaining to being required to give an account for something held against one, liable, answerable, guilty; has sinned against all (the commandments) (BDAG 338-339)
 - i. How many crimes must one commit to be a lawbreaker?
 - ii. We call a person a criminal, not because they committed every crime possible, but because they broke the law even if it was only in one point (e.g., murder)
- 4. “For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.” ([Jm. 2:11](#))
 - a. A simple illustration which makes the point clear
 - b. Though a person never committed adultery yet they murdered, they have violated God’s Law ([Ex. 20:13-14](#); [Rm. 13:9](#); cf. [Mt. 19:18](#))
 - c. A powerful lesson for us to learn!
 - i. All of God’s Law must be followed to be right with Him!
- 5. “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” ([Jm. 2:12](#))
 - a. James now directs the brethren to speak and act according to the law of liberty
 - i. “law of liberty” = the faith (cf. [Jm. 1:21, 25](#); [1 Pt. 1:25](#); [Eph. 4:5](#); [Jude 3](#); [Gal. 1:11, 23](#))
 - ii. It sets us free from sin and thus gives us liberty ([Gal. 5:13-14](#); [Rm. 8:1-2](#))
 - iii. Everything we say and do must be done by the authority of Jesus ([Col. 3:17](#))
 - b. Why? We all will be judged one day ([2 Cor. 5:10](#))
 - i. Words matter ([Mt. 12:34-37](#))
- 6. “For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” ([Jm. 2:13](#))

- a. without mercy (*anileos* G448 an-ee´-leh-occe) judgment is merciless (BDAG 77)
- b. No pity was shown to the poor and thus no pity would be shown to those individuals on the day of judgment
 - i. Exactly the point Jesus made to the goats ([Mt. 25:41-46](#))
- c. rejoiceth (*katakauchaomai* G2620 kat-ak-öw-khah´-om-ahee) mercy boasts itself superior to judgment, i.e. full of glad confidence has no fear of judgment (Thayer 331)
- d. Mercy cancels out judgment therefore we must practice it in our daily lives
- e. “Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.” ([Mt. 5:7](#))

James 2:14-20 - Faith Without Works Is Dead

1. “What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” ([Jm. 2:14](#))
 - a. profit (*ho* G3588 *ophelos* G3786 of´-el-os) an advantage derived from something, benefit, good (BDAG 743)
 - i. The businessman understands profit very well
 - b. say (*lego* G3004 leg´-o) to express oneself orally or in written form, utter in words, say, tell, give expression to; by indirect discourse or indirect question (BDAG 588)
 - c. faith (*pistis* G4102 pis´-tis) my personal faith in God
 - i. This faith comes by hearing God’s word and doing it ([Rm. 10:17](#))!
 - ii. “22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” ([Jm. 1:22-25](#))
 - d. works (*ergon* G2041 er´-gon) that which displays itself in activity of any kind, deed, action (BDAG 390)
 - i. Synonymous with obedience to God’s will in this context
 - ii. God established the works that we are to walk in ([Eph. 2:10](#))
 - e. “can faith” = that faith (definite article present in the Greek)
 - i. Which faith?
 - ii. Faith without works

- f. save (*sozo* G4982 *sode´-zo*) to save or preserve from transcendent danger or destruction, save/preserve from eternal death (BDAG 982)
 - i. Function of Christ ([Mt. 1:21](#))
 - ii. We have responsibility in our salvation ([Acts 2:38, 40](#); [Phil. 2:12](#))
- 2. “15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?” ([Jm. 2:15-16](#))
 - a. A real life scenario is set forth by James regarding a brother or sister who lacks adequate clothing
 - i. Does not mean completely naked (cf. [Jn. 21:7](#))
 - b. This brother or sister also lacks daily food
 - i. Destitute = lack ([Jm. 1:5](#))
 - ii. Daily = what is needed or lasting for a day
 - c. Talk is cheap in this scenario and profits nothing
 - i. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” ([Mt. 7:21](#))
- 3. “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” ([Jm. 2:17](#))
 - a. Dead faith is a faith which is not coupled with works of obedience
 - i. It is in speech only
 - b. The faithful fed and clothed the hungry and naked ([Mt. 25:34-36](#))
 - c. The unfaithful did not ([Mt. 25:41-43](#))
- 4. “Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” ([Jm. 2:18](#))
 - a. James now compares two types of faith
 - i. Dead faith = faith without works
 - ii. Living faith = faith coupled with works
 - b. Faith and works are not mutually exclusive!
 - i. It is not “either or” but “both and”
 - ii. Rather, we show our faith by our obedience to God and His will
 - iii. Our faith in God must be visible
 - iv. Two examples of this are forthcoming
- 5. “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” ([Jm. 2:19](#))

- a. “believest” = verb form of “faith”
 - i. Verb describes action
 - b. The demons believe there is one God
 - i. It does not result in the proper action of obedience to him
 - ii. Our action can be wrong too as in the case of the demons ([Lk. 4:33-35](#); c.f. [Mt. 7:22-23](#))
 - iii. What of those that deny the existence of God?
 - c. “tremble” = a result of extreme fear
 - i. They know what is coming! ([Mt. 25:41](#))
 - ii. What about me? Do I fear God?
6. “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” ([Jm. 2:20](#))
- a. vain (*kenos* G2756 ken-os´) pertaining to being devoid of intellectual, moral, or spiritual value, empty (BDAG 539)
 - i. A man boasts he has something, “faith”, but he lacks the fruit of faith because he does not obey God
 - ii. “18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” ([Mt. 7:18-20](#))
 - b. This is twice now that James has shown this is a dead faith
 - i. Repetition shows emphasis

[James 2:21-25](#) - Examples of Living Faith

1. “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” ([Jm. 2:21](#))
 - a. James uses a very familiar character to the Jews to prove his point on faith and works: Abraham
 - i. [Genesis 22:1-19](#) chronicles this event
 - ii. In Abraham’s mind, Isaac was sacrificed to God ([Heb. 11:17-19](#))
 - b. Abraham’s faith, coupled with obedience to God’s commandments, rendered him justified
 - i. Justified = just if I’d never sinned
 - ii. It was imputed [reckoned; credited] unto him for righteousness ([Jm. 2:23](#))
 - c. It is here that it appears like we have a contradiction between what Paul said in Romans and what James says here

- i. This difficulty disappears when we realize that Paul is dealing with meritorious works and James is dealing with obedience to God (See [Rm. 4:1-5](#))
2. “Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” ([Jm. 2:22](#))
 - a. Abraham’s faith worked together with his works (obedience)
 - b. This brought his faith to completion or maturity (perfection)
 - c. So it must be with us if we wish to be righteous before God
3. “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” ([Jm. 2:23](#))
 - a. “And he [Abram] believed in the LORD; and he [the LORD] counted it to him [Abram] for righteousness.” ([Gen. 15:6](#))
 - b. it was imputed (*logizomai* G3049 log-id´-zom-ahee) to determine by mathematical process, reckon, calculate; credit something to someone as something (BDAG 597)
 - i. Abraham’s obedience resulted in God deeming his faith as righteousness
 - c. Abraham was called the Friend of God
 - i. “*Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?” ([2 Chr. 20:7](#))
 - ii. “But thou, Israel, *art* my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The seed of Abraham my friend.” ([Isa. 41:8](#))
 - iii. Christians are the seed of Abraham and thus should be God’s friend ([Gal. 3:29](#); cf. [Jn. 15:14](#))
4. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” ([Jm. 2:24](#))
 - a. This is the only time in the Bible you will discover the phrase “faith only”
 - i. Faith only does not justify a person and as such cannot save!
 - ii. Faith only is dead faith (cf. [Jm. 2:17](#), [20](#))
5. “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?” ([Jm. 2:25](#))
 - a. The account of Rahab and what she did is found in [Joshua 2:1-22](#)
 - i. What she did is the point!

- b. What would have happened had Rahab not sent the messengers out another way?
 - i. She and her family would have been destroyed by the Israelites
 - ii. She was required to stay in her house and bind the scarlet thread in the window of her house ([Josh. 2:18](#))
- c. Rahab and her family were spared ([Josh. 6:25](#))
- d. Rahab was in the lineage of Christ ([Mt. 1:5](#))

James 2:26 - Faith Without Works Is Dead - Final Illustration

- 1. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” ([Jm. 2:26](#))
 - a. Death describes a separation
 - b. James now uses a powerful illustration that we are very aware of: physical death
 - i. Just as the physical body is dead without the spirit, so too is faith dead without works (obedience)
 - c. We do not want a rotting corpse of faith, we want a living, active faith!
 - i. So let us show it by obedience and may it always grow stronger and stronger (cf. [Lk. 17:5](#))