

# How-To-Handbook “James”

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Book of James is so practical and down to earth that it was called as ‘The Proverbs of the New Testament. It has a lot of practical illustrations and talking about doing and not just hearing.

If you are not willing to apply what we are going to learn tonight from James, and if you are not born-again Christians, you are not going to learn anything out of it. Because the only people who can hear the Word and understand the Word are those whose hearts are opened to the Lord by the Holy Spirit. Unless the Lord opens our hearts, the Word of God is a foolish thing to human being.

### A. THE CONFIGURATION OF THE BOOK

The James is the book that shows how to apply the doctrine we learn from other epistles and Gospels to our lives in day to day living.

It talks about how to turn trials and tests to joy;  
and it talks about listening and doing;  
and it talks about no favoritism;  
also it talks to us about faith and deed;  
taming the tongue;  
wisdom;  
submitting ourselves to God;  
boasting about tomorrow;  
warning to rich oppressors;  
patience in suffering;  
and it finally talks about the prayer in faith.

These are the things we can use and apply in our lives every day and night. We can sit under the best teacher in the world and hear the best sermons and teachings every day and still not knowing anything. The prime example was Judas who betrayed Jesus for thirty coins of silver. Yes, he was practical in worldly way. But he lost his soul eternally. Jesus said it was better for him not to be born. We can have all the knowledge about the Bible. We might even be able to quote many more Bible verses than anyone in this room. We might even have better prestige in church realm than any of us. But if we don't apply what you learn in our life, the very knowledge will turn against us in the Judgement Day.

*Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgement,*

The more we know about the Word, the more we are accountable to it. God does not cut slack and He does not lower His standard for the sake of our laziness and stupidity.

Martin Luther once rejected the Book of James, because he said that “According to Romans, you will be saved by faith through believing that Jesus Christ is Lord, not by

your work. But James talks about deeds." Later Luther changed his mind and said, "James is helpful for Christians to grow." He advised the group of people who put together the Bible to put James in the back of the Bible with Jude & Revelation. Faith is the root of Christian growth. But the fruit of Christianity is by works in the Lord. How can you find true Christians? By their lives, by their works, by their walk with Jesus in day to day living.

James gives practical advices to us how to live and grow in the Lord. There are many people go to churches every Sunday morning, even Wednesday nights or Thursday nights. They listen to sermons after sermons, walk away with headful of Bible knowledge. But they do not put it into practice.

So churches become like giant playpens with a bunch of grown old, not grown up, Christians who have been in the Lord for many years. Yet they fight with each others. They rattle, scream at each others. When they don't get their way, they pick up their toys and walk away with lips sticking out. "I am not going to play with you anymore!" They use the Word out of context to get their own way to each others.

Christianity is like riding a bike on uphill. Unless we put effort into constant peddling, we will end up in the bottom again. That goes same for Christianity. Unless we put our Bible knowledge and doctrine into our lives constantly, we will backslide and end up in the bottom. Because we are carnal and wicked.

## **B. THE THEME OF THE BOOK**

The theme of James is **spiritual maturity** (James 1:4).

## **C. AUTHOR**

The author of the book of James is not the one of twelve disciples.

Disciple James who was a brother of John was killed by Herod A.D. 44. Jesus called them Sons of Thunder. Some says that this book was written in the early 60's.

Another Disciple James who was a son of Alphaeus, called "The Little". Neither one of them had the stature nor the influence to write of this letter.

We strongly believe that the author was James (Matt 11:35), a brother of Jesus who thought Jesus was flipping during the ministry of Jesus on earth (John 7:2-5). But later on he was called 'James the Just', or 'Old Camel Knees' because he spent so much time on his knees in prayer which we can see in the chapter 5. Within 10 years of time after crucifixion of Jesus, James the Just grew up in the Lord so much that he became very prominent in the church:

He was very influential both among the Jews and in the church.

Peter reported to him on his release from prison (Acts 12:17).

Paul acted on James advice (Acts 21:18-26).

He was a very strict Jew himself, but was author of the tolerant letter to Gentile Christians (Acts 15:13-29).

He endorsed Paul's evangelism to Gentile, but was himself mainly concerned with Jews.

His life work was to win Jews, and 'Smooth their passage to Christianity'.

Throughout the Book of James, James quoted the Scriptures from the Old Testament for 45 times.

According to Josephus, a Jewish historian of the second century, shortly before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army (A.D. 70), when Jews were, in large

numbers, embracing Christianity, Ananus, the high priest, the Scribes and Pharisees assembled the Sanhedrin and commanded James to denounce Jesus from one of the Temple galleries in A.D. 62 or 66. But instead, James the Just cried out that Jesus was the Son of God and Judge of the world. Enraged religious fanatics stoned and clubbed him to death. Until the last moment he was praying for them, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

#### **D. THE BONDSERVANT**

*James 1:1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.*

James the Just, the author of this letter, didn't think that it was necessary to explain who he was to the readers who were mainly Jewish Christians and they knew him so well. So he simply identified himself as '*James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ*'. What would I do if I was a blood brother of Jesus Christ? Probably, I would stick my thumbs in my spiritual vest pockets and stick my stomach out, and introduce myself as, "the most humble and important servant of God and a half blood brother of Lord Jesus Christ". Showing off my family connection. Oh, how often we see that we love to be identified with worldly VIPs! We should be more proud to be related with God and Lord Jesus than related to someone influential and powerful in this world. So if someone calls you as a 'Jesus Freak', rejoice! They can see and identify you as His. Let's take it as an honor.

'A bondservant' here was *duros* or *duroi* in Greek. According to the Old Testament law, if you are a servant, the servanthip last for 7 years. By the end of that 7th year, you want to hang around with your master, because you still have your family as his servant or you just might like this guy, you go to your master and tell him that you want to be a bond servant with your own will. Then your masters take you to the house door post and put your ear against the door post and pierce your ear. Then he would put a earring on your ear. That shows you that you become a bondservant for the rest of your life in your own free will. You no longer want what you want, but you want what your master wants. You will follow your master's wishes as your own wishes.

*Jesus said in John 15:15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

So when we say that we want to be His servants, it means we want to do what He wants us to do, not what we want to do.

In turn, your master has an obligation to take care of all your needs. He has to feed you, cloth you, take care of you. Our heavenly Father knows what we need. He promised that He would take of all our needs according to His riches in glory.

*Matt 6:31-33 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

*Phil 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

So when we have problems, we should go to God, and say, "Lord, we have problems." Let Him take care of them. They are not our problems, because He said that He will take care of it. It may not be the way you want. But it will be His way and the right way.

James called Jesus Christ as 'Lord' (kyrios) and putting Jesus as the same level as God (theos). James believes in One God. In *James 2:19* *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!*

## **E. APPLICATIONS**

### **1) Let's be bondservants of Christ.**

We should not care about what we want, but we should care what He wants.

### **2) It's not about what we are, but it is about whom we are with.**

We have the identity of Jesus Christ because what He has done on the cross, not what we have accomplished or want to accomplish.