

PUTTING *Faith*
TO **WORK**

**A BIBLE READING PLAN FOR THE
BOOK OF JAMES**





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Project 119 is a Bible reading initiative of Mountain Brook Baptist Church. Our hope is that every member of our church body would be encouraged in his or her relationship with Jesus Christ through the regular reading of God's Word.

This reading plan compliments a five-week sermon series our Senior Minister, Dr. Doug Dortch, will be preaching on the book of James. The plan provides you with an assigned Scripture reading and devotional thought for each day of the week. You will be reading one chapter of James each week. On the weekends, we suggest that you re-read the chapter of James that you have been working through during the past week. To learn more about Project 119 and to access previous plans, visit www.mbbc.org/project119.



PUTTING *Faith* TO **WORK**

WEEK ONE: JAMES 1

AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 6 | DR. DOUG DORTCH

MONDAY, AUGUST 31 | JAMES 1:1-8

“Why do bad things happen to good people?” That’s a question that has dogged believers for centuries, even as far back as the first century, when the first Christians were experiencing a level of persecution we are fortunate to have never known. The letter of James gives readers one insight into that most unsettling of questions: Our perseverance in the face of trials and tribulations enables us to experience God’s wisdom, which God doesn’t hold back from those who earnestly seek it. If you’re going through such a season today, ask God for both perspective and power to persevere, and then find strength to face your challenges in steadfast devotion, which is the only way any of us will ever make sense of those otherwise harrying times.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 | JAMES 1:9-12

Some equate pride as being a sinful emotion, and when it is the kind that is based on one’s accomplishments, it most certainly is. But James tells us that the person who has been humbled by the challenges of life can be proud of what God has allowed to come upon him because when everything has been taken away except for our faith, then we find ourselves in a place where our trust in God is able to shine through most brightly. So, remember that he who has the “most toys” is really not the one who ends up winning in faith; it’s the person who is willing to lose everything in order to gain what can never be taken away – one’s devotion to Christ, who gives us power to stand tall in the face of all that would break us down.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 | JAMES 1:13-15

We tend to be naturally gifted at “passing the buck” for everything that doesn’t work out in our favor. We even at times try to point the finger at God, as if God is responsible for the trials that come our way. But this section of James tells us that God is not the one at fault. If we would only take a good look in the mirror, we would see where to place the blame; and by acknowledging our own complicity in all that is wrong with us, then be in a position to find the grace that is greater than all our sin and the power that brings life out of death.



PUTTING *Faith* TO **WORK**

WEEK ONE: JAMES 1

AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 6 | DR. DOUG DORTCH

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 | JAMES 1:16-18

Was it Gary Chapman who talked about “love languages” and how each of us responds to different expressions of love? As I recall, Chapman mentioned several such “languages,” but the one that most of us have in common is our appreciation and delight in receiving gifts. James reminds us that God has known this all along, which is why He chose to bless us in ways that far surpass our expectations. Not just some gifts come from God; all of them do. So, receive those that have come your way with undying gratitude and show your appreciation by employing them in a way that advances God’s Kingdom purposes in the part of the world in which you live, work, and play.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 | JAMES 1:19-27

More damage has been done by the tongue than all other members of the human body put together. We’ve all said things that we wanted to take back but couldn’t, and have had to live with the consequences. That is why James encourages us to be slow and circumspect in our words, which is always best done by attending to God’s Word. If we hear and heed it what comes from God’s mouth instead of thoughtlessly running our own, we will be certain to miss none of the blessing God wants us to know and the joy of being true to our confession and seeing it make a difference in the lives of those God puts in our lives.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5 - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 | JAMES 1

This weekend read James 1 and reflect on what God has been teaching you this week.



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WEEK TWO: JAMES 2 **SEPTEMBER 7-13 | WAYNE SPLAWN**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 | JAMES 2:1-7

All people are created equal and deserve to be treated the same. This is an important principle on which our country was founded. In fact, it is such an important truth in America, that we confess our belief in the equality of all people each time we recite the Pledge of Allegiance and we say the words, “. . . with liberty and justice for all.” Unfortunately, we often fall short of this ideal. Justice is perverted and people are treated differently based on their ethnicity, level of education or socio-economic status.

Here in James 2:1-7, we are reminded that a local church should be a place where people are treated equally. James’ audience had fallen short of this ideal and was treating people differently based on their income. The rich were given seats of honor while the poor were pushed to the margins. James reminds his audience that this is a serious sin. As Christians, we must take seriously our belief that all people are made in God’s image and deserve to be treated with an equal measure of dignity and respect, regardless of the value they are assigned by those who operate according to the principles of the world.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 | JAMES 2:8-13

Our justice system is designed to punish people in a way that is proportionate to the offense committed. For example, you will not be sentenced to forty years in prison for a minor traffic violation. In this respect, we recognize that some infractions are worse than others.

We often apply this same principle to our relationship with God. It seems obvious to us that murder is a more egregious sin than telling a lie. And, in some respects, this is certainly true. However, there is another sense in which all sins are equal. That is, even the seemingly smallest violation of God’s commands renders us guilty before the Lord.

There are two implications of this truth of which we need to be constantly reminded. First, we must approach all of God’s commands with the utmost seriousness. The Lord earnestly expects us to obey the command, which states, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” and we should be grieved and repent when we fail to do so. Second, we must remember that God is merciful. If we confess our sins, God is gracious to forgive us. We should marvel at God’s mercy and be quick to extend this same mercy to those who have wronged us.



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WEEK TWO: JAMES 2 SEPTEMBER 7-13 | WAYNE SPLAWN

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 | JAMES 2:14-17

In this passage, James seeks to clarify a misunderstanding that some in his audience had regarding the relationship between saving faith and works. These people believed that a person could have faith in Jesus Christ that had no impact on how they lived their lives. James shows that this understanding of faith is completely wrong. Just as our words of encouragement alone are no good to someone in need, so a faith that is not accompanied by works is not genuine faith. New Testament scholar Douglas Moo clarifies James' point by stating, "James is not saying that faith does not save: he is saying that the faith this person claims to have, a faith that *has not works*, cannot save."¹ If we have genuine faith in Jesus Christ, then our lives will bear witness to that faith by how we live.

¹ Douglas J. Moo, "James" in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity), 104.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 | JAMES 2:18-19

In our passage yesterday, James highlighted the important connection between saving faith and works. Here in James 2:18-19, James provides a powerful illustration that shows the deficiency of faith apart from works. In verse 19, James writes, "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder!" (ESV). The demons believe in God, but this belief is not a belief that is accompanied by love for God and submission to God's will. And, it is obviously not saving faith. James wants his original audience, and us, to examine our faith and see if it is only head knowledge about the Lord or if it is a genuine love for God that transforms our lives. Saving faith will always be accompanied by a desire to conform our lives to the will of God out of love and gratitude for him.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 | JAMES 2:20-26

Most of us learn best when we hear or see examples that effectively illustrate a new concept or idea. In James 2:14-19, James writes about the important relationship that exists between faith and works. Here in 2:20-26, James provides two examples of people of faith who demonstrated the genuineness of their faith by how they lived: Abraham and Rahab. Hebrews 11 is another passage of Scripture that provides us with many examples of men and women whose lives were characterized by works that gave testimony to the genuineness of their faith. As you reflect on the examples of faithfulness in the lives of Abraham, Rahab and the saints described in Hebrews 11, ask God to show you how he might be calling you to obediently follow him by faith.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 | JAMES 2

This weekend read James 2 and reflect on what God has been teaching you this week.



PUTTING *Faith* TO **WORK**

WEEK THREE: JAMES 3 SEPTEMBER 14-20 | MARY SPLAWN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 | JAMES 3:1-2

In my home town, there is a famous greasy spoon called The Beacon. When I was young, a blind man named J.C. would greet you at the counter saying, "Walk and talk ... walk and talk!" as to keep the booming restaurant's line moving. If you got in the line, you needed to know what you wanted to order. Otherwise, he'd ask you to step aside so that others could move along.

In James 3:1, James is warning people not to take up the teaching post too quickly. He wants them to be ready to "walk" what they "talk." If they are eloquent in speech but don't live in line with the truths they proclaim, they may lead others astray. If they are interested in the prestige that often comes with the teaching ministry, but they teach things that are not in line with God's truth, they will surely cause others to stumble.

James would rather that people step out of line than to hastily become teachers.

In essence, James wants teachers to be ready to practice what they preach. Public teacher or not, this is applicable to us. Do we daily "walk" with Christ, dependent upon him for guidance, correction, and truth so that we can effectively "talk" on his behalf?

Lord, help us to walk closely to you, so that when we talk; our words represent you well! – Amen.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 | JAMES 3:3-6

The old adage "sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me" just isn't true. We all know that our words do matter, and they can be used for great good or evil. We can use words to draw others to Christ and our words can also fuel in others a desire to distance themselves from God.

The tongue, which is so small and seemingly insignificant, directs the body, like a rudder directs a ship. Our words have power in the lives of people, therefore; we must continually examine what we say. We must take every thought (and word ... if we speak before we think) captive and present it to God, asking him to help us control what cannot be directed or bridled without his help.

Today, as you examine what you say, think about this Scripture: "Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). What do your words say about your heart?

Consider this list of people that you may encounter today: family, friends, colleagues, those who provide you with services (grocery store clerks, repairmen, lawn care professionals, waiters, and domestic helpers), neighbors, and the Lord. Are you using your tongue for good in the lives of others or is your speech reckless or unfeeling? Are there certain people with whom you need to be more conscious of your words and tone in the days to come? If so, pray for God's help in taming the tongue. Ask God to help you see that your words really reveal something about your spiritual state! Look for opportunities to speak words of appreciation and blessing to those around you! Because, while words can hurt, they can also work to heal (Proverbs 12:18)!



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WEEK THREE: JAMES 3 SEPTEMBER 14-20 | MARY SPLAWN

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 | JAMES 3:7-12

During the era of the VHS tape, the video store motto was "Be kind, rewind." My family has adopted this motto, but with a different meaning than was applied at Blockbuster or Movie Gallery. (If you are under 20, you probably have no idea what I'm talking about right now. It's ok, read on!)

When someone in my family says something unkind without thinking and they immediately regret it, they hold up their hands and say, "Be kind, rewind." It is our way of saying, "I want another chance to say that ... I'd like a do-over please ... I know that I messed up."

James understands the dangers associated with the untamed tongue and he wants us to consider our constant need for sanctification (being made more like Christ) as it relates to our speech. Remember earlier in James, he warns us, "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak" (James 1:19). Jesus also warns us to guard our words. He says, "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:36-37).

Sometimes we need to be silent and other times we are called to speak. This is especially true as it relates to speaking about other people. I've heard it said, "If you can't say a good word about someone, say nothing at all." James would agree. He explains that we were created in God's image to bless God. And so, it is really hypocritical (double-minded) if we use our tongue, which was meant for blessing, to casually curse others who were also made in God's likeness.

James encourages us to guard against careless speech, dizzying chatter, and bad-mouthing others. When we do speak, we are called to use our words on behalf of Christ and to be an encouragement to those around us (Colossians 3:12-17). And in those moments where we speak an unkind word before we think, we need to quickly confess our sin and seek forgiveness.

Lord, help us to use our words wisely, so that in our speech grace may abound!

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 | JAMES 3:13-17

It is amazing how quickly we can spot someone who doesn't speak like we do. On a recent mission trip to California, many in our group were asked a similar question, "You're not from around here ... are you?" Our Alabama accent (or in my case a South Carolina accent) exposed the fact that we are not native to California.

Accents have been used to distinguish peoples since Biblical times (Judges 12:6). We form our accents over time, as we listen to those around us speak.

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WEEK THREE: JAMES 3 SEPTEMBER 14-20 | MARY SPLAWN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 | JAMES 3:13-17

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Consider the idea of a Christian accent, one that is developed over time as you immerse yourself in God's word. As the love and grace of God through Jesus Christ transforms your life, your speech and actions are transformed as well. You begin to sound less like the world around you which tends to harbor bitter envy, selfish ambition and evil desires (see v. 14-15) and you begin to sound more like Christ whose words are filled with mercy, peace, sincerity, impartiality, and consideration for others (v. 17)!

Wouldn't it be cool if people began to notice that your speech is filled with God's words and not your own? Wouldn't it be exciting if our community recognized that we're not from around here, but that our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20)?

Lord, help us to be near you and to find our home in you, so that we begin to speak like you to a world around us who needs to hear words of truth and life (John 17:17 and John 6:63, 68).

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 | JAMES 3:18

In the final portion of chapter 3, James encourages us to be peacemakers. The best illustration related to peacemaking that I've heard is in Matt Chandler's study "Recovering Redemption." There he talks about the difference between peacekeepers and peacemakers. He says that peacekeepers walk into conflict and try to resolve it, but peacemakers refuse to let anyone sow seeds of disunity.

For example, when someone says, "Hey man, you're not going to believe what such and such did," a peacemaker will respond, "Listen, you're not going to have that conversation with me. ... Are you trying to recruit me for your team? You need to go and have that conversation with them ... Go work it out. That is what the Bible says we should do. ... You are trying to put something in my mind that would rob me of the ability to give this person the benefit of the doubt. No, I'm not letting you have this conversation!"

Chandler continues by saying that when people are piling on and talking about all the bad qualities of someone, a peacemaker will launch an "awkward grenade," as he calls it, and talk about some positive quality that the person possesses. For the sake of building up a unified community, a peacemaker will not abide people talking negatively about someone else. In fact, he or she will risk conflict for the sake of peace.

This is a challenging concept, but when followed, one that benefits Christ's church.

Lord, help us to be peacemakers by sowing only seeds of unity that raise a harvest of righteousness (see 3:18).

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 | JAMES 3

This weekend read James 3 and reflect on what God has been teaching you this week.



PUTTING *Faith* TO **WORK**

WEEK FOUR : JAMES 4 SEPTEMBER 21 - 27 | HAYDEN WALKER

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 | JAMES 4:1-4

Can you recall the sensation of cleaning a cut? The moment an antiseptic makes contact with your wound, it stings! We would certainly like to avoid this less-than-pleasant experience. However, we realize that cleaning a wound protects us from infection. The real but temporary sting has great benefit long term as it aids us in healing.

The words of James 4:1-4 certainly come with a sting. However, we must all recognize that we have spiritual wounds which need to be confronted with the antiseptic James provides here. He uncovers the root of many problems: our passions are at war within us. These passions are fueled by the selfish ambition and vain conceit which so easily creeps into our lives. We think ourselves better than others. We get frustrated when someone does not respond as we'd like. We become disappointed when we don't receive the things we want materially, relationally and financially. Striving after the things the world tells us will bring happiness and success is friendship with the world.

James goes on to say that whoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God. These strong words sting! He does not say it dampens or hinders or strains the relationship-- it causes enmity. May these words of James sting our hearts today, not to injure us further, but so that we might see our sin and find true healing in the God who always forgives and restores those who confess their sin before him.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 | JAMES 4:5

Have you ever been on vacation and returned home to a messy house? The last few dishes in the sink or clothes in the hamper which did not bother you when you departed suddenly seem monstrous upon your return. We like for things to be where they belong. We like our dishes in the cupboard and clothes in the drawers! It just feels better when everything is in the place it was intended to go.

Our souls also have a place which is appointed for them. In his book, *Confessions*, Saint Augustine famously wrote, "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." We will never feel at peace until our hearts are where we belong- united with our creator!

James 4:5 provides us God's perspective on the state of our hearts. God is jealously yearning for our spirits to find rest in him. As we reflected yesterday, James 4:1-4 reminds us that the world will never satisfy. God knows that he alone can satisfy our souls and he yearns for us to come to that understanding as well. God is jealously yearning for us to dwell in him because he knows that our greatest joy comes from him, not the world!



PUTTING *Faith* TO **WORK**

WEEK FOUR : JAMES 4 SEPTEMBER 21 - 27 | HAYDEN WALKER

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 | JAMES 4:6-10

The first five verses of James 4 may have left you a bit overwhelmed. The stinging words about friendship with the world, quarreling and misplaced passions were intended by James to convict his readers of sin. This conviction is a good thing because it is intended to turn our hearts to humility and obedience to God.

Conviction cannot be the end; conviction must move to repentant activity just as James suggests in verses 6-10. Just as the commands in this passage require activity from you, let us engage in a little activity today as we study this passage. Go through these verses and underline all of the commands James gives us.

These words (submit, resist, draw near, cleanse, mourn, humble, etc.) require a renewal of your mind and heart, realizing that your desires and dreams are not supreme! These actions foster a spirit of humility within us.

King Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel 4 is one of my favorite Biblical examples of humility. He did not humble himself on his own as James 4:6-10 advises. God had to take drastic measures to make Nebuchadnezzar recognize who was the true king of the earth! Let us allow Nebuchadnezzar's words to sound a warning against pride for us: "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble." (Daniel 4:37)

Nebuchadnezzar was a very prideful king, but God gave him grace and drew him to repentance. Before you put away your pen today, circle the first part of verse 6. A dramatic turning point is given in five precious words: But he gives more grace. It was grace that God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to repent when he deserved judgment. It is also grace, the unmerited favor of God, that allows us to humble ourselves. Praise be to God that we who humble ourselves before God will share in the eternal joy of the Father!

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 | JAMES 4:11-12

We've all heard a conversation- at the grocery store, on the telephone, on social media that ended in the phrase "Who are you to judge your neighbor?" Christians seem to be easy targets for this sort of phrase. We often don't know how to respond...especially because the phrase is taken directly from Scripture.

Unfortunately, we often take this as an excuse for relativism. We live in an age when absolute truth is out of vogue. It is much more popular to say "What is right for you is right for you, and what is right for me is right for me." Duke Divinity professor Stanley Hauerwas said, "Every religion and culture was different, but every culture before our culture said, 'Right and wrong is determined by something outside the self, and it's the job of the self to harmonize with it.' We are the first culture, Hauerwas says, that is marked by "expressive individualism." (continued on the next page)



PUTTING *Faith* TO **WORK**

WEEK FOUR : JAMES 4 SEPTEMBER 21 - 27 | HAYDEN WALKER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 | JAMES 4:11-12

(continued from previous page) In these verses, James reminds us that we should not gossip, slander or speak against our brothers and sisters. This kind of activity tarnishes the name of Christ. Let us remember that this warning about judgment has more to do with the taming of our tongue than God's clear and absolute truth.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 | JAMES 4:13-17

School has recently started back in Birmingham. There is a certain freshness that comes with new backpacks, empty notebooks and an unopened package of pens. The start of a new semester often gives students (and teachers!) an opportunity to imagine the possibilities the future might hold. It is also a great time to make goals and plans for the year ahead.

Even if the school year is a distant memory for you, who among us has not made advance plans? We often think about the future with great anticipation, organizing events, business deals, academic plans or fitness goals. We sometimes approach these plans with confidence that they will certainly come to pass, because we will personally see to it!

However, in these verses, James reminds us that our plans and goals are not ultimate. Only God's plans prevail. In fact, James sounds a lot like the Preacher of Ecclesiastes. Throughout the book of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher reminds his listeners that life is a vapor, a mist that goes as quickly as it comes. The book ends by reminding readers that fearing God is what lasts (Ecc. 12:13).

Our plans, as well intentioned as they may be, are not definite. Each one of us is served a healthy dose of humility when we remember that we are not promised tomorrow on earth. However, we know the God who orchestrates our every tomorrow, be that here or in eternity. Let us approach all of our plans with humility and remember that:

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 | JAMES 4

This weekend read James 4 and reflect on what God has been teaching you this week.



PUTTING *Faith* TO **WORK**

WEEK FIVE : JAMES 5

SEPTEMBER 28 - OCTOBER 4 | WAYNE SPLAWN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 | JAMES 5:1-6

In the age of social media, we are constantly reminded of the negative effects of inappropriate behavior. People carelessly tweet an insensitive comment or someone videos a famous person doing something embarrassing in public and posts it to Facebook and in an instant a person's career is forever ruined.

When we see examples of inappropriate behavior, we are reminded that we never want to make such a mistake. Here in James 5:1-6, James rebukes some in his audience for engaging in behavior unbecoming of a Christian. What were they doing that was so unsuitable for a Christian? There were some rich people among them who were living lives of luxury and self-indulgence at the expense of the poor. Rather than using their material resources to meet the needs of those in poverty, they were cheating the poor in order to accumulate more wealth for themselves. In verse 5, James uses a powerful image to warn the rich. He says that in amassing more and more wealth, they are actually fattening themselves up for the day of slaughter. They will one day face God's judgment for all that they have done.

Each of us should examine our lives in light of James' words of warning. Are we inappropriately using the wealth God has entrusted to us to acquire excess material possessions for ourselves rather than meeting the needs of others? May God give us the eternal perspective we need to appropriately invest the financial resources he has graciously given to us.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 | JAMES 5:7-11

Have you ever participated in a bat relay race? This is the race that requires you to run a certain distance, place your forehead on a bat, turn around 3 or 4 times and then run back and tag the next person in line. If you have ever been in a bat race, you know how difficult it is to run while you are dizzy. Being dizzy is very disorienting and makes even the simplest of tasks difficult.

Suffering can have a similar effect on us. When we go through times of suffering and trials, it is easy to become disoriented. We forget what we know to be true about God's character and his love for us and we find it difficult to put one foot in front of the other. In this passage, James reminds us of the importance of being patient during seasons of suffering. We must remember that the Lord will one day return and make all things right. We must remember that our God is full of compassion and mercy and that He will never leave or forsake us. If you are walking through a difficult season, remember that God has not forsaken you. When everything seems to be shifting around you, keep your eyes firmly fixed on God's character and ask Him to give you the faith to daily trust in His plan and purposes in your life.



PUTTING *Faith* TO **WORK**

WEEK FIVE : JAMES 5

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 4 | WAYNE SPLAWN

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 | JAMES 5:12

You may have heard the expression, "My word is my bond." Folks who utter these words are assuring someone that they will follow through on the commitments they have made.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we should be men and women of integrity who are serious about following through on the commitments we have made. There should be no need for an oath or a promise to assure someone of our trustworthiness. A simple 'yes' or 'no' should suffice. Do you often make careless commitments? Ask the Lord to show you ways that you have not been a man or woman of your word and to help you not make commitments that you will not be able to keep.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1 | JAMES 5:11-12

Who is one of your heroes? Perhaps you immediately think of your parents, your favorite sports figure, a missionary whom God has used to accomplish much for the Kingdom or a figure from the Bible. Considering the lives of such people can often inspire us to do great things as well. However, focusing on heroes is not always a positive thing. Many of us compare our own lives with the lives of such remarkable people and conclude that we could never accomplish anything exceptional.

Here in James 5:13-18, James helps us to see the folly of such an approach to life. As James writes about the power of prayer, he mentions the example of Elijah. Elijah prayed that it would not rain for three and a half years and the Lord answered his prayer. Then, at the end of that time, Elijah prayed that it would rain and the Lord answered that prayer as well. We are tempted to walk away from the story of Elijah and think that there was something special about him and that God would never answer our prayers in the same way. But, in James 5:17, James reminds us that Elijah was a person just like you and me. God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things in this world. Elijah was not the hero, God was. And the same God who has used ordinary men and women for his purposes in the world is the same God who is at work in your life today. Ask God to use you for His glory today!

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2 | JAMES 5:13-17

Have you ever been lost? Even in the age of GPS technology and smart phones, most of us know what it is like to head in the wrong direction. And, depending on where you are, getting lost could be a minor inconvenience or a life-threatening situation. For example, getting lost driving across town is much different than taking the wrong path while hiking in a remote mountain range. In either instance, we are always thankful when we encounter people who know the way and can put us back on the right path.

People who do not know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are headed down a path that leads to destruction. However, if you know Christ, then you know the way that leads to eternal life. Be sensitive to the people that God places in your life. (continued on next page)



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**WEEK FIVE : JAMES 5
SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 4 | WAYNE SPLAWN**

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2 | JAMES 5:13-17

(continued from previous page) Do they know Jesus Christ? If not, take the opportunity to tell them of the salvation they can experience if they will repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ through faith.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3 - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4 | JAMES 5

You have now completed the book of James. Take some time this weekend to read the entire book in one sitting. Thank God for providing you with this book and ask Him to give graciously empower you to put your faith to work each and every day.