

JAMIES

WHAT YOU DO MATTERS

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE + STREAMING VIDEO

FIVE SESSIONS

MARGARET FEINBERG

James Study Guide

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WHAT YOU DO MATTERS

Welcome, friend!

I've got a question for you. When you're facing a hardship, challenge, or uncertainty, where do you turn for answers in the Bible? Do you flip open the book and simply see where the pages land? Or do you know what book of the Bible will offer the comfort, encouragement, and clarity you need?

Other than the Gospels, which are packed with the teachings of Christ, do you know which book of the New Testament sounds the most like Jesus?

It's James! Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised. The author of this book, James, was the sibling of Jesus. They were raised by the same mom, played in the same yard, and shared the same meals around the table. Yet despite watching his brother perform mighty miracles and deliver life-changing teachings, James remained a skeptic for quite some time.

But something about the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus changed everything for James. He became a vibrant believer, and one of the leading voices in the Church of Jerusalem.

He penned his letter to Jewish believers who were experiencing persecution and poverty. Many had been seduced by popular culture and had fallen prey to division and quarrels. Throughout his letter, James echoes the refrains of his brother Jesus, especially those found in the Sermon on the Mount. He knows that it's easy to get sidelined in life—by struggles, disappointments, judgments, distractions, and divisions.

James' letter is a rallying cry to listen to God's words, and to look for every opportunity to live them out. Genuine love of God expresses itself through faith *and* action. What we do matters.

I can't wait to take this journey through James with you!

Margaret Feinberg

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Group Information and Size Recommendations

The *James* video study is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, small group, or Sunday school class. Of course, you can always work through the material and watch the videos on your own if a group is unavailable. Maybe call a few friends or neighbors and start your own!

After opening with a short activity, you will watch the video session and participate in a time of group discussion and reflection on what you're learning both from the video teaching and from the personal Bible study between meetings. This content is rich and takes you through the entire book of James, so be prepared for a full experience of the depth of Scripture.

If you have a larger group (more than twelve people), consider breaking up into smaller groups during the discussion time. It is important that members of the group can ask questions, share ideas and experiences, and feel heard and seen—no matter their background or circumstance.

Materials Needed and Leading a Group

Each participant should have his or her own study guide. Each study guide comes with individual streaming video access (instructions found on the inside front cover). Every member of your group has full access to watch videos from the convenience of their chosen devices at any time—for missed group meetings, for rewatching, for sharing teaching with others, or for watching videos individually before meeting if your group is short on meeting time. This gives your group the flexibility to make the experience doable no matter your unique circumstances.

This study guide includes video outline notes, group discussion questions, a personal Bible study section for between group meetings, coloring pages, and Scripture memory cards to deepen learning between sessions.

There is a Session by Session Overview in the back of each study guide so anyone can lead a group through this study.

Timing

The timing notations—for example, 20 minutes—indicate the length of the video segments and the suggested times for each activity or discussion. Within your allotted group meeting time, you may not get to all the discussion questions. Remember that the *quantity* of questions addressed isn't as important as the *quality* of the discussion.

Using the Session by Session Overview in the back of the guide to review the content overview of each session and the group discussion questions in advance will give you a good idea of which questions you want to focus on as a leader or group facilitator.

Facilitation

Each group should appoint a leader or facilitator who is responsible for starting the video and keeping track of time during the activities and discussion. Facilitators may also read questions aloud, monitor discussions, prompt participants to respond, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

Opening Group Activity

Depending on the amount of time you meet and the resources available, you'll want to begin the session with the group activity. You will find these activities on the group page that begins each session. The interactive icebreaker is designed to be a catalyst for group engagement and help participants prepare and transition to the ideas explored in the video teaching.

The leader or facilitator will want to read ahead to the following week's activity to see what will be needed and how participants may be able to contribute by bringing supplies or refreshments.



GROUP STUDY

SESSION

1

HOW YOU RESPOND TO HARDSHIP MATTERS

Opening Group Activity

(10–15 MINUTES)

In upcoming sessions, we'll have group activities. But for this opening session, let's start with some questions. Everyone comes to a gathering like this for different reasons and with different goals and hopes. Take a few moments to discuss the following:

- What prompted you to come to this study group?
- What do you hope to get out of this time together?
- What do you hope to get out of studying James?

Bonus: Take a photo of your group and send it to hello@margaretfeinberg.com. She and her team want to see your smiling faces and pray for your group.

Session One Video

(21 MINUTES)

Leader, stream the video or play the DVD.

As you watch, take notes while thinking through:

What caught your attention?

What surprised you?

What made you reflect?

Video Notes

- ❑ James' letter sounds more like Jesus than any other New Testament letter
- ❑ Who said it: James or Jesus?
- ❑ Practice a defiant joy
- ❑ Perseverance is faith stretched out
- ❑ Ask God to lavish you with wisdom
- ❑ Every good and perfect gift is from above

SCRIPTURE covered in this teaching session: **James 1:1–6, 17**

Group Discussion Questions

(30–45 MINUTES)

Leader, read each numbered prompt and question to the group and select volunteers for Scripture reading.

1. What challenged, encouraged, or surprised you about the game, *Who Said It: James or Jesus?*

2. Select a few volunteers to read **Matthew 13:55; John 7:1–5; 1 Corinthians 15:3–7; and James 1:1.**

Discuss the following:

What do each of these passages reveal about James?

What do you think would have been some of the joys and challenges of being Jesus' sibling?

3. Select a few volunteers to read **Matthew 5:11–12** and **James 1:2–4**. Discuss the following:

What parallels do you see between Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and James' instruction?

What's one challenge or hardship you've faced that has really stretched you? How did that difficult time impact your faith, your relationships, and your outlook on life?

In what ways did you grow stronger, more mature, or more in love with God and others?

Where are you still needing to heal from that experience?

4. Margaret teaches:

“ Practicing a defiant joy is an active engagement of the mind in which we choose to place our trust in the character and competence of God. Practicing a defiant joy means that no matter what we’re facing, we remain suspicious that God is up to something good. Because when we look for the goodness of God, we will find him. ”

Describe a hard season when you found God’s goodness shining through in an unexpected way.

What are some practical ways you can cling to the goodness of God in hard times?

5. When you’re in the midst of a challenge or hardship, which of the following do you tend to go to first for help and wisdom? Circle your top three responses and rank them.

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|
| ___ Internet | ___ Friends | ___ Self-help book |
| ___ Spouse | ___ Instagram | ___ Pastor |
| ___ God | ___ Online video | ___ Influencer |
| ___ Family | ___ Counselor | ___ Other _____ |

Where does God rank among the places you turn to quickest?

What hinders you from going to God first?

How can you overcome these hindrances?

- 6.** Margaret gave two tactics based on James' teaching for what to do when hardship happens:

**Practice a Defiant Joy
and
Ask God to Lavish You with Wisdom**

Go around the group answering a selection of the following questions:


Which of these tactics is easiest for you to remember and implement when facing hardship, and which is most difficult? Explain.

Which would help you most in the challenges you're facing now? Explain.
What's stopping you from implementing this tactic?

Close in Prayer

Consider the following prompts as you pray together for:

- Defiant joy in the midst of hardship
- Wisdom that comes from above
- Eyes to see the goodness of God

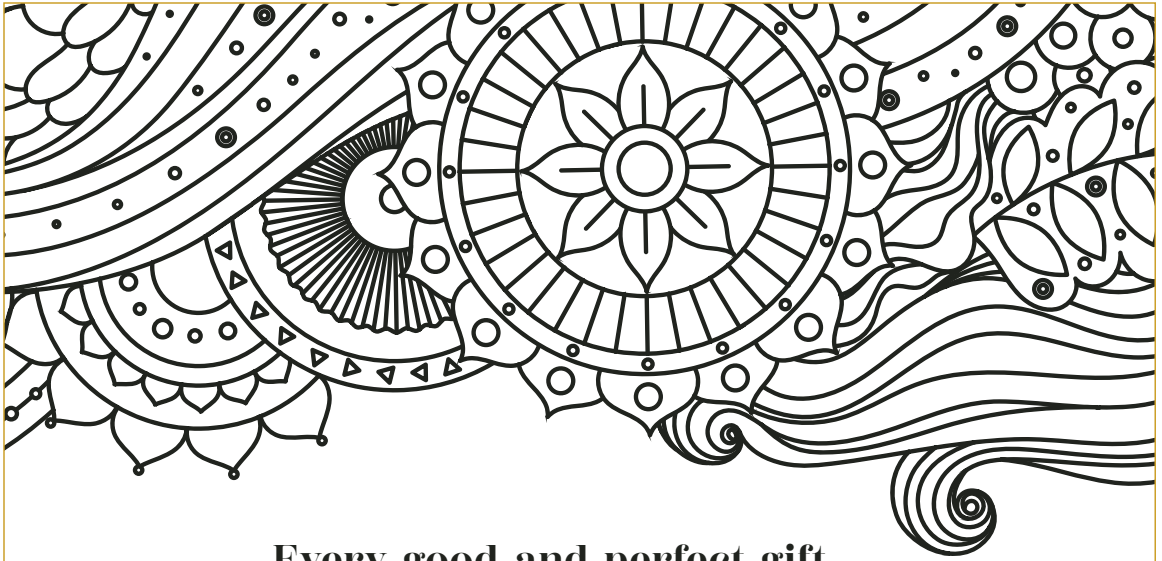


God stands tippytoe ready to lavish you with wisdom, and it's his joy to give it to you!

Preparation

To prepare for the next group session (Session 2):

- **Read James 1:22–27.**
- Tackle the three days of the Session One Personal Study Time.
- Memorize this week's passage using the Scripture memory coloring page. As a bonus, look up the Scripture memory passage in different translations and take note of the variations.
- Ask members to bring something for the next session's Opening Group Activity—it's a fun one! See page 38 for the list of needed items.



Every good and perfect gift
is from above, coming down from the
Father of the heavenly lights, who does
not change like shifting shadows.

James 1:17



PERSONAL STUDY TIME

SESSION

1

HOW YOU
RESPOND TO
HARDSHIP
MATTERS

DAY 1

Background of James

If you look for the name James in the New Testament, you'll find several, including:

- ❑ James, the brother of John and son of Zebedee, one of the twelve apostles (Mark 3:17; Luke 5:10; Luke 9:28; Acts 1:13).
- ❑ James, the son of Alphaeus, one of the twelve apostles (Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13).
- ❑ James, the father of Judas (not Iscariot) (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13).
- ❑ James, the brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:19).

As his brother, the James we're studying had a unique, close-up look at many of the growing-up years of Jesus. The Gospels record very few details about Jesus' youth beyond his birth, except one story: when the family travels to Jerusalem for the Festival of Passover. All of the children—including James—would have gone, too. That's when Mary and Joseph discover that Jesus is missing.

1. Read Luke 2:41–52.

What does the family—including James—likely have to endure because of Jesus' disappearance?

What do you think it's like for Jesus' family—including James—to discover where Jesus has been and what he has been doing?

How does Jesus' mother respond to the incident?

If you were James, how would you respond to the incident?

2. Read Mark 3:20–35.

What stands out to you about this interaction between Jesus and his family—including James?

On the continuum below, mark how challenging it would have been for you to be Jesus' sibling.

