

# James

DEVELOPING A FAITH THAT WORKS

# A Radical Change

- James was the son of Mary and Joseph and thus the half-brother of Jesus (Matt 13:55; cf. Gal 1:19).
- During the earthly ministry of Jesus, James did not believe his brother was the Christ (John 7:1–5; cf. Mark 3:31–35).
- Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared to James, and James repented and accepted Jesus (1 Cor 15:7; Acts 1:14; Jas 1:1).
- James became a leader in the Jerusalem church (Gal 1:19; 2:9, 12; Acts 12:17; 15:13–21; 21:18; cf. Jude 1).

# Reclaiming Religion

- The letter of James focuses on the character traits of a disciple that express themselves in visible activities.
  - Character Traits. A disciple is firm (1:2–18), dutiful (w. 19–27), fair (2:1–13), faithful (w. 14–26), controlled (3:1–12), wise (w. 13–18), humble (4:1–5:6), patient (5:7–18), and loving (w. 19–20).
  - Visible Activities. We will discuss these throughout the series, but illustrative verses are 1:19–27, 2:14–17, 3:13–18, and 4:11–12.
- In a world that “hates religion,” a Christian must be a “doer of the work” and “religious” (i.e., “pure and undefiled religion”).

# Faithful Disciples

- Related to the preceding discussion of religion is the use(s) of “faith” (Gr. pistis, 16x) or “to believe” (Gr. pisteuo, 3x) in the epistle of James and the attendant controversy (e.g., Luther).
- James defines various kinds of faith (dead, demonic, dynamic) but justifying faith implies faithfulness (Jas 2:14–26).
- Paul and James do not contradict one another; they use “faith” similarly but “works” differently.
- Faithful disciples not only believe but also obey Jesus!

# Preview

- We will study through James on the first Sunday of each month. We will focus on the practical elements of discipleship.
- We will cover the following themes in this sermon series: trials, temptation, transformation, partiality, faith, speech, infighting, pride, wealth, patience, and prayer.
- We will discuss “trials” (Feb), “partiality” (May), “infighting” (Aug), and “patience” (Nov) on the “Invite Sundays.”

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