

BAND of BROTHERS

SUMMER SERIES 2026 – WEEK 2 HANDOUT

## WEEK 2 – Faith That Obeys

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

- James 1:22 ESV

- **Nothing but a collection of pithy, proverbial sayings**

*Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life... – James 1:12 ESV*

*...let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. – James 1:19 ESV*

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only... – James 1:22 ESV*

*...faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. – James 2:17 ESV*

*...no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. – James 3:8  
ESV*

- James is a book of **theology**
  - Not just a collection of wise sayings
  - It's about more than ethics and morality
  - The focus is on God
  - And the theme is practical godliness
    - It's about **faith** that shows up as **faithfulness**
    - It's about **belief** (faith) in **action** (faithfulness)

*Show me your faith apart from your works [actions], and I will show you my faith by my works [actions]. – James 2:18 ESV*

*...faith apart from works [actions] is dead. – James 2:26 ESV*

**Faith** (Belief): The inward conviction or assurance of God's truth that focuses on the object of belief, trusting in God's promises.

**Faithfulness** (Action): The outward behavior, consistency, and dedication to God's will and commands that is the evidence of faith (belief).

- This is what James is looking for

*You **believe** [have faith] that God is one; you do well. Even the demons **believe** — and shudder!* – James 2:19 ESV

- The demons' **fear** is a kind of faith (belief in God)
- **Faithfulness** is the evidence of our **saving** faith
  - And it is a **sanctifying** faith

*Every **good gift** and every **perfect gift** is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be **a kind of firstfruits** of his creatures.* – James 1:17-18 ESV ‘

**good gift** – literally, “every good giving”

- The emphasis is on the **act of giving**
- He is the source of the **greatest gift** ever given

**perfect**: *teleios* – complete, lacking nothing

- The emphasis is on the **gift given**
- God spared no expense
- He sacrificed His own Son

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have **eternal life**.* – John 3:16 ESV

*He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, freely give us **all things**?* – Romans 8:32 ESV

*...he brought us forth by **the word of truth**.* – James 1:18 ESV

the word

*...the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.* – John 1:14 NLT

the truth

*“I am the way, **the truth**, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”* – John 14:6 NLT

- **The first of many to come**

- A new harvest of fruitful, faith-filled believers
- Living out their faith in faithfulness
  - **Conduct** conformable to **creed** (statement of beliefs)
  - **Behavior** commensurate with **belief**
  - **Department** compatible with **doctrine**
- Faith fleshed out

*Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. – James 1:19-20 ESV*

- Anger is a common response to trials
  - We see difficulties as **intrusions**
  - They are **unwanted** and **unwarranted**
  - They produce **resentment** and **outrage**
- But anger is **unhelpful** and **non-productive**
  - Especially when directed at God

*How foolish can you be? He is the Potter, and he is certainly greater than you, the clay! Should the created thing say of the one who made it, “He didn’t make me”? Does a jar ever say, “The potter who made me is stupid”? – Isaiah 29:16 NLT*

*“What sorrow awaits those who argue with their Creator. Does a clay pot argue with its maker? Does the clay dispute with the one who shapes it, saying, ‘Stop, you’re doing it wrong!’ Does the pot exclaim, ‘How clumsy can you be?’” – Isaiah 45:9 NLT*

*“So much of what James is saying in this opening chapter has to do with perspective. That is why he recommends asking God for wisdom when facing trials. We need the divinely enabled capacity to see trials from His vantage point, and that includes the ability to maintain a healthy perspective regarding our Creator-creature relationship with God.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on the Book of James**

*...who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to Him who formed it, “Why did You make me like this?” Does not the potter have the right to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for special occasions and another for common use? – Romans 9:20-21 BSB*

*“O Israel, can I not do to you as this potter has done to his clay? As the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand.” – Jeremiah 18:6 NLT*

- A right view of God produces right behavior
  - It affects our **words** and **actions**

- **Listening** to God requires **obedience**
- He uses trials to **teach** and **transform** us
- But we must ...humbly **submit**
  - ...willing **repent**
  - ...practically **apply** His lessons

*Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. – James 1:21 ESV*

**filthiness** – that which renders us impure  
 everyday sins that effect your fellowship with God  
**rampant wickedness** – old habits from our past  
 sins that characterize your pre-conversion life

- Put away **every sin** – from bad to worst
  - The **godly** wisdom you asked for
  - This is NOT about salvation from sin and death
  - It is about salvation from trials and difficulties

*Therefore, it was necessary for him to be made in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. Then he could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested. – Hebrews 2:17-18 NLT*

- **Practical godliness**
  - Divine **input** should produce godly **outcomes**
  - **Illumination** results in **transformation**
  - But it requires faithful **application**

*But **be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. – James 1:22-24 ESV***

the word

- This is not a reference to the New Testament
  - James was written before the gospels
  - And before the letters of Peter and John
  - His letter coincided with those of Paul
- So this is about God’s imparted wisdom...
  - ...through the Old Testament
  - ...the apostles’ teachings
  - ...and the words of Jesus
- God has a way of exposing and convicting

- He shows us what is wrong
- He reveals what He wants to change
- But distance makes the heart forgetful
- Trials expose our true nature

*But the one who looks into **the perfect law, the law of liberty**, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. – James 1:25 ESV*

- **Free to live righteously**

- James is referring to the gospel
- The good news sets us free
- It is a “law” in that it is God’s revealed will

*For **the law of the Spirit of life** has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. – Romans 8:2 ESV*

*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, **there is freedom**. – 2 Corinthians 3:17 ESV*

*So **Christ has truly set us free**. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law. – Galatians 5:1 NLT*

- Doing God’s will brings His blessing
  - Even in the midst of a trial
  - We will sense His peace, power, and presence
  - He will sustain and sanctify us
  - He will reveal Himself to us and through us

*“...nothing reveals hypocrisy in the life of a believer quite like a trial. We can be going along quite well, displaying a form of righteousness that has everyone believing we are some kind of super saint. But then an unexpected and unwanted difficulty rears its ugly head and our facade of faithfulness comes crashing down like a house of cards.” – Ken Miller, Devotionary™ on the Book of James*

*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. – James 1:27 ESV*

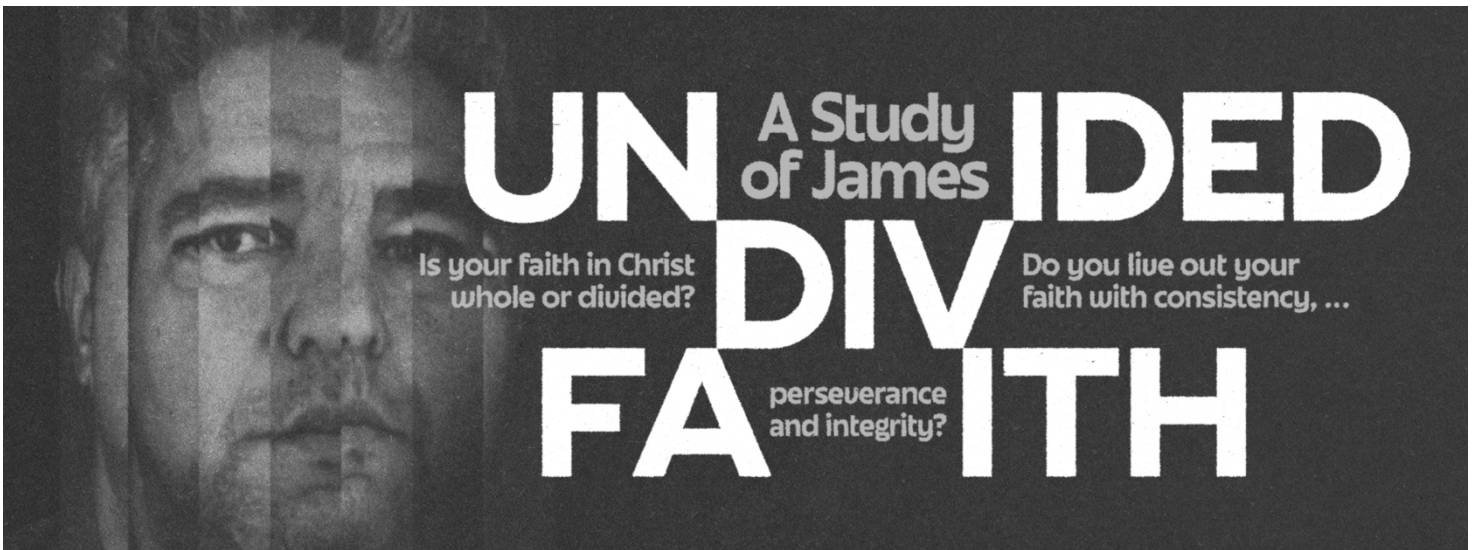
- It is...selfless
  - ...sacrificial
  - ...other-oriented, not me-centered
  - ...focused on the “least of these”
  - ...never about recognition or rewards
  - ...always for God’s glory

- **Discussion questions**

When we go through trials, we tend to make it all about us. So why did James bring up widows and orphans?

Ken described faithfulness as faith in action. How could that change our view of faith in practical ways?

Why do you think it is so hard to listen to God when going through trials?



BAND of BROTHERS

SUMMER SERIES 2026 – WEEK 3 HOMEWORK

### WEEK 3 – Faith Without Favoritism

In this lesson, James moves from **personal obedience** to **relational integrity**, exposing favoritism as a serious threat to gospel-shaped faith. Partiality reveals values formed by the world rather than by God's grace and mercy. James reminds believers that faith in Christ must reflect God's character—especially His impartial love—and that obedience to the *royal law* reveals an undivided heart.

- In Ken's Devotionary™ on the Book of James. Please read pages 23-28 sometime this week. They cover the section of James that we will be studying in week 3.
- Before you read the text for this week, go back and look at James 1:9-10. In these verses, James mentions two different groups of people who comprise the church. Who are they?

Why do you think James pointed out these two groups? What is it about poverty and affluence that could be a problem in a local congregation?

- Now read **James 2:1–13**. James makes a point of commenting on these same two demographics again. Describe the problem he seems to be addressing.

Consider the following quote: "Ancient Jewish tradition generally viewed poverty as an unmitigated evil and a heavy burden, rather than a virtue, while viewing wealth positively as a potential blessing for doing good, provided it was acquired ethically and used for charitable purposes. The focus was on stewardship, responsibility, and maintaining a balanced life—labeled as "tzedakah" (righteousness/charity) to ensure community cohesion and protect the marginalized."

- In verses 1-4, James links impartiality with faith in Jesus. What is the connection he seems to be making between the two?

What specific example does James use to illustrate partiality? Why do you think this scenario would have felt familiar to his original audience?

According to verse 4, what does favoritism reveal about the judgments we make in our hearts?

- Read **James 2:5-7**. What do you think James means when he describes the poor of this world, “to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom”?

What are some of the reasons for showing favoritism to the wealthy?

What are some excuses for ignoring the plight of the poor?

- To better understand verses 8-9, look at Matthew 22:37-40. What makes loving your neighbor as yourself a “royal law”?

How does showing favoritism “communicate sin”?

- Read **James 2:10-13**. Why does James compare showing partiality to sins like adultery and murder? What’s the connection?

What do you think James means when he warns about being judged under the law of liberty? Go back and look at 1:22-25 for insight.