

BAND of BROTHERS

SUMMER SERIES 2026 – WEEK 5 HANDOUT

WEEK 5 – Faith That Reflects the Heart

*But he gives more grace. Therefore it says,
“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

- James 4:6 ESV

- **Paul seems obsessed with the tongue**

*Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, **slow to speak**, and slow to get angry. – James 1:19 NLT*

*...**whatever you say** or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free. – James 2:12 NLT*

*...**if you say you have faith** but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? – James 2:14 NLT*

***You say you have faith**, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. – James 2:19 NLT*

- James puts a strong emphasis on our words

- o In chapter 3...

- He refers to “the tongue” 4x

- And “the mouth” 2x

- o Our words carry weight

*...we all make many mistakes. For **if we could control our tongues**, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way. – James 3:2 NLT*

- Why does James emphasize the tongue?

- o Because words matter

- o They reflect the condition of our heart

*A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. **What you say flows from what is in your heart.** – Luke 6:45 NLT*

*“But **the words you speak** come from the heart — that’s what defiles you. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you. – Matthew 15:18-20 NLT*

- What’s James’ point?

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. – James 3:1 ESV

- Is he **discouraging** them from teaching?
- Is he **disqualifying** their knowledge?
- No, he’s **denoting** the power of the tongue
- And the **accountability** of our words

- Teaching is an **obligation**, not an **option**

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.**” – Matthew 28:19-20 ESV*

- And we are always teaching...
 - ...whether we realize it or not
 - Our lives are an unspoken testimony
 - What we **say** and **do** matter
 - “The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don’t follow their example. **For they don’t practice what they teach.**” – Matthew 23:1-3 NLT*
 - ...we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be **perfect** and could also control ourselves in every other way. – James 3:2 NLT*

perfect – *teleios* – complete, full grown, fully mature

- Remember: This is not a self-help book
 - This is not a matter of self-control
 - The tongue is tiny
 - And yet completely uncontrollable
 - ~ Just as...
 - ...a bit can control a horse
 - ...and a rudder can direct a ship
 - So, the tongue has mastery over a man
- **The unflattering truth about the tongue**
 - The tongue ...is a massive problem – vs 5
 - ...is a consuming fire – vs 6
 - ...is a world of unrighteousness – vs 6
 - ...corrupts the entire body – vs 6

...is hellish in nature – vs 6
...and is completely untamable – vs 7

...no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. – James 3:8 NLT

- Your tongue controls you
 - It causes you...to express love for God and hatred of others
 - ...to pronounce both blessings and curses
 - ...to offer praise while propagating violence

My brothers, these things ought not to be so. – James 3:10 NLT

- But they are!
 - ~ Because no one can tame the tongue
 - ~ Our speech speaks volumes
 - ~ Words are a barometer of the heart
 - The tongue can bring death or life;*
those who love to talk will reap the consequences. – Proverbs 18:21 NLT
 - Some people make cutting remarks,*
but the words of the wise bring healing. – Proverbs 12:18 NLT
 - Gentle words are a tree of life;*
a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. – Proverbs 15:4 NLT

- Self-control is self-delusional
 - God is not demanding you to get your proverbial act together
 - This is not about **self-correction**...
...it's about **self-examination**
Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? – James 3:11-12 NLT
 - The answer is **NO!**
 - This is not about **self-effort**...
...it's about **sanctification**
Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Neither are you able to do good — you who are accustomed to doing evil. – Jeremiah 13:23 BSB
 - This is not about **self-control**...
...it's about **submission**
...you can't draw fresh water from a salty spring. – James 3:13 NLT

- **New-and-improved, not self-improved**

- God is in the transforming business
- It is His job to change us, not ours

*...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And **all of this is a gift from God**, who brought us back to himself through Christ. – 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 NLT*

- This is the real message of the book of James
- It is the message of the New Testament
For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.
– Philippians 2:13 NLT
- Your tongue can only be tamed by God

- **In a word: wisdom**

- James brings up the need for wisdom again
- But not the wisdom of this world

*Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct **let him show** his works in the meekness of wisdom. – James 3:13 ESV*

***If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom.** – James 3:13 NLT*

Worldly wisdom

- Jealousy
- Selfish ambition
- Earthly
- Unspiritual
- Demonic

Godly wisdom

- Pure & peaceable
- Gentle & reasonable
- Merciful
- Impartial & sincere
- Full of good works

*When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. But the Holy Spirit produces **this kind of fruit** in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. – Galatians 5:19-23 NLT*

*May you always be filled with **the fruit of your salvation**—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God. – Philippians 1:11 NLT*

- The “fruit” of an untamed tongue
...selfish ambition in your heart... – vs 14
...cover up the truth... – vs 14
...boasting and lying... – vs 14
...disorder and evil of every kind... – vs 16
- The fallout of worldly wisdom – 4:1-12

What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. – James 4:1-3 NLT

- Self-transformation is rarely **selfless**
 - Quarrels & fights – vs 1
 - Evil desires – vs 1
 - Covetousness – vs 2
 - Scheming – vs 2
 - Self-reliance – vs 2
 - Jealousy – vs 3
 - Wrong motives – vs 3
 - Pursuit of pleasure – vs 3

*You adulterers! Don't you realize that **friendship with the world** makes you an **enemy of God**? I say it again: If you want to be **a friend of the world**, you make yourself an **enemy of God**. – James 4:4 NLT*

- James accuses them of **unfaithfulness**
 - Their **words** lack godly wisdom
 - Their **works** display worldliness
 - Because they **love the world**
 - ~ That's why they...sucked up to the rich
 - ~ ...looked down on the poor
 - ~ ...emphasized faith over works
 - ~ ...misused their tongues
 - ~ ...and gave in to their passions

Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? – James 4:5 ESV

- Discerning a difficult passage
 - What is James trying to say here?
 - ~ Is he quoting a specific OT passage? If so, which one?
 - ~ Which "spirit" does he have in mind? The Holy Spirit or the spirit of man?
 - ~ What is the nature of his statement? Is it positive or negative?
 - A better translation

Or do you think the scripture means nothing when it says, "The spirit that God caused to live within us has an envious yearning"? – James 4:5 NET

 - ~ Our "fleshly" spirit has a sinful bent

*The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that **everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil**. – Genesis 6:5 NLT*

- We can't manufacture "good" works...
...so God extends grace
But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. – Ephesians 4:7 ESV

*You know **the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.* – 2 Corinthians 8:9 NLT

- **Spiritual riches, not worldly wealth**

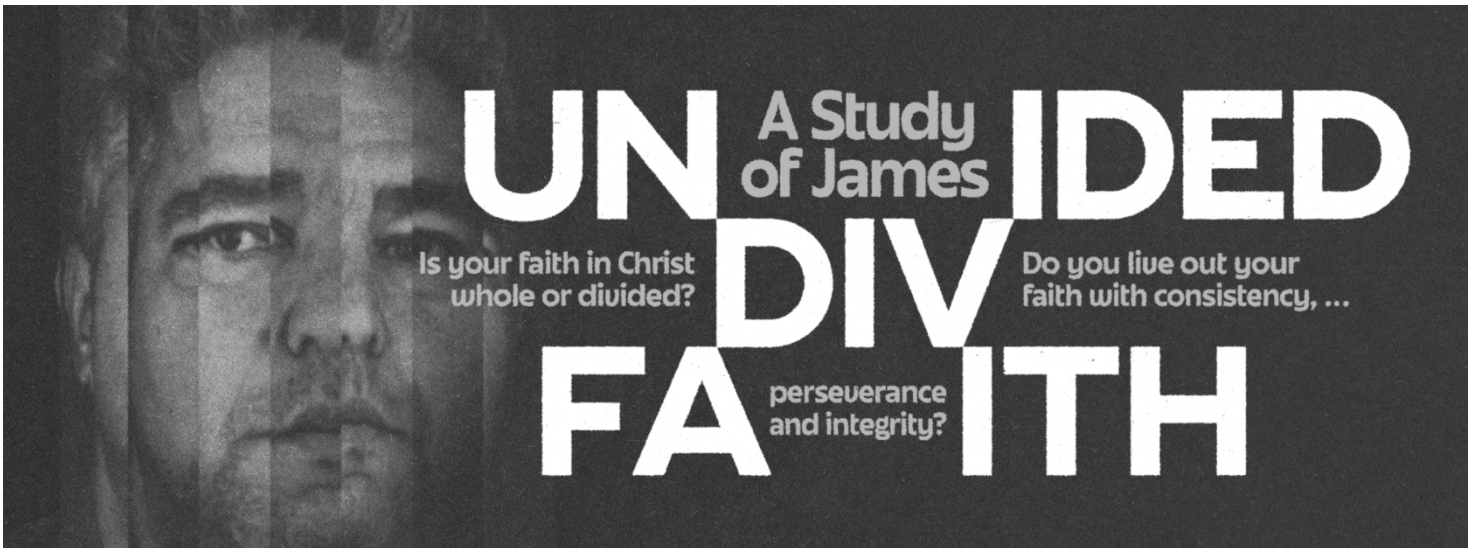
- He gives the riches of His grace to "the humble"
God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. – James 4:6 ESV
 - This is not referring to the **self-humbled**
the **helpless**
the **hopeless**
the **unworthy**
the **undeserving**
 - The same word used in Chapter 1
*Let **the lowly** brother boast in his exaltation, and the rich in his **humiliation**...* – James 1:9-10 ESV
- The antidote to **worldliness** is **godliness**
 - You can seek have the world "enrich" you...or you can trust God to do it
 - But first...
Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. – James 4:9-10 ESV
 - Let Him...**comfort** and **convict you**
...**cleanse** and **purify** you
...**unify** your mind
...**refresh** your sense of spiritual poverty
...and **exalt you**

- **Discussion questions**

Since we can't spend all day in Bible study and prayer, what are some other ways we can draw near to God?

Why do Christians seem to think it's up to them to modify their behavior? What is James suggesting instead?

Why do we need to embrace God's grace each day, and how do we do it?



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SUMMER SERIES 2026 – WEEK 6 HOMEWORK

WEEK 6 – Faith That Perseveres

James closes his letter by calling believers to remain steady and faithful in a world marked by uncertainty, suffering, and injustice. He reminds us of the brevity and fragility of life, urging humility and dependence on God rather than confidence in our own plans or resources. This final passage presses believers to endure with patient faith, sustained through prayer, obedience, and hope in the coming of the Lord.

- In Ken's Devotional™ on the Book of James, please read pages 45-60 sometime this week. They cover the section of James that we will be studying in week.
- Read **James 4:13–5:20** several times this week. Read slowly and prayerfully, asking God to reveal where you may be trusting in your own plans, resources, or timelines rather than resting in His sovereign care.
- Read **James 4:13-17**. What warning does James give about planning for the future?

How does James describe the nature of human life, and why does that matter for faith?

What does it mean to submit our plans to the will of the Lord?

- Read **James 5:1-6**. Who is James addressing in this passage, and what sins does he confront?

How does misuse of wealth reveal misplaced trust or false security?

What warning does James give about injustice and self-indulgence?

- Read **James 5:7-12**. What does James call believers to do in the face of suffering and injustice?

How should the Lord's coming shape Christian endurance?

Why does James point to the prophets and Job as examples of perseverance?

- Read **James 5:13-18**. How does James describe the role of prayer in every season of life?

What does this passage teach about prayer in suffering, joy, sickness, and repentance?

What do you think James means by "righteous prayer"?

- Read **James 5:19-20**. Why does James end his letter with a call to care for those who wander from the truth?

What does this reveal about perseverance within the community of faith?