

*Bible
Teachings
Series*

*A self-study
course on
the book of
James*



A Living Faith

A Living Faith

A self-study course on
the book of James



Multi-Language Productions

Bringing the Word to the World

Original text produced by the Institutional Ministries
Committee of the Commission on Special Ministries of the
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Copyright © 2003

Text adapted by Multi-Language Productions of the Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Printed in 2005

ISBN 1-931891-57-5

All cover and black and white illustrations are the work of
Glenn Myers. Rights to Glenn Myers' illustrations reserved by
Northwestern Publishing House.

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, New International
Reader's Version.

Copyright © 1996, 1998 by International Bible Society. Used
by permission of the International Bible Society.

Level 1, Book 14



Table of Contents

Getting Started	1
The Book of James	3
Chapter 1:	
What is Faith?	11
Chapter 2:	
How Do We Fight Against Sin?	23
Chapter 3:	
Hold Your Tongue!	37
Chapter 4:	
Think About Others First	49
Chapter 5:	
And Then There is God	63
Glossary	81
Answers to Chapter Tests	85
Final Test	87



Getting Started

This book is about how to live your life once you have become a Christian. It is based on a book of the New Testament in the Bible written by a man named James. His advice and teachings are for all time. His words are as helpful today as they were when he wrote them nearly two thousand years ago.

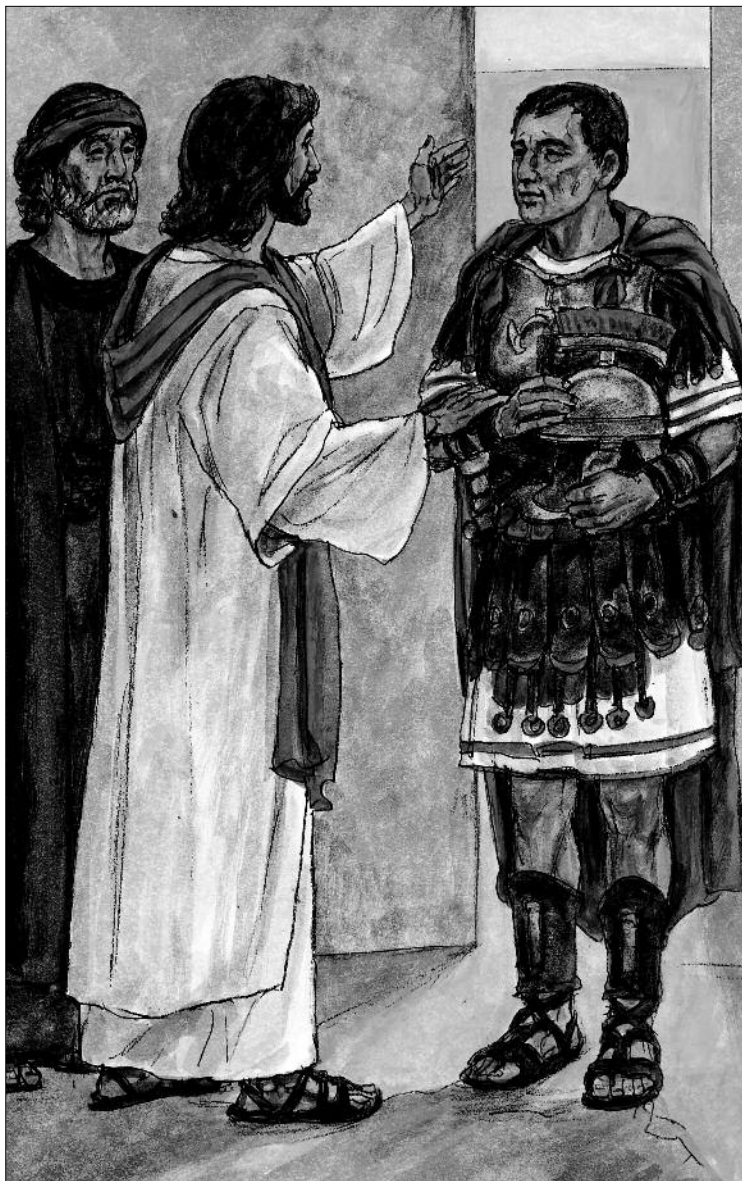
Each of the five chapters begins with a list of goals marked by a small star (*). These goals tell you what you will be learning in that chapter. Within each chapter there are some questions for you to answer. At the end of the chapter there is a short test.

If you read the lesson carefully, you will be able to answer the questions in the short test. If you go back to the beginning of the chapter and check the goals (*), you will see what you learned about those goals in the chapter. After each set of questions and after each chapter test, you will see a page number where you can find the correct answers to those questions. Check each of your answers and understand each answer before you read any further.

At the end of the book is a final test. Before you take the final test, go back and review the chapter tests.

When you complete the final test, you can either turn it in to the person who gave you this book, or mail it to the address found on the back cover.

May God help you as you learn more about how to be a Christian: how to think, how to talk and how to act.



Jesus speaks about the faith of a Roman soldier.



The Book of James

1 I, James, am writing this letter. I serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ. I am sending this letter to you, the 12 tribes that are scattered among the nations. Greetings.

Facing All Kinds of Trouble

² My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy. ³ Your faith will be put to the test. You know that when that happens it will produce in you the strength to continue. ⁴ The strength to keep going must be allowed to finish its work. Then you will be all you should be. You will have everything you need.

⁵ If any of you need wisdom, ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone. He doesn't find fault.

⁶ But when you ask, you must believe. You must not doubt. People who doubt are like waves of the sea. The wind blows and tosses them around. ⁷ A man like that shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ He can't make up

his mind. He can never decide what to do.

⁹ A believer who finds himself in a low position in life should be proud that God has given him a high position.

¹⁰ But someone who is rich should take pride in his low position. That's because he will fade away like a wild flower.

¹¹ The sun rises. Its burning heat dries up the plants. Their blossoms fall. Their beauty is destroyed. In the same way, a rich person will fade away even as he goes about his business.

¹² Blessed is the man who keeps on going when times are hard. After he has come through them, he will receive a crown. The crown is life itself. God has promised it to those who love him.

¹³ When you are tempted, you shouldn't say, "God is tempting me." God can't be tempted by evil. And he doesn't tempt anyone.

¹⁴ But your own evil longings tempt you. They lead you on and drag you away. ¹⁵ When they are allowed to grow, they give birth to sin. When sin has grown up, it gives birth to death.

¹⁶ My dear brothers and sisters, don't let anyone fool you. ¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from God. It comes down from the Father. He created the heavenly lights. He does not change like shadows that move.

¹⁸ God chose to give us new birth through the message of truth. He wanted us to be the first and best of everything he created.

Listen to the Word and Do What It Says

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, pay attention to what I say. Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry. ²⁰ A man's anger doesn't produce the kind of life God wants.

²¹ So get rid of everything that is dirty and sinful. Get rid of the evil that is all around us. Don't be too proud to accept the word that is planted in you. It can save you.

²² Don't just listen to the word. You fool yourselves if you do that. You must do what it says.

²³ Suppose you listen to the word but don't do what it says. Then you are like a man who looks at his face in a

mirror. ²⁴ After looking at himself, he leaves. Right away he forgets what he looks like.

²⁵ But suppose you take a good look at the perfect law that gives freedom. You keep looking at it. You don't forget what you've heard, but you do what the law says. Then you will be blessed in what you do.

²⁶ Suppose you think your beliefs are right because of how you live. But you don't control what you say. Then you are fooling yourselves. Your beliefs are not worth anything at all.

²⁷ Here are the kinds of beliefs that God our Father accepts as pure and without fault. When widows and children who have no parents are in trouble, take care of them. And keep yourselves from being polluted by the world.

Treat Everyone the Same

2 My brothers and sisters, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So treat everyone the same.

² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes. And suppose a poor person in worn-out clothes also comes in. ³ Would you show special attention to the one who is wearing fine clothes? Would you say, "Here's a good seat for you"? Would you say to the poor person, "You stand there"? Or "Sit on the floor by my feet"? ⁴ If you would, aren't you treating some people better than others? Aren't you like judges who have evil thoughts?

⁴ If you would, aren't you treating some people better than others? Aren't you like judges who have evil thoughts?

⁵ My dear brothers and sisters, listen to me. Hasn't God chosen those who are poor in the world's eyes to be rich in faith? Hasn't he chosen them to receive the kingdom? Hasn't he promised it to those who love him?

⁶ But you have put poor people down. Aren't rich people taking advantage of you? Aren't they dragging you into court?

⁷ Aren't they speaking evil things against the worthy name of Jesus? Remember, you belong to him.

⁸ The royal law is found in Scripture. It says, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." (Leviticus 19:18) If you really keep that law, you are doing what is right. ⁹ But you sin if you don't treat everyone the same. The law judges you because you have broken it.

¹⁰ Suppose you keep the whole law but trip over just one

part of it. Then you are guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ God said, "Do not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18) He also said, "Do not commit murder." (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17) Suppose you don't commit adultery but do commit murder. Then you have broken the Law.

¹² Speak and act like people who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom. ¹³ Those who have not shown mercy will not receive mercy when they are judged. To show mercy is better than to judge.

Show Your Faith by What You Do

¹⁴ My brothers and sisters, what good is it if people claim they have faith but don't act like it? Can that kind of faith save them?

¹⁵ Suppose a brother or sister has no clothes or food.

¹⁶ Suppose one of you says to them, "Go. I hope everything turns out fine for you. Keep warm. Eat well." And you do nothing about what they really need. Then what good have you done?

¹⁷ It is the same with faith. If it doesn't cause us to do something, it's dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith. I do good works."

Show me your faith that doesn't do good works. And I will show you my faith by what I do. ¹⁹ You believe there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that. And they tremble!

²⁰ You foolish man! Do you want proof that faith without good works is useless? ²¹ Our father Abraham offered his son Isaac on the altar. Wasn't he considered to be right with God because of what he did? ²² So you see that what he believed and what he did were working together. What he did made his faith complete.

²³ That is what Scripture means where it says, "Abraham believed God. God accepted Abraham because he believed. So his faith made him right with God." (Genesis 15:6) And that's not all. God called Abraham his friend. ²⁴ So you see that a person is made right with God by what he does. It doesn't happen only because of what he believes.

²⁵ Didn't God make even Rahab the prostitute right with him? That's because of what she did. She gave the spies a

place to stay. Then she sent them off in a different direction.

²⁶ The body without the spirit is dead. In the same way, faith without good works is dead.

Control What You Say

3 My brothers and sisters, most of you shouldn't want to be teachers. You know that those of us who teach will be held more accountable.

² All of us get tripped up in many ways. Suppose someone is never wrong in what he says. Then he is a perfect man. He is able to keep his whole body under control.

³ We put a bit in the mouth of a horse to make it obey us. We can control the whole animal with it. ⁴ And how about ships? They are very big. They are driven along by strong winds. But they are steered by a very small rudder. It makes them go where the captain wants to go.

⁵ In the same way, the tongue is a small part of the body. But it brags a lot. Think about how a small spark can set a big forest on fire.

⁶ The tongue also is a fire. The tongue is the most evil part of the body. It pollutes the whole person. It sets a person's whole way of life on fire. And the tongue is set on fire by hell.

⁷ People have controlled all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea. They still control them.

⁸ But no one can control the tongue. It is an evil thing that never rests. It is full of deadly poison.

⁹ With our tongues we praise our Lord and Father. With our tongues we call down curses on people. We do it even though they have been created to be like God. ¹⁰ Praise and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, it shouldn't be that way.

¹¹ Can fresh water and salt water flow out of the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives? Can a grapevine bear figs? Of course not. And a saltwater spring can't produce fresh water either.

Two Kinds of Wisdom

¹³ Are any of you wise and understanding? You should show it by living a good life. Wise people aren't proud when

they do good works.

¹⁴ But suppose your hearts are jealous and bitter. Suppose you are concerned only about getting ahead. Don't brag about it. Don't say no to the truth. ¹⁵ Wisdom like that doesn't come down from heaven. It belongs to the earth. It doesn't come from the Holy Spirit. It comes from the devil.

¹⁶ Are you jealous? Are you concerned only about getting ahead? Then your life will be a mess. You will be doing all kinds of evil things.

¹⁷ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is pure. That's the most important thing about it. And that's not all. It also loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit. It is fair. It doesn't pretend to be what it is not.

¹⁸ Those who make peace should plant peace like a seed. If they do, it will produce a crop of right living.

Obey God

4 Why do you fight and argue among yourselves? Isn't it because of your sinful longings? They fight inside you.

² You want something, but you can't get it. You kill and want what others have. But you can't have what you want. You argue and fight. You don't have what you want, because you don't ask God. ³ When you do ask for something, you don't receive it. Why? Because you ask for the wrong reason. You want to spend your money on your sinful pleasures.

⁴ You are not faithful to God. Don't you know that to be a friend of the world is to hate God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵ Don't you know what Scripture says? The spirit that God caused to live in us wants us to belong only to God. Don't you think Scripture has a reason for saying that? ⁶ God continues to give us more grace. That's why Scripture says, "God opposes those who are proud. But he gives grace to those who are not." (Proverbs 3:34)

⁷ So obey God. Stand up to the devil. He will run away from you. ⁸ Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Make your hearts pure, you who can't make up your minds.

⁹ Be full of sorrow. Cry and sob. Change your laughter to

crying. Change your joy to sadness. ¹⁰ Bow down to the Lord. He will lift you up.

¹¹ My brothers and sisters, don't speak against one another. Anyone who speaks against another believer speaks against the law. And anyone who judges another believer judges the law. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it. Instead, you are acting as if you were its judge.

¹² There is only one Lawgiver and Judge. He is the One who is able to save life or destroy it. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

Bragging About Tomorrow

¹³ Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city. We will spend a year there. We will buy and sell and make money." ¹⁴ You don't even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? It is a mist that appears for a little while. Then it disappears. ¹⁵ Instead, you should say, "If it pleases the Lord, we will live and do this or that."

¹⁶ As it is, you are proud. You brag about it. That kind of bragging is evil. ¹⁷ So when you know the good things you should do and don't do them, you sin.

A Warning to Rich People

5 You rich people, listen to me. Cry and sob, because you will soon be suffering.

² Your riches have rotted. Moths have eaten your clothes.

³ Your gold and silver have lost their brightness. Their dullness will give witness against you. Your wanting more and more will eat your body like fire. You have stored up riches in these last days.

⁴ You have even failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields. Their pay is crying out against you. The cries of those who gathered the harvest have reached the ears of the Lord who rules over all.

⁵ You have lived an easy life on earth. You have given yourselves everything you wanted. You have made yourselves fat like cattle that will soon be butchered. ⁶ You have judged and murdered people who aren't guilty. And they weren't even opposing you.

Be Patient When You Suffer

⁷ Brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord comes. See how the farmer waits for the land to produce its rich crop. See how patient he is for the fall and spring rains. ⁸ You too must be patient. You must stand firm. The Lord will soon come back.

⁹ Brothers and sisters, don't find fault with one another. If you do, you will be judged. And the Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, think about the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. They are an example of how to be patient when you suffer. ¹¹ As you know, we think that people who don't give up are blessed. You have heard that Job was patient. And you have seen what the Lord finally did for him. The Lord is full of tender mercy and loving concern.

¹² My brothers and sisters, don't take an oath when you make a promise. Don't call on heaven or earth or anything else to back up what you say. Let your "Yes" be yes. And let your "No" be no. If you don't, you will be judged.

The Prayer of Faith

¹³ Are any of you in trouble? Then you should pray. Are any of you happy? Then sing songs of praise.

¹⁴ Are any of you sick? Then send for the elders of the church to pray over you. Ask them to anoint you with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ The prayer offered by those who have faith will make you well. The Lord will heal you. If you have sinned, you will be forgiven.

¹⁶ So admit to one another that you have sinned. Pray for one another so that you might be healed. The prayer of a godly person is powerful. It makes things happen.

¹⁷ Elijah was just like us. He prayed hard that it wouldn't rain. And it didn't rain on the land for three and a half years.

¹⁸ Then he prayed again. That time it rained. And the earth produced its crops.

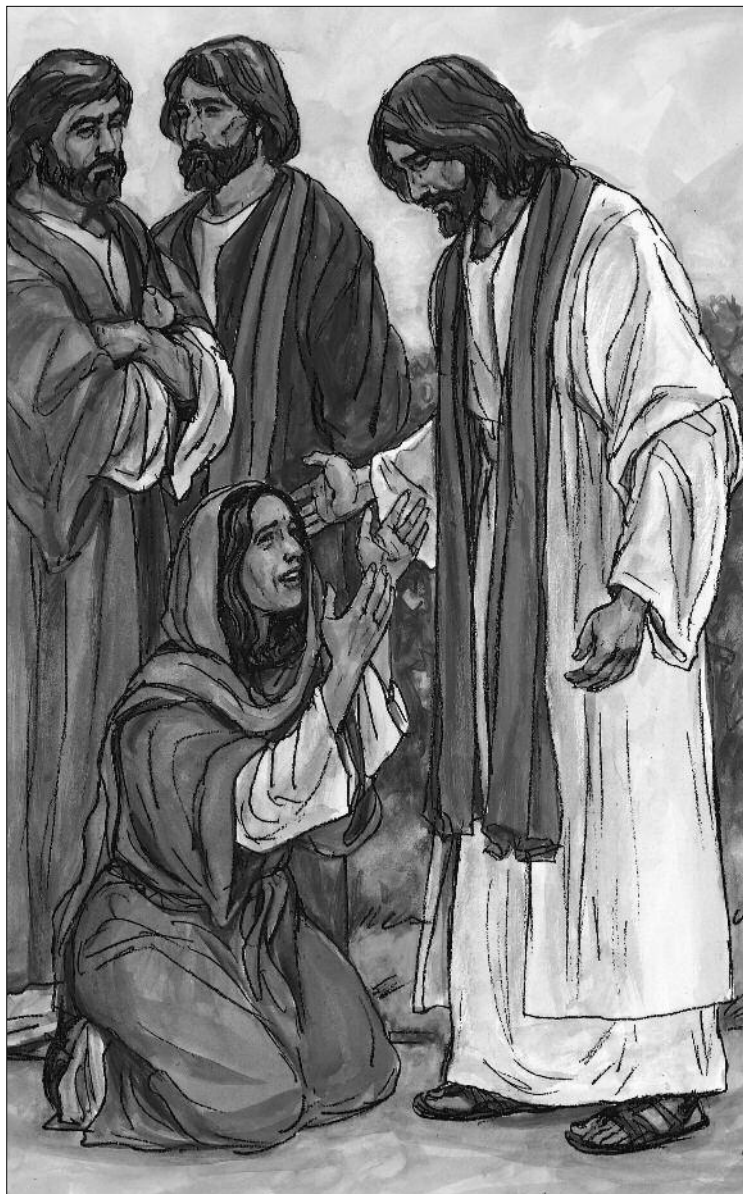
¹⁹ My brothers and sisters, suppose one of you wanders away from the truth and someone brings you back. ²⁰ Then here is what I want everyone to remember. Anyone who turns a sinner from going down the wrong path will save him from death. God will erase many sins by forgiving him.



Chapter One

What Is Faith?

When you read the book of James, the first thing you notice is that he does not sound like a preacher. Every now and then he uses many big words. But usually, he sounds more like the person next door. You know the one? The man who knows how the world works and how things ought to be better.



Jesus sees the faith of a woman from the land of Canaan.

This makes James just the right man to explain a few things about Christian faith. He does not sound like he is trying to write a poem about faith. He is just explaining what life is like. In this chapter, we will look at what James said about Christian faith. At the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- * Tell what proves to you that you have faith, and
- * Tell the difference between a living faith and a dead faith.

Who is this James who writes this book? That is hard to say. If you read the story of Jesus' life in the Bible, you may think that every other person Jesus met was named "James." Two of his disciples as well as one of his brothers are named James. James must have been a well liked name.

Our James, the author of the book of James in the New Testament, only says, "I, James, am writing this letter. I serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ." Which James in the New

Testament is he? Your guess is as good as anyone else's. But whichever James he is, he is a man who does not have much time for foolish things or words.

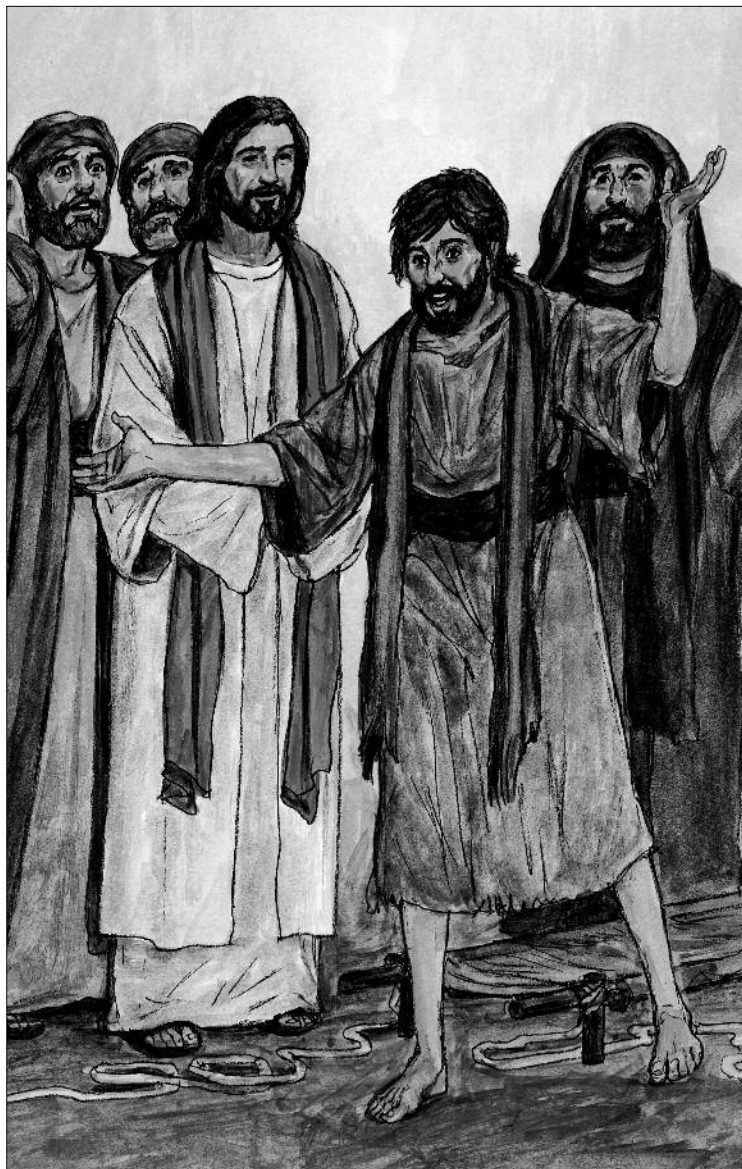
People sure do talk a lot about many foolish things, at times, when it comes to their Christian faith. James talks about such faith in the second chapter of his book. "My brothers and sisters, what good is it if people claim they have faith but don't act like it? Can that kind of faith save them?" (James 2:14).

You get the feeling that James has listened to too many people talking about what good Christians they are. Have you heard about the kind of people I am talking about? All the time they speak about their "relationship to Jesus Christ." But you could never tell they are Christians from the way they act. They curse and swear at other people. They are mean and angry all the time. They cannot say a nice word to anyone and they will not share anything they have with someone even though they have plenty.

James does not think faith like that can save anyone. He does not think it is even a real live faith any more. He gives an example to show what he means.

"Suppose a brother or sister (in the faith) has no clothes or food. Suppose one of you says to them, 'Go. I hope everything turns out fine for you. Keep warm. Eat well.' And you do nothing about what they really need. Then what good have you done? It is the same with faith. If it doesn't cause us to do something, it is dead" (James 2:15-17).

In other words, if you are going to tell everyone you have faith, prove it! What we do speaks louder than words. If the person in the example above really wanted the other person to stay warm and have enough to eat, he would give him his coat and give him some food! Just saying the words, "Keep warm!" and then walking away prove only one thing: the speaker did not mean it!



Jesus heals a crippled man.

Faith, you see, is more than just words you say. It is more than just a belief in your heart. If it is a belief that only goes as far as your mouth, it is not worth anything. Real live Christian faith will make us do good things, not just talk about our faith. "Show me your faith that doesn't do good works. And I will show you my faith by what I do" (James 2:18).

1. James says it does not do any good to say you have _____ but not to do any good things.
2. Faith by itself is _____ if it does not cause you to do good things.
3. Actions speak louder than _____.
4. A Christian shows his faith by the _____ things he does.

(Check your answers on page 22)

Faith is also more than just knowing the story of Jesus in the Bible. Being able to answer all questions about the life of Christ is not the same as having saving faith. James has an interesting way of humbling people who are

proud of this kind of "faith." He says, "You believe there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that. And they tremble" (James 2:19). Faith is not just knowing what is in the Bible. The devils know what is in the Bible, but it does not do them any good. Real live saving faith not only knows about Jesus, but also makes you act like a Christian should act.

"The body without the spirit is dead. In the same way, faith without good works is dead" (James 2:26). This is what James is teaching you. If you say you are a Christian, that is good. We will all be able to tell whether or not you mean it by the way you live your life. If you are always trying to do good things, then we will believe you. If not, then we know better. When you say you are a Christian but you do not try to do good things, you are only fooling yourself.

5. Faith is more than just _____
the story of Jesus in the Bible.

6. Saving faith also makes you act like a _____ should act.
7. If you say you are a Christian, but you do not try to do good things, you are only _____ yourself.

(Check your answers on page 22)

So, what have we learned about Christian faith? We know that the only thing that will save us is faith in Jesus, our Savior. Doing good things is not going to save us at all. However, once we have this saving faith, it will make us want to do good things. As the opportunities present themselves, we will do the sort of things the Bible tells us to do. We will help people that we can help. We will speak in a kindly and friendly way to others. We will obey the laws and rules God has put over us. We will love our neighbor as ourselves. We will even be kind to our enemies.

We do not depend on our good actions or good works to save us. We depend on Christ. That is

what faith is all about. But if we have this kind of Christian faith, then the good actions will follow. The stronger my faith, the more good things I will do because of it. But if someone says he has faith, yet never wants to do any good thing, then his faith is dead, as James says.

8. The only thing that will save us is _____ in Jesus, our Savior.
9. Once we have saving faith, it will make us want to do _____ things.
10. The _____ my faith, the more good things I will do because of it.
11. If someone says he has faith, but never wants to do good things, his faith is _____.

(Check your answers on page 22)

Chapter One Review

Some people claim to have Christian faith. James says they need to prove it. The way to prove that we have faith is by doing good things. James shows this by using of an example. If you see someone needing food and clothes, and all you do is say you hope he gets some

food and clothes, then that is no good. You did not really mean what you said, or else you would have gotten him some food and clothes. In the same way, if you say you have Christian faith, but you do not try to do the good things a Christian ought to do, then your faith is really dead.

Christian faith is more than just words. It is more than just knowing about Jesus. Christian faith not only believes in Jesus, but it makes us want to do good things that the Bible tells us to do. We do not depend on our good actions to save us. Our faith is in Christ to save us. But once we have that faith, it will lead us to do good things as the Bible tells us.

Chapter One Test

1. James says it does not do any good to say you have faith and not to _____ any good things.
2. Faith by itself is _____ if it does not cause you to do good things.
3. _____ speak louder than words.

4. A Christian shows his _____
by the good things he does.
5. Faith is more than just knowing the story of
_____ in the Bible.
6. Saving faith also makes you _____
like a Christian should.
7. If you say you are a _____,
but you do not try to do good things, you
are only fooling yourself.
8. The only thing that will save us is faith in
_____, our Savior.
9. Once we have saving faith, it will make us
_____ to do good
things.
10. The stronger my faith, the more good
things I will _____ because of it.
11. If someone says he has faith, but never
wants to do good things, his
_____ is dead.

(Check your answers on page 85)

Answers from questions within Chapter 1:

1. faith; 2. dead; 3. words; 4. good; 5. knowing;
6. Christian; 7. fooling; 8. faith; 9. good; 10. stronger;
11. dead.



Chapter Two

How Do We Fight Against Sin?

So, faith without good deeds is dead. Life would be easy if that were all there were to know? Unfortunately, there is the problem of sin and temptation. A Christian wants to show his faith by doing what is good and right. However, we are always being tempted to do what is wrong.



Joseph runs away when tempted by Potiphar's wife.

James knows that, and so he also writes about the fight against sin. At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- * Recognize how bad sin really is, and
- * Tell how to fight against sin.

Many pastors will tell you that, when people have sinned and need to see the pastor, they do not usually want to say that they have sinned. Instead, they will say, "Pastor, I made a mistake." Or, they will say, "Pastor, I gave in to a moment of weakness."

The apostle James tells us the truth. He likes to call a sin a sin. He writes about such people as if they were some young woman who got pregnant outside of marriage. "Oh. I made a mistake. I became pregnant. I did not mean to do it."

That is what a sinner sounds like when he or she does not want to admit that he or she has sinned. "I had a moment of weakness. I ended

up doing something I should not do. But I did not mean it; it was not really my fault!"

Here is James' answer: "Your own evil longings tempt you. They lead you on and drag you away, When they are allowed to grow, they give birth to sin. When sin is grown up, it gives birth to death" (James 1:14-15). Sin does not just "happen." Nor do we get dragged into it when we do not want to. Sin is your fault. It is your own evil desires or longings that lure you away from doing what is right.

We all know that this is true. No one holds a gun to your head and forces you to commit a sin. You sin because you want to. You would not be tempted to commit a sin you do not enjoy doing, would you? Here is a poor example: Would you be tempted to commit the sin of spitting on the cross of Jesus? Of course not; that is one temptation you will not fall into because you do not want to.

But how about the sin of doing or taking drugs? Or the sin of homosexuality? Or the sin of

stealing, or lying, or any other sins you could name? People do them because these sins look good to them. There is an evil longing or desire in them that wants to commit the sin, and so they commit the sin.

Do not try to avoid the blame, then. It is your sinful desire that made it happen. It is your fault. If you continue in your sin and die for it, do not blame anyone but yourself. That is what James wants to tell us.

1. People do not usually want to say that they have _____.
2. James says that we sin when we are led astray by our own evil _____.
3. People commit sins because the sins _____ to them.
4. If you sin, it is your own _____.

(Check your answers on page 35)

James wants us to avoid sin. The whole business of fighting against sin has to do with

knowing what the Bible says about it. James tells us the following;

"Don't just listen to the word. You fool yourselves if you do that. You must do what it says. Suppose you listen to the word but don't do what it says. Then you are like a man who looks at his face in a mirror. After looking at himself, he leaves. Right away he forgets what he looks like. But suppose you take a good look at the perfect law that gives freedom. You keep looking at it. You don't forget what you've heard, but you do what the law says. Then you will be blessed in what you do" (James 1:22-25).

Can you imagine a person who looks into the mirror, sees that he or she is a mess, and then goes off as if there were nothing wrong with them? Women especially would never do that. If a woman looks into the mirror and sees that her hair is messy, she will get a brush or comb and straighten it out. If she sees that her face is dirty, she will wash the dirt off.

Yet some people read God's Word. They see how much they need to improve their lives. But they walk away as if they had seen nothing. For example: The Bible says, "Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God" (Exodus 20:7). Suppose you were a person who is always cursing and swearing: "Goddamn this and Goddamn that" and on and on. You open a Bible and read this passage and say to yourself, "Well, I have fallen far short on this commandment." You walk away and something happens you do not like and you begin to curse about it. What good did looking in the Bible do you, if all you wanted to do was read it? What was the good if you do not want to live according to it?

Now suppose you do curse, but when you read that commandment you say, "I have been doing wrong all this time. I am going to try to stop, beginning right now!" Then James would say you are being smart. You are not just reading what God says; you are trying to obey him, too.

5. Looking at the law of God is like looking into a _____.
6. It does not do any good to look into the Bible if you do not plan to _____ according to it.
7. You should not just read what God says; you should try to _____ him.

(Check your answers on page 35)

So, we ought to read the Bible with the desire to do what it says. When we fall into sin, we should do what the Bible says and stop doing it.

But we know very well that it is not always that easy. Sometimes people get so involved in a sin that they have a hard time stopping it. This is especially true when that sin has to do with an addiction to drugs or alcohol.

So James tells us, at the end of his letter, that we ought to do all we can to help other people who are caught in such sins. He writes:

"My brothers and sisters, suppose one of you wanders away from the truth and someone brings you back. Then here is what I want everyone to remember. Anyone who turns a sinner from going down the wrong path will save him from death. God will erase many sins by forgiving them" (James 5:19-20).

It is not often easy to talk to other people about their sins. Maybe they will get angry at you. Maybe you will really be hurting their feelings, and you would rather not add to their troubles. It is usually much easier to mind your own business.

But James thinks otherwise.

If someone you liked were about to be killed, would you not try to save him? Suppose he were standing in the street, and a car was racing toward him and he was not moving because he did not see the car. Would you not shout to warn him about his danger?



Jesus speaks to the woman who lived in the land of Samaria.

"Anyone who turns a sinner from going down the wrong path will save him from death" (James 5:20). God does not want anyone to die in their sins and go to hell. He wants us to warn them about the danger, and try to turn them from their sins and bring them to Jesus, their Savior.

8. We ought to do all we can to help people who are caught in _____.
9. It is usually much easier to mind your own _____.
10. God does not want anyone to _____ in their sins and go to hell.
11. We should try to turn them from their sins and bring them to _____, their Savior.

(Check your answers on page 35)

Chapter Two Review

People do not like to admit that they are sinners. They would rather say that they made a mistake or that they were weak. They do not think they are at fault. But sin is always our

fault. We sin because our own evil desires lure us away from what is right. We do something sinful because we find it looks or feels good. Instead of making excuses, we should read the Bible and find out what God wants us to do. The law of God is like a mirror that shows us our faults. A person does not look into a mirror and then not fix what is wrong with the way he or she looks. In the same way, we do not look into the law of God and then not try to stop sinning. That would be foolish.

Sometimes it is not easy to live according to God's laws. That is when we need to watch out for each other. If someone is having a hard time giving up a sin, we need to help him or her to stop sinning. In this way, we save him or her from dying in their sins and going to hell.

Chapter Two Test

1. People do not usually want to say that they have _____.
2. James says that we sin when we are led astray by our own _____ desires.

3. People commit sins because the sins _____ to them.
4. If you sin, it is _____ fault.
5. Looking at the _____ of God is like looking into a mirror.
6. It does not do any good to look into the _____ if you do not plan to live according to it.
7. You should not just _____ what God says; you should try to obey him.
8. We ought to do all we can to help people who are caught in _____.
9. It is usually much _____ to mind your own business.
10. God does not want anyone to die in their sins and go to _____.
11. We should try to _____ them from their sins and bring them to Jesus, their Savior.

(Check your answers on page 85)

Answers from questions within Chapter 2:

1. sinned; 2. desires; 3. look good; 4. fault; 5. mirror;
6. live; 7. obey; 8. sin; 9. business; 10. die; 11. Jesus.



Cain does not like his brother Abel.



Chapter Three

Hold Your Tongue!

Many people like to talk and talk loudly. You know that kind of person: the lips never seem to stop moving, and the tongue never seems to stop going. In the end such people get themselves into big trouble. You would think they would learn their lesson, but, no, they do not. Before you know it, they are talking again.

In the entire Bible, there is no book like the book of James for warning about the dangers of an uncontrolled tongue. A Christian really wants to control what he or she says. James will tell us why and how to do that. At the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- * Tell how the tongue can cause so much trouble, and
- * Tell how to tame or control your tongue.

Did you ever think about what a little part of your body the tongue is? It must not measure more than a couple of inches (six or seven centimeters), and if it weighs half a pound (one-fourth of a kilogram), you have a big tongue. Yet, the tongue might be one of the most important members of your body, because of all the talking it does.

James is impressed by this fact, too. He writes, "We put a bit in the mouth of a horse to make it obey us. We can control the whole animal with it. And how about ships? They are very big.

They are driven along by strong winds. But they are steered by a very small rudder. It makes them go where the captain wants to go. In the same way, the tongue is a small part of the body. But it brags a lot" (James 3:3-5).

What is James trying to tell us? He tells us that we can use a little piece of iron like a bit to steer a ton or two of horse, or a small piece of wood like a rudder to steer a big ship. The little thing controls the big thing. Our tongues do something like that. They begin to boast, and before you know it, more than our tongue has to try to answer to that boast.

Say, for example, you are outside and your tongue begins talking about what a great fighter you are. The next thing you know, someone has challenged you to a fight, and not with your tongue. Because you let your tongue do all that bragging, now the rest of your body might get hurt because of what your tongue said.

1. The tongue might be one of the most _____ members of your body.
2. When your tongue begins to boast, it is like the little thing that _____ the big thing.
3. Your tongue does the boasting, and the rest of you has to try to _____ that boast.

(Check your answers on page 48)

James does not trust people with their tongues. He writes: "Think about how a small spark can set a big forest on fire. The tongue also is a fire. The tongue is the most evil part of the body. It pollutes the whole person. It sets a person's whole way of life on fire. And the tongue is set on fire by hell. People have controlled all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea. They still control them. But no one can control the tongue. It is an evil thing that never rests. It is full of deadly poison" (James 3:5-8).

One really important thing James says is about how the tongue can contaminate your whole

body. Have you ever known a person who is like that? Imagine, if you will, a really beautiful woman. Her hair is perfect, her skin is smooth and soft, her face, her figure - everything about her is lovely. But then, suppose she opens her mouth and starts cursing and swearing, calling people bad names, and acts like what we might call a dirty mouth. Does not her tongue really ruin all her beauty?

Christians are people who have been bought by God to be his own children. He did this by sending his Son to die for our sins. That makes us something special and beautiful in his sight. And he wants us to act that way.

But when we will not curb our tongues, we spoil the whole picture. We do not give people the impression that we are really that serious about our faith. All this happens because we would not try to control a little member of our body like our tongues!

4. The tongue can contaminate your whole _____.
5. An unbridled tongue can ruin a person's _____.
6. If we do not curb our tongues, people will think we are not _____ about our faith.

(Check your answers on page 48)

James gives a good example of this: "With our tongues we praise our Lord and Father. With our tongues we call down curses on people. We do it even though they have been created to be like God. Praise and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers and sisters, it shouldn't be that way" (James 3:9-10).

Think about what you have just read. You could be sitting in church, singing the godliest hymns, and saying the Lord's Prayer and saying "Amen!" with the preacher. But then you leave the service, and you see someone you do not like, and you call him a dirty rotten person or worse!

What have you just done? You have been talking about how great and wonderful God is. Then you see your fellow man, made in the image of God, and you begin to curse and swear at him. James says you ought to make up your mind. Either God is great and worthy of praise, in which case anyone made in his image is also worthy of respect. Or else you can feel free to curse and swear at the people made in God's image. But remember, then you are cursing God, too, in a way.

7. We use the same tongue to praise God and to curse people made in God's _____.
8. If God is worthy of praise, then people, made in his image, are worthy of _____.
9. If you curse at people, in a way, you are cursing _____.

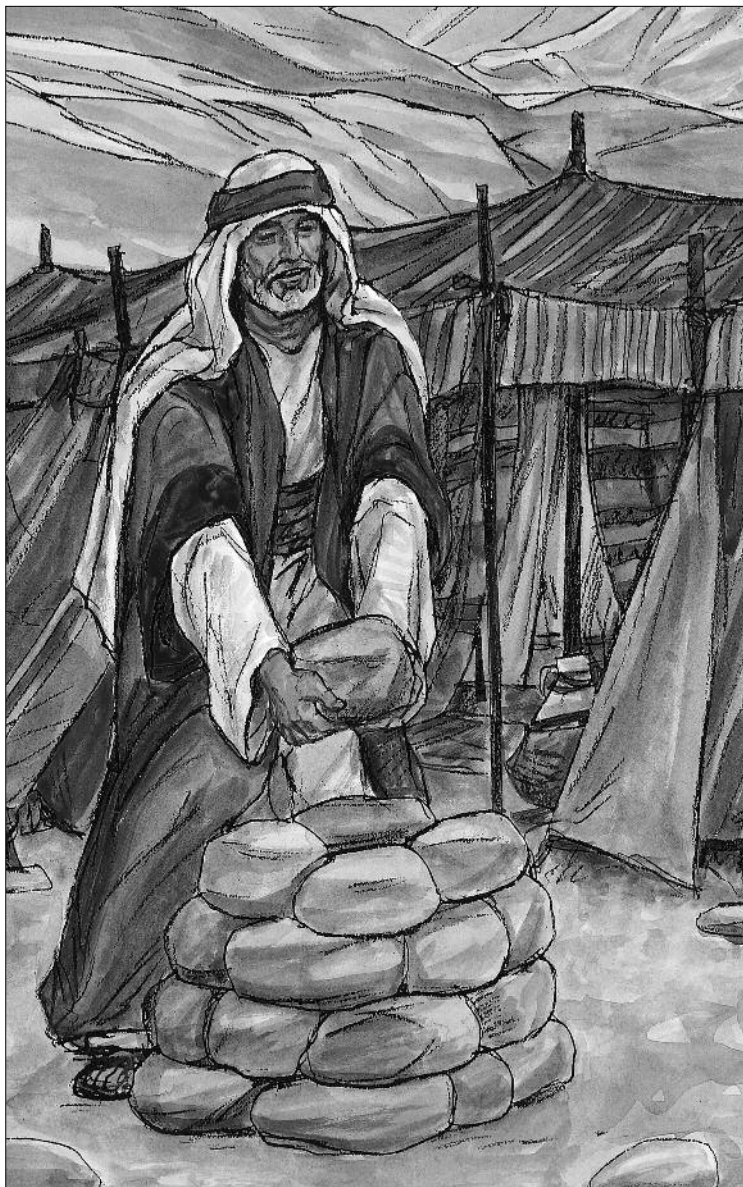
(Check your answers on page 48)

But you cannot do both. James continues: "Can fresh water and salt water flow out of the same spring? My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives? Can a grapevine bear

figs? Of course not. And a saltwater spring can't produce fresh water either" (James 3:11-12). Think of what you are doing. If you have a "dirty mouth," do not expect that any decent praises can come out of it towards God. You cannot curse and swear at your fellow men for six days and twenty-three hours a week, and then expect that your mouth is clean enough to sing the praises of God in worship services in church on Sunday morning!

Here is a way to control your tongue, then. **THINK!** When you are about to say something bad about someone else, when you are about to curse or swear at him or call him a name, think! Would you say that about God? So do not say it about someone made in the image of God.

Do you want your praises and prayers to sound good in God's ears? Then remember all week long that you are going to be doing some praying. You are going to be talking to the God who made you and who sent his Son to be



Abraham builds an altar to praise God.

your Savior. Keep your mouth clean. Curb your tongue, so that it will be worthy of saying prayers and singing hymns on Sunday!

10. James asks whether clean and _____ water can flow out of the same spring.
11. You cannot curse your fellow man and then think your mouth is _____ enough to sing God's praises.
12. Do not say bad things about somebody made in the _____ of God.

(Check your answers on page 48)

Chapter Three Summary

Even though the tongue is a very small part of the body, it can have a lot of control over us. It can start making big boasts, and then the rest of our body and mind has to answer for them. Our tongue can use such bad language that it makes us ugly, no matter how good we might look. When our tongue curses our fellow man, it is as good as cursing God. After all, man was

made in the image of God. We need to curb our tongues, and only say the kinds of things that show we are Christians. Otherwise, our mouths are not really "clean" enough to praise God.

Chapter Three Test

1. The _____ might be one of the most important members of your body.
2. When your tongue begins to _____, it is like the little thing that controls the big thing.
3. Your _____ does the boasting, and the rest of you has to try to answer that boast.
4. The tongue can _____ your whole body.
5. An unbridled tongue can _____ a person's beauty.
6. If we do not curb our tongues, people will think we are not serious about our _____.
7. We use the same tongue to praise God and to _____ people made in God's image.

8. If God is worthy of praise, then people, made in his _____, are worthy of respect.
9. If you curse _____, in a way, you are cursing God.
10. James asks whether clean and polluted water can flow out of the same _____.
11. You cannot curse your fellow man and then think your mouth is clean enough to sing God's _____.
12. Do not say bad things about somebody made in the image of _____.

(Check your answers on page 85)

Answers from questions within Chapter 3:

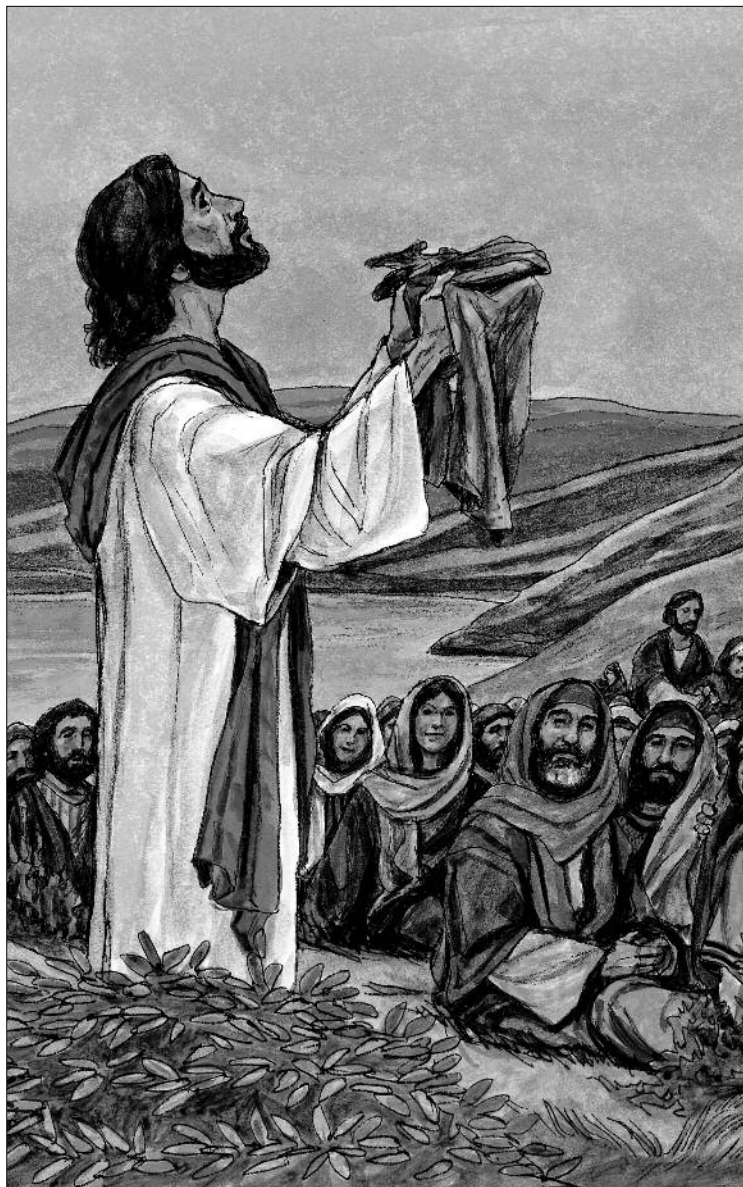
1. important; 2. controls; 3. answer; 4. body; 5. beauty;
6. serious; 7. image; 8. respect; 9. God; 10. polluted;
11. clean; 12. image.



Chapter Four

Think About Other People First!

One thing that James makes clear again and again is that Christians should think about other people first. This is not always the easiest thing to do. Many people have been raised to think that they are the most important person in their lives. "Look out for yourself first," they say.



Jesus shows his love and care by feeding over 5000 people.

But that is not God's way, and it is not the way a Christian acts, either. In this chapter we will see what the apostle James has to say about putting other people first in our lives. At the end of the chapter you will be able to tell:

- * Why fighting and arguing are wrong,
- * Why favoring only certain people is wrong, and
- * How a Christian acts toward other people.

Everyone knows how quickly fights and quarrels can start. When we are angry with someone we might want to quarrel or fight him or her. It does not take much to start a fight.

James has something to say about quarreling and fighting. "Why do you fight and argue among yourselves? Isn't it because of your sinful longings? They fight inside you. You want something, but you can't get it. You kill and want what others have. But you can't have what you want. You argue and fight. You don't have what you want, because you don't ask God" (James 4:1-2).

Why do people get into fights? Usually it is because one of them has something that the other person wants. Maybe it is something you can put your hands on, like money or food. Sometimes it is just an attitude they have. They are at peace, and you are not. Because you are jealous of them, you pick a fight with them.

James says this is because of selfish desires. "You want something, but you can't get it. You kill and want what others have" (James 4:2). Some people really do this. They kill someone to get what he has. Others just wish the fellow were dead because they are so jealous. Some just hate him. In God's book to think evil is as bad as murder.

It's easy to see why this is wrong for the person you are prepared to fight with. But it is also a sin against God. James continues with these words:

"When you do ask (pray) for something, you don't receive it. Why? Because you ask for the wrong reason. You want to spend your money

on your sinful pleasures" (James 4:2-3).

If you want something, rather than envying someone else who has it, you should pray to God for it. But watch out! Your motives might not be God-pleasing. If the only reason you want these things is for your own pleasure, then you are being selfish. It is not right for a Christian to be filled with selfishness.

A little later on James really says much about this kind of selfishness. Some people want everything for themselves and do not care at all about other people. They want to be rich and everyone else can starve. Here is James' warning to them.

"You rich people, listen to me. Cry and sob (moan), because you will soon be suffering. Your riches have rotted. Moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver have lost their brightness. Their dullness will give witness against you. Your wanting more and more will eat your body like fire. You have stored up riches in these last days. You have even failed

to pay the workers who mowed your fields. Their pay is crying out against you. The cry of those who gathered the harvest have reached the ears of the Lord who rules over all. You have lived an easy life on earth. You have given yourselves everything you wanted. You have made yourselves fat like cattle that will soon be butchered" (James 5:1-5).

Such selfishness is behind so much fighting and quarreling. If you continue to live that way, you end up like the people James is writing against. Is it worth it? Of course not!

1. Fights and quarrels are caused by our _____ desires.
2. Instead of fighting for things, we ought to _____ for them.
3. But if we only want things for our own _____, then our motives are selfish.
4. A Christian should not be filled with _____.

(Check your answers on page 62)

Another way this kind of selfishness shows up is in favoritism. That word means that you favor one person over another. This is not about the fact that you are friends with some people and not with others. This means you show great respect to some people while you treat others badly.

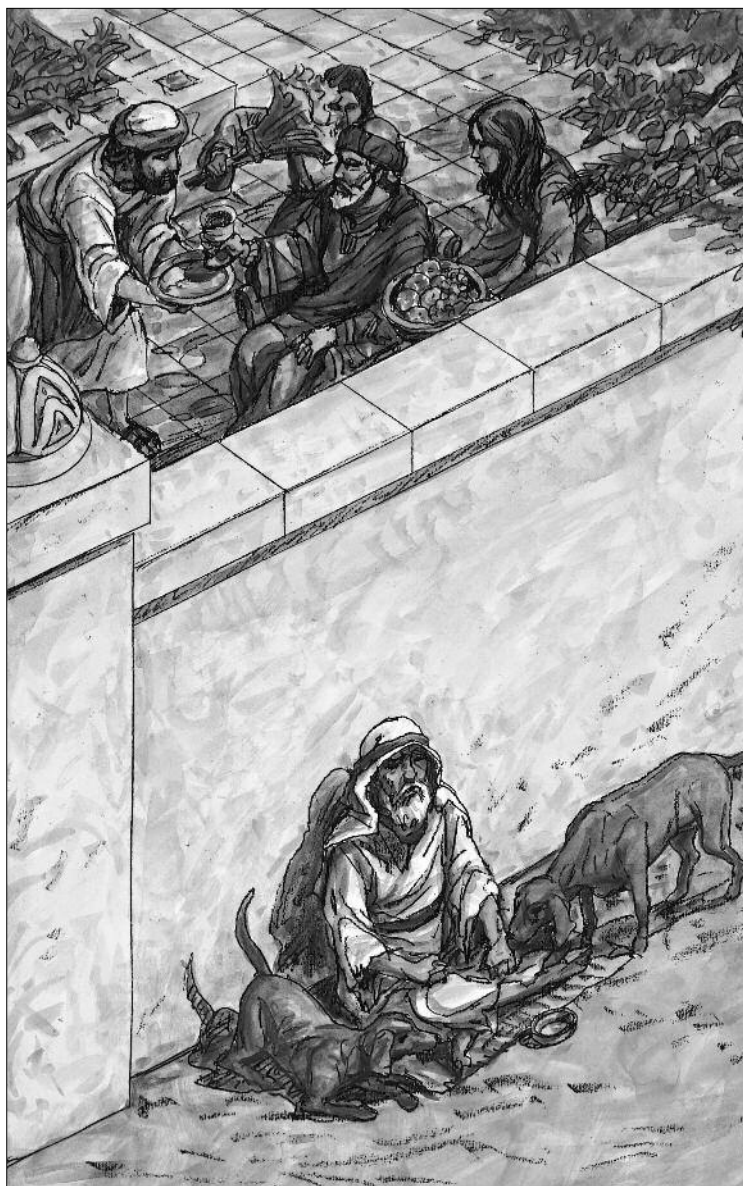
James has this to say about favoritism:

"My brothers and sisters, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So treat everyone the same. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes. And suppose a poor person in worn-out clothes also comes in. Would you show special attention to the one who is wearing fine clothes? Would you say, 'Here's a good seat for you'? Would you say to the poor person, 'You stand there'? Or 'Sit on the floor by my feet'? If you would, aren't you treating some people better than others? Aren't you like judges who have evil thoughts...The royal law is found in Scripture. It says, 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' If you really

keep that law, you are doing what is right. But you sin if you don't treat everyone the same" (James 2:1-4, 8-9).

Why do people show favoritism? Usually it is because they do not want to consider matters from God's side. What does God care how rich a person is? Did not Jesus die for rich and poor alike? If you favor a rich person over a poor person, what are you saying to God? Are you not telling him that he ought to change the law? He ought to rewrite that commandment. "Love your neighbor as yourself" to read, "Love your neighbor if you think he is worth it!"

It is not our place to judge whether someone is worthy of our respect. God says that person is our neighbor and we are to love him as ourselves, no matter if he is rich or poor, black or white or Hispanic, living in a city or a country boy, man or woman. A Christian will not take these things into consideration. We are to think of them before ourselves.



A rich man does not care for poor Lazarus.

5. Favoritism means treating some people with respect while treating others _____.
6. It is not our place to judge whether someone is _____ of respect.
7. No matter what a person is, God says he is our _____.
8. We are to think of _____ before ourselves.

(Check your answers on page 62)

It may sound, from what you have just been reading, that James tells you much about what not to do, but is not so good at telling you what to do. It is true that he is a loud critic of selfishness and favoritism. But he also has something to say about how we ought to be.

"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is pure. That's the most important thing about it. And that's not all. It also loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit. It is fair. It doesn't pretend to be what it is not" (James 3:17).

He speaks of "the wisdom that comes from heaven." Wisdom means knowing the right thing to do. On this earth, there is a kind of "wisdom" some people like to follow. It is the "wisdom" of watching out for yourself and letting everyone else watch out for themselves. That is the wisdom that has put a lot of people in prison, is it not?

But the wisdom God gives us is different. Look at how it works. It is pure. That means, it is not mixed in with lots of selfish motives, but completely wants what is best for others. It is peaceful. It does not want to make trouble with others, but always tries to be at peace when possible. It is gentle, not going around looking for fights, but treating other people kindly and gently. It is filled with mercy and good deeds for others. It shows that mercy and goodness impartially (without favoritism). And it is sincere. You are doing all these things because you really want to, not just as an act to try to impress someone.

When you look at this list, does it remind you of anyone? Did not Jesus act that way when he was living on earth as a man among men? What God wants from us, then, is that we imitate Jesus, and when we do, we will do as he did: We will put others before ourselves.

9. Earthly "wisdom" often tells us to watch out for _____ alone.
10. God's wisdom completely wants what is best for _____.
11. What God wants from us is that we _____ Jesus.

(Check your answers on page 62)

Chapter Four Review

Most fights and quarrels start because you have a selfish desire for what someone else has. Such selfishness not only makes you hate those who have what you want. It also is a sin against God. If we want something, we ought to pray to him for it; but we must not pray out of selfish desires.

We should not show favoritism, respecting some people and despising or looking down on other people. God says that no matter who and what they are, they are our neighbors, and we ought to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

God has something better in mind for us. He wants us to have wisdom from above, which leads us to put others before ourselves. After all, did not Jesus do that for us? We ought to do the same for other people.

Chapter Four Test

1. Fights and quarrels are caused by our selfish _____.
2. Instead of fighting for things, we ought to _____ for them.
3. But if we only want things for our own pleasure, then our motives are _____.
4. A Christian should not be consumed by _____.
5. Favoritism means treating some people with _____ while treating others badly.

6. It is not our place to judge whether someone is worthy of _____.
7. No matter what a person is, _____ says he is our neighbor.
8. We are to think of others before _____.
9. Earthly "wisdom" often tells us to watch out for _____ alone.
10. God's _____ completely wants what is best for others.
11. What God wants from us is that we imitate _____.

(Check your answers on page 85)

Answers from questions within Chapter 4:

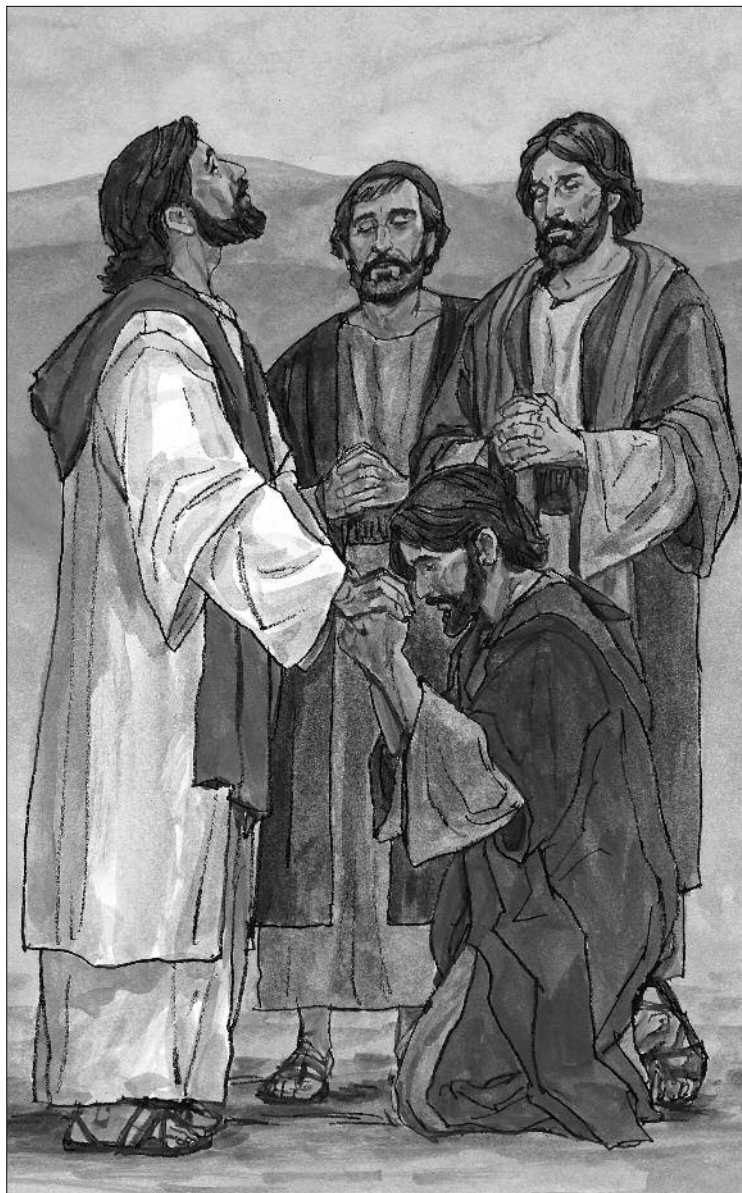
1. selfish; 2. pray; 3. pleasure; 4. selfishness; 5. badly;
6. worthy; 7. neighbor; 8. others; 9. ourselves; 10. others;
11. imitate.



Chapter Five

And Then There is God

In the last couple of chapters we have seen how a Christian shows his faith. He shows it in the way he watches what he says. He shows it in the way he fights against sin. He shows it in the way he treats his fellow man.



Jesus teaches his followers to pray.

Of course, when he is doing all of this, he is showing that he wants to obey God and do what the Bible says. In this chapter we will look at the special ways a Christian shows his faith by the way he acts around God. By the end of this chapter, you will know:

- * How to pray to the Lord in the right way,
- * How to be humble before the Lord, and
- * How to have hope in the Lord.

Prayer is perhaps the first thing you think of when you think of how things go between you and God. We know that Jesus took away our sins, which had stood between us and God. Now, thanks to Jesus, we can pray with confidence. That means we can be certain or sure that God will hear our prayers.

This kind of complete confidence is something James talks about in these words:

"If any of you need wisdom, ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone. He doesn't find fault. But when you ask, you

must believe. You must not doubt. People who doubt are like waves of the sea. The wind blows and tosses them around. A man like that shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. He can't make up his mind. He can never decide what to do" (James 1:5-8).

There are a couple of statements of James to think about here. First of all, look what James says we ought to pray for. He says we should pray for wisdom. In the last chapter, we learned what God's wisdom is all about. It is the kind of wisdom that leads us to put others before ourselves, and to imitate Jesus. That is the kind of unselfish prayer God likes to hear. God wants us to be like Jesus and put others ahead of ourselves.

The second thing James reminds us about is God's generosity. He is happy to answer such prayers. We should not have any doubts but should be certain God will answer our prayers.

In fact, doubts really do not belong in our prayers at all. Sometimes people think that is the way to pray. They will say something like, "God, if there is a God, if you are listening to me...." That is not much of a prayer, is it?

In fact, how would you feel if someone asked you for a favor in the same way that such a person prays to God? "Say, if you are for real, if you really are listening, if you can really help me like you said you could...?" Would you feel like doing a favor for someone who does not really trust you? So God also says he will not be answering such doubting prayers.

1. Thanks to Jesus, we can pray with _____.
2. We ought to pray to be like Jesus and put _____ before ourselves.
3. _____ do not belong in our prayers.

(Check your answers on page 79)

James says that prayers offered in faith will be answered. God has done so in the past.

"The prayer of a godly person is powerful. It makes things happen. Elijah was just like us. He prayed hard that it wouldn't rain. And it didn't rain on the land for three and a half years. Then he prayed again. And the earth produced its crops" (James 5:16-18).

(You might be asking. "Why did this Elijah not want it to rain?" Elijah, who was a prophet of God in Old Testament times, was trying to call his people away from the sin of worshipping a false god. This false god was a rain god, and so Elijah thought that if they did not get rain for a couple of years, these people would know the rain god was a false god. Elijah's plan worked! The people finally gave up worshipping the false god).

That was a big request, was it not? "Dear God, please do not let it rain for three years!" And then, at the end of the three years, "Dear God, please let it rain again right now!" But God

heard and answered the prayer. God did what Elijah asked for.

Why? "The prayer of a godly person is powerful. It makes things happen" (James 5:16). Elijah had faith in God. He knew God's Son was his Savior from sin. He knew that what he was praying for would do good for others (calling them away from a false god). And so, when he prayed, he knew God would answer his prayer.

That is the kind of prayer God wants to hear: a confident one. Do you believe Jesus died for your sins? Do you believe God has the power to do what you ask? Are you asking for the sort of thing that God will find good and unselfish? Then pray.

Sure, you might not get the wildly successful results Elijah got. A man in prison might pray, "O Lord, please let me get an early release from prison. It will help my family so much." God's answer might be to let him stay in prison

a little longer any way, but give the man and his family the strength and courage to wait longer. The prayer is effective, is it not? God granted what the man really needed and, although perhaps he did not know it, what he really wanted: For everyone to wait patiently for the Lord to help them.

4. Prayers offered in _____ will be answered.
5. The kind of prayer God wants to hear is a _____ one.
6. God will grant what a person really _____.

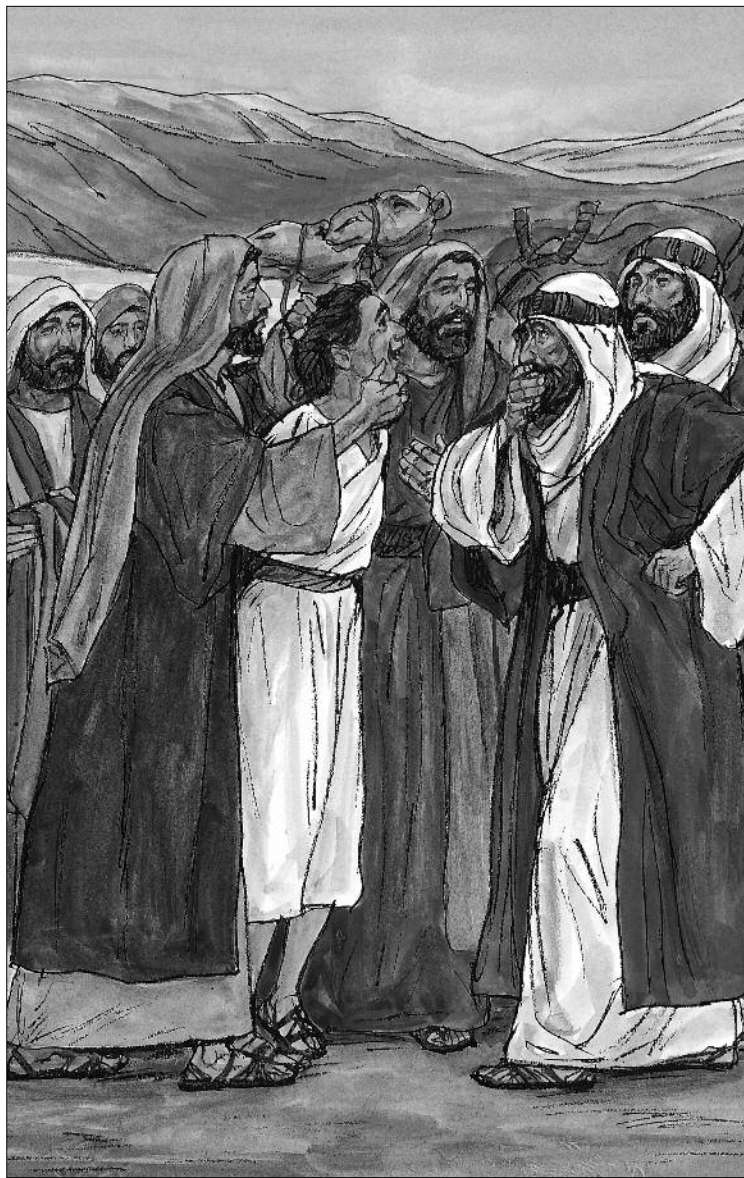
(Check your answers on page 79)

This kind of patience is another way of showing your faith in God. People often have to suffer some bad things. Sickness is only one of the trials a Christian sometimes has to go through. But James says that the good Lord has his reasons.

"My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy. Your faith will be put to the test. You know that when that happens it will produce in you the strength to continue. The strength to keep going must be allowed to finish its work. Then you will be all you should be. You will have everything you need" (James 1:2-4).

How can you be happy when bad things are happening to you? How can you be happy when you are sick or poor or depressed? You can be happy because you know God is going to bring good out of it. In another part of the Bible God promises, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28).

And the good he will bring out of it is that we learn to endure. We can put up with bad things. Our faith becomes strong enough to last when weaker people might be giving up and saying, "Well, God just will not ever help me!"



Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers.

Sure, it is not easy on you. But how else is God going to build up your faith? If you were building up your muscles, how would you do it? By exercising, that is, by using them (and using them hard!). It is not easy lifting two hundred pounds (100 kilograms) of weights. It hurts your muscles when you are doing it. You feel sore. But you feel happy, because you know your muscles are getting stronger.

God builds up our faith in the same way: By making us use it. He lets something happen to us that forces us to rely on him and him alone. When we have done that, we will be more ready to rely on him when anything else happens.

So James writes: "Brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord comes. See how the farmer waits for the land to produce its rich crop. See how patient he is for the fall and spring rains. You too must be patient. You must stand firm. The Lord will soon come back" (James 5:7,8).

Do not give up hope. The Lord will be here soon to help you, all in his good time. Farmers wait for the rain because they know it will come. So we can wait for the Lord. We know he will come to help us, just as we know Jesus will come again on Judgment Day to take us to heaven. In heaven there will be no more trials or troubles.

7. _____ is another way of showing your faith in God.
8. God builds up our _____ by making us use it.
9. We should never give up _____, because the Lord will help us in his good time.

(Check your answers on page 79)

Even when there are no trials to go through, this faith in God will show up in the way we think. Here's an example:

"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city. We will spend a year there. We will buy and sell and make

money.' You don't even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? It is a mist that appears for a little while. Then it disappears. Instead you should say, 'If it pleases the Lord, we will live and do this or that.' As it is, you are proud. You brag about it. That kind of bragging is evil. So when you know the good things you should do and don't do them, you sin" (James 4:13-17).

When our faith in God is as strong as it should be, we will begin to think about God all the time. Even when we are planning for our future, we will not forget that God has the final word in what will happen.

What do you plan to do tomorrow, or next month, or in two years? Many people make such plans as if they controlled their own future. Christians know better. We are only on this earth for a few years, and we do not have the power to shape the future (not any more than the morning mist can decide for itself how long to hang around!).

"My whole life is in your hands," says one of the Bible writers in Psalm 31:15. We know that God controls what will happen. We make our plans, but we remember that God has the final word. Maybe he will agree, and then we will go to that city, stay a year, and make some money. Maybe he will have other plans. If we brag about our plans for the future, then we are being arrogant or proud. But if we make our plans, and then let everyone know that God has final approval, we are showing a strong faith in him.

10. When we are planning for our future, we will not forget that God has the _____ word.
11. We know that God _____ what will happen.
12. When we let everyone know that God has the final word, we are showing a strong _____ in him.

(Check your answers on page 79)

Chapter Five Review

We should pray to God with confidence. We know he will answer our prayers. We pray unselfishly, for the kind of things he wants to give us (like the gift of being unselfish!). We know he will answer our prayers, because Jesus died for our sins, and God has promised to hear us.

Sometimes he makes us wait for an answer, and we suffer bad times in the meantime. But we know he is using bad times to strengthen our faith. He forces us to rely on him, and then, in the future, we are more ready to rely on him in all things.

Even when we are not undergoing any troubles, this faith will show up in the way we think about the future. We may make our plans, but we will always remember that God has the final approval over them. We do not complain about that, either. Our faith is strong enough that we trust God with everything in our lives.

Chapter Five Test

1. Thanks to _____, we can pray with confidence.
2. We ought to pray to be like Jesus and put _____ before ourselves.
3. _____ do not belong in our prayers.
4. Prayers offered in _____ will be answered.
5. The kind of prayer God wants to hear is a _____ one.
6. God will grant what a person really _____.
7. _____ is another way of showing your faith in God.
8. God builds up our _____ by making us use it.
9. We should never give up _____ because the Lord will help us in his good time.
10. When we are planning for our future, we will not forget that God has the _____ word.

11. We know that God _____
what will happen.

12. When we let everyone know that God has
final approval, we are showing a strong
_____ in him.

(Check your answers on page 85)

Answers from questions within Chapter 5:

1. confidence; 2. others; 3. Doubts; 4. confidence [or faith]; 5. confident; 6. needs; 7. Patience; 8. faith; 9. hope; 10. final; 11. controls; 12. faith.



Glossary

(A list of words you may not know)

addiction	to give yourself up to something like drugs and alcohol
advice	saying what a person thinks on how to act
apostle	a follower called by Jesus
approval	agreeing that something is good
attitude	a way of showing our thoughts and feelings
avoid	to stay away from something
bit	a metal mouthpiece used to control an animal
boast	to speak proudly about what someone has done
brag	to speak with too much praise of oneself
challenge	to call on someone to do something
commit	to do something (especially wrong)

complain to show feelings of being unhappy about something

contaminate to make impure or dirty

confident complete trust or belief

control the power to direct or stop something

critic a person who finds bad or good in something

curb to stop

curse to use God's name uselessly

depend to trust or to support

depressed saddened or discouraged

doubt not sure about something

effective giving good results

endure to carry on through hard times

envy a sinful feeling a person has against someone who is better or richer

erase to rub out or to remove

fault a mistake or weakness

- favor** an act of kindness or approval
- generosity** ready to help and give through kindness
- homosexuality** being sexually attracted to others of the same sex
- humble** not proud or to lower a person's position
- imitate** to copy or to look alike
- impress** to cause someone to advise or to respect you
- impression** the idea or feeling one has of a person or thing
- improve** to make or become better
- involve** to take part in something
- lure** to make something look good
- motive** reason for doing something
- opportunity** a good time to do something
- plenty** enough, a large amount
- pollute** to make dirty
- pregnant** about to have a baby

prove	to show something is true
quarrel	to disagree; an angry discussion
relationship	a connection
rely	to trust; to depend on someone
request	asking for something
respect	high regard; to honor
rot	to decay because of natural causes
rudder	a flat piece of wood or metal used to steer a ship
selfish	doing things only for oneself
steer	to control the way a person or a machine goes
swear	to use God's name uselessly in an oath
ton	2000 pounds or 900 kilograms
trials	a testing; great troubles
ugly	not pleasant to look at
unbridle	cannot be controlled



Answers to the Chapter Tests

Chapter Test One (Pages 21-22)

1. do; 2. dead; 3. Actions; 4. faith; 5. Jesus; 6. act;
7. Christian; 8. Jesus; 9. want; 10. do; 11. faith.

Chapter Test Two (Pages 34-35)

1. sinned; 2. evil; 3. look good; 4. your, 5. law; 6. Bible;
7. read; 8. sin; 9. easier, 10. hell; 11. turn.

Chapter Test Three (Pages 47-48)

1. tongue; 2. boast; 3. tongue; 4. control; 5. ruin; 6. faith;
7. curse; 8. image; 9. people; 10. spring; 11. praises;
12. God.

Chapter Test Four (Pages 61-62)

1. desires; 2. pray; 3. selfish; 4. selfishness; 5. respect;
6. respect; 7. God; 8. ourselves; 9. ourselves; 10. wisdom;
11. Jesus.

Chapter Test Five (Pages 78-79)

1. Jesus; 2. others; 3. Doubts; 4. confidence [or faith];
5. confident; 6. needs; 7. Patience; 8. faith; 9. hope;
10. final; 11. controls; 12. faith.



Final Test

Congratulations! You have completed your study of how to show you have a living faith. Go back through the book and review the chapter tests, especially the questions on which you made a mistake. Also review the goals from each chapter. When you are sure you are ready, take the Final Test.

Complete the Final Test without looking at the book. When you are finished, give the test to the person who gave you this book or mail it to the address on the back cover of this book. You may also ask for more Bible study books in this series.

If you are ready, remove the test from the book and put the book away. Take the test without opening the book.



A Living Faith ***Final Test***

1. James says it does not do any good to say you have _____ and not do any good things.
2. Faith by itself is _____ if it does not cause you to do good things.
3. A Christian shows his faith by the _____ things he does.
4. Faith is more than just knowing the story of _____ in the Bible.
5. Saving faith also makes you act like a _____ should.
6. If you _____ you are a Christian, but you do not try to do good things, you are only fooling yourself.
7. Once we have saving _____, it will make us want to do good things.
8. The _____ my faith, the more good things I will do because of it.
9. If someone says he has faith, but never wants to do good things, his faith is _____.

10. James says that we sin when we are led astray by our own evil _____.
11. People commit sins because the sins _____ to them.
12. Looking at the law of God is like looking into a _____.
13. You should not just read what God says; you should try to _____ him.
14. We ought to do all we can to _____ people who are caught in sin.
15. God does not want anyone to die in their sins and go to _____.
16. The _____ can contaminate your whole body.
17. If we do not curb our tongues, people will think we are not serious about our _____.
18. If God is worthy of praise, then people, made in his _____ are worthy of respect.
19. If you curse your fellow man, in a way, you are cursing _____.

20. You cannot curse your fellow man and then think your mouth is clean enough to sing God's _____.
21. Fights and quarrels are caused by our _____ desires.
22. Favoritism means treating some people with respect while treating others _____.
23. It is not our place to judge whether someone is worthy of _____.
24. No matter what a person is. God says he is our _____.
25. We are to think of _____ before ourselves.
26. Thanks to Jesus, we can _____ with confidence.
27. We ought to pray to be like _____ and put others before ourselves.
28. _____ do not belong in our prayers.
29. Prayers offered in confidence will be _____.
30. Patience is another way of showing your _____ in God.

31. God builds up our _____
by making us use it.
32. We should never give up hope, because
the Lord will _____ us in his good time.
33. When we are planning for our future, we
will not forget that God has the
_____ word.
34. When we let everyone know that God has
the final _____, we are
showing a strong faith in him.

Please PRINT the following information.

NAME:

ADDRESS:

Please give us your comments on this course.

***For additional information
or to order more courses write to:***



**Multi-Language
Productions**

Bringing the Word to the World

**A Living Faith - English
Bible Teachings Series
MLP Catalog Number: 383290**

ISBN 1-931891-57-5