



WEEK 2 - SUNDAY 29 JUNE

Welcome to the study of the Book of James

It is suggested by scholars that this letter (Epistle) was written by James who is thought to be the brother of Jesus. According to John 7:3-5 James was not a believer. He only became a true follower after the Resurrection. According to the Galatians he headed up the Jerusalem Church. The Book of James outlines the faith walk through *genuine religion* (1:1-27), *genuine faith* (2:1-3:12) and *genuine wisdom* (3:13-5:20). We will even pick up in our readings the discourse on faith in action..... hence our theme LIVING AS A CHRIST FOLLOWER. It is about “Walking the Talk.”

Week 1. Trails and Temptations – 22 June.

Week 2. Listening and doing – 29 June.

Week 3. Faith and works – 6 July.

Week 4. Taming the Tongue – 13 July

Week 5. Two types of Wisdom – 20 July.

Week 6. Worldliness and Riches – 27 July.

LISTENING AND DOING

There are far too many voices, but we need to listen carefully for the voice that leads us to always doing what is right. There is only one; that is the voice of God. When listening and doing we can't go wrong. But the decision is ultimately ours.

Worship Song: Phil Wickham - The Jesus Way - https://youtu.be/4Fhv4arL3yk?si=yhEUhG4Y6L7i5_7W

Readings: Psalm 78:1-8 / James 1:19-27 / Matthew 7:15-23

Psalm 78:1-8

¹ My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth.² I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old –³ things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us.⁴ We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.⁵ He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children,⁶ so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.⁷ Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.⁸ They would not be like their ancestors – a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.

James 1:19-27

Listening and doing

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. ²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do

what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it – not forgetting what they have heard but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do. ²⁶ Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Matthew 7:15-23

True and false prophets

¹⁵ ‘Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognise them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognise them.

True and false disciples

²¹ ‘Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and, in your name, perform many miracles?” ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”

REFLECTION ON THE READINGS: KEAGILE MOLOABI – LOCAL PREACHER

We live in a time when the Word of God has become like a weekly dosage, consumed on Sunday like a spiritual high, then slowly fading throughout the week. As it wears off, we top it up with gospel songs in our cars and online sermons, while hiding behind our high walls, comfort, and personal routines. We have become inward-looking and self-indulgent Christians who hear the Word for ourselves but seldom live it out or share it with others.

Yet the Word of God is not meant to be stored up for personal motivation, it is meant to transform us and move us into action. The three readings this week remind us that God calls us not only to **listen**, but also to **act**.

- **Psalm 78** urges us to *teach God’s Word to the next generation*, so that our children and their children may know and trust the Lord. If our faith stops with us, we have failed in our responsibility.
- **James 1** paints a vivid picture of someone who hears the Word but does nothing with it, like a person who looks in the mirror, walks away, and forgets what they look like. This is not true faith. True religion, James tells us, is *active*: it involves *caring for the vulnerable* and *keeping ourselves from being polluted by the world*.
- **Matthew 7** gives us a sobering warning: *not everyone who says “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom*. Why? Because they may say the right things, even perform miracles, but their lives bear no *fruit*. Jesus is not impressed by empty titles or public displays. He wants lives marked by obedience, compassion, humility, and love.

So let us be reminded:

- That being a Christian is not about words, but *witness*.
- Not about performance, but *practice*.
- Not about what we say on Sundays, but how we *live every day*.

Let us:

1. **Teach the Word to others**, especially our children.
2. **Reach out to the needy**, offering love through action—be it a meal, clothing, prayer, or presence.
3. **Bear fruit** by living a life that reflects the heart and character of Christ.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

1. In what ways are we guilty of "*hearing the Word but not doing what it says*" in our daily lives (James 1:22)? What changes can we commit to today?
2. Are there people in our families, workplaces, or communities whom we have neglected to teach or witness to about the love and truth of God (Psalm 78:4-7)? Why, and what can we do about it?
3. Jesus said, "*By their fruit you will recognize them*" (Matthew 7:20). If someone judged your faith by your actions, what kind of fruit would they see?

DAILY MEMORY VERSE AND PRAYER

Monday	MEMORY VERSE: (James 1:22) " <i>Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.</i> " PRAYER: Lord, help me not to be a hearer only, but a doer of Your Word. Let my life reflect what I believe.
Tuesday	MEMORY VERSE: (Psalm 78:4) " <i>We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.</i> " PRAYER: Father, may I never be silent about Your goodness. Give me the courage to teach and pass down my faith to others.
Wednesday	MEMORY VERSE: (Matthew 7:20) " <i>Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.</i> " PRAYER: Jesus, let my life bear good fruit; love, joy, peace, kindness. Teach me to live in a way that points others to You.
Thursday	MEMORY VERSE: (Micah 6:8) " <i>He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.</i> " PRAYER: Lord, may I not seek religion for appearance, but a life of justice, mercy, and humility before You.
Friday	MEMORY VERSE: (Luke 11:28) " <i>Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.</i> " PRAYER: God, I don't just want to hear Your Word, I want to obey it. Give me strength to follow You fully today.
Saturday	MEMORY VERSE: (Romans 2:13) " <i>For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.</i> " PRAYER: Father, remind me that true righteousness is in obedience. Help me live out what I believe, with integrity and faith.

FOR THE KIDS:

Written by: Jenny Blake: Children's Pastor.

Week 2 — Listening and Doing

Opening Thought

Every day we hear many voices: friends, family, TV, social media, even our own thoughts. But not all voices give us good advice. The most important voice to listen to is God's. James reminds us that it's not enough to hear God's Word - we must *do* what it says. When we listen to God and act on His Word, we build a strong life that pleases Him.

Bible Readings

- **Psalm 78:1-8:** Listen and obey so future generations will know God's ways.
- **James 1:19-27:** Listening carefully and doing what the Word says.
- **Matthew 7:15-23:** True followers are known by their actions.

Family Discussion (with questions for all ages)

1 Be Quick to Listen

James tells us to be *"quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry"* (James 1:19). Sometimes, we're so busy talking or thinking about our own opinions that we don't really listen to others or to God. Good listening helps us understand what God wants us to do.

For Everyone:

👉 *Why do you think James says we should listen first?*

For Young Children:

👦 *What happens if you don't listen to Mom or Dad?*

👦 *How can you listen to God?*

For Teens:

👦 *Why is it sometimes easier to talk than to listen?*

👦 *What distractions keep you from hearing God's voice?*

2 Do What the Word Says

James compares hearing God's Word without obeying it to looking in a mirror but forgetting what you saw. God wants us not just to listen, but to obey. True faith is shown in our actions.

For Everyone:

👉 *What is one way you can "do" God's Word this week?*

For Young Children:

👦 *Can you think of something kind you can do for someone this week?*

👦 *How does doing good make God happy?*

For Teens:

👦 *What does it mean to live out your faith at school or with friends?*

👦 *How can you tell if you're just "hearing" God's Word or really "doing" it?*

3 Look at the Fruit

In Matthew 7, Jesus says we can tell who truly follows Him by their fruit, the good things that grow out of their lives. Listening to God's Word leads to good fruit: kindness, love, honesty, and courage.

For Everyone:

👉 *What kind of "fruit" does God want to see in your life?*

For Young Children:

👦 *What does a tree need to grow fruit?*

👦 *What do we need to grow good fruit for God?*

For Teens:

👦 *What kind of "fruit" shows that a person is a real follower of Jesus?*

👦 *How do you think your friends see your faith by the way you live?*

Family Object Lesson

The Mirror Example:

- Bring a mirror to the devotion time.
- Let each person look in the mirror and describe what they see.
- Then cover the mirror and ask if they remember every detail.

👉 James says hearing God's Word without doing it is like forgetting what you saw in the mirror. We need to remember and live out what God shows us.

Key Verse to Memorize

"Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." James 1:22 (NIV)

Prayer *Dear God, help us to hear Your voice above all the noise in our world. Teach us to listen carefully and obey what You say. Help us to live in a way that shows others we follow Jesus. Amen.*

This Week's Challenge

- As a family, pick one command from the Bible (like being kind, forgiving, or helping others) and practice it all week.
- At the end of the week, talk about what you learned from "doing" God's Word.