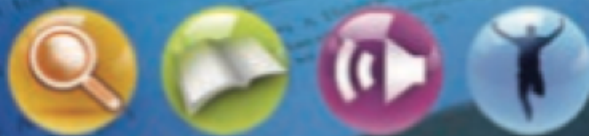


# HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

**James**  
**Work Book**



# Hearing the Word James Work Book

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*Nigel Barge, July 2017*

## Scripture Quotations taken from

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## Resources

*The New Bible Dictionary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, published by Inter Varsity Press  
*The New Bible Commentary* 21<sup>st</sup> century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP  
[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

# *Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading*



**LOOK** – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
  - a) What questions does it raise -  
*Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?*
  - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
  - a) the surrounding text
  - b) the Book of the Bible
  - c) the whole Bible
  - d) the place in the Bible Story



**LEARN** – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



**LISTEN** – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



**LIVE** – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God,  
(Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace\*
  - c) Jesus / his salvation\*\*
- 2) What should I do?

\* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

\*\* The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).

## Reading Letters in the Bible

In seeking to hear the Word of God throughout the Bible, we need to take into account the *type of literature* in which each part is written. The New Testament (from now on, 'NT') contains letters written by five Apostles of Jesus to various parts of the church of their day. They are part of the Word of God, authoritative for the church then, *and* for the church for all time.

Since 'James' is written *as a letter*, in the first instance it must be read as such. We need to take into account that letters are:

- a) *Relational*. A letter is usually addressed to a particular person or group of people and its contents apply to them. So it is in the Bible. (Here James appears to be addressing general believers in the early church.) It is only once we have grasped what was being said to *them, then* that we may generalise as to what God might be saying to *us, now*. The two will *always* be consistent.
- b) *Occasional*. Letters are one side of a 'conversation' between two people. They refer to matters in which details of situations and people are assumed to be common knowledge. A third party reading a letter needs to 'read between the lines' to work out the other side of the story. We have to understand the situation to which this Bible letter was written, so as to grasp how the writer was addressing *it*. Only then may we ask how God might apply this Word to our own circumstance.
- c) *Dated*. Letters are written at a particular time and place, and within a particular culture. So in the Bible, the letters of the first century are expressed within the habits and traditions of that day. In discerning what God might be saying to us, now, we need to separate any instructions which are 'time-bound' from principles that are *timeless*.
- d) *To be read as a whole*. When we open a letter from a friend nowadays, we read the whole thing. We recognise it as a single communication whose contents are all related. So with letters in the Bible: every part must be viewed in the context of the whole letter. Thus, it is best practice to read a Bible letter *right through*, before analysing its parts.

# Reading James

## The Author

There are at least four people called 'James' in the NT. This letter was most likely written by the one who was the *brother* of Jesus (Galatians 1:19). This James became leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 2:9). (It was probably *not* by the *disciple* James, brother of John, sons of Zebedee, (Mark 1:19, 5:37) because Herod had him killed early on (Acts 12:2) in AD 44).

## Date of writing

Contemporary historical records tell us James, the Lord's brother, was put to death by Ananus II, the high priest, in AD 62. So the letter must have been written before then, perhaps as even as early as the first persecution of the Jewish followers of Jesus in Jerusalem. (Acts 8:1)

## To whom was it written?

This is one of the seven 'general' letters in the NT, along with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John and Jude, *i.e.* it was written to the church at large, not just one locality or individual, as Paul did. The 'twelve tribes' was a title used by Jews to refer to the re-gathered people of the last days. James probably had Jewish Christians in mind, perhaps those in the coastal area north of Palestine, in Syria and perhaps also in southern parts of Asia Minor; who had scattered from Jerusalem after the persecution in Acts 8:1 (*see also* Acts 11:19)

## Paul and James

There is often a contrast made between the teaching of Paul and James on the issue of faith and works. Several facts may be relevant:

- 1) this letter is for a purely Jewish audience, (1:1)
- 2) it may have an early date being written *before* Peters acceptance of the gentile Cornelius (Acts 10) and *before* Paul's controversies over the gentiles and the Law, and works and faith,
- 3) it would appear to address a very poor and persecuted Jewish population perhaps that had been dispersed from Jerusalem. (Acts 8:1 – 11:19)

These facts may explain why the letter has a purely practical emphasis and doesn't address theological controversies. If this was the case, these were soon to come in the spreading early church with the inclusion of the gentiles. If this was the case then Paul's letter to the Galatians, addressing this situation, would then be written a few years later.

## **Why was the letter written?**

The letter implies that these Jewish believers were mainly poor people who were caught up in a situation of considerable social tension, taken advantage of by wealthy landlords (5:4-6), hauled in to court by rich people (2:7) etc

James' concern, however, is with how worldly attitudes were getting into the church. That showed in a number of ways *e.g.* fawning deference to the rich and callous indifference towards the poor (2:1-4). Most of all, Christians were 'double-minded' with respect to God, short-circuiting the effectiveness of prayer (1:5-8). They were failing to put faith into practice (1:22-27; 2:14-16)

The letter has a strong emphasis on pastoral exhortation in a tone of tender concern. James calls on them to repent from this worldliness, to humble themselves before the Lord so that He might exalt them (4:7-10) and to work hard to bring other sinners back from the errors of their ways (5:19-20).

The tone of the letter is very negative and extreme; he talks of 'filthiness and rampant wickedness' (1:21) and says 'you desire and do not have so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel' (4:2) This would suggest that either James is either having a 'bad day'(!) or that he is addressing a particular, critical circumstance. Perhaps his force would not be surprising if he is addressing a church scattered from Jerusalem by persecution and under threat of dissipation and extinction?

James' exhortations may be titled as follows:

- a) Persevere in trials (1:1-18)
- b) Obey the Word (1:19-27)
- c) Be merciful to all (2:1-13)
- d) Note - Real faith works (2:14-26)
- e) 'Watch your mouth' (3:1-12)
- f) Be wise (3:13-18)
- g) Don't judge others (taking God's place!) (4:1-12)
- h) Repent of your pride and greed (4:13 -5:1-6)
- i) Be patient and stand firm (5:7-12)
- j) Save and heal the wanderer (5:13-19)

# Study 1

# James 1:1-18

## Persevere joyfully in trials

### Background

The believers were facing tough times; that's probably James' main reason for writing to them. He wants to encourage them to persevere wholeheartedly so that they will receive the 'crown of life' God has promised them (v12).

### Word list

- |    |                        |   |
|----|------------------------|---|
| 2  | <i>my brothers</i>     | NIV adds ' <i>and sisters</i> '. James & all his readers are siblings in the family of God; James uses the term 14 times.   |
|    | <i>pure joy</i>        | Greek word <i>pas</i> emphasises the quality of the joy   |
|    | <i>trials</i>          | Greek <i>peirasmos</i> here denotes external afflictions  |
|    | <i>many kinds</i>      | he is also referring to difficulties common to all people as a result of sin  |
| 3  | <i>testing</i>         | Greek <i>dokimion</i> is rare in Bible – Ps 12:6, Prov 27:21, it refers to process by which gold & silver refined by fire   |
|    | <i>perseverance</i>    | steadfastness, endurance, staying power with which we respond to problems   |
| 4  | <i>finish, mature</i>  | same Greek word <i>teleios</i> . James uses same word in 1:17; 1:25; 2:22; where it is translated <i>perfect</i>  |
| 5  | <i>generously</i>      | or wholeheartedly   |
| 6  | <i>believe</i>         | or have faith (Matt 21:21-22)   |
|    | <i>doubt</i>           | Greek <i>diakrio</i> basically means 'to differentiate' <i>ie</i> refers not to intellectual doubt but to a conflict of loyalties <i>eg</i> God and 'the world' 4:4 |
| 10 | <i>wild flower</i>     | Palestinian flowers like anemones and cyclamens bloom in the morning but die rapidly as the heat rises  |
| 12 | <i>crown</i>           | Gk <i>stephanos</i> the victorious athlete's laurel wreath <i>ie</i> symbolising glory and honour   |
| 17 | <i>heavenly lights</i> | stars, planets, etc, including the sun and moon   |

### Bible Connections

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 2  | <i>Enduring trials</i>                      | <i>see also</i> Colossians 1:3-14; 1 Peter 3:9, 4:12                            |
| 3  | <i>Producing perseverance</i>               | <i>see also</i> Romans 5:3-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7                                     |
|    | <i>God tests us to strengthen our faith</i> | <i>see</i> Genesis 22:1; Judges 2:22; 2 Chron 32:31 <i>cf</i> 2 Kings 20:12-19. |
| 18 | <i>First fruits mean Christians</i>         | <i>see</i> 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Revelation 14:4                                |
|    | <i>of a redeemed creation</i>               | <i>see</i> Romans 8:19-23   |



# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

# LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

## **LISTEN**

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
- 2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

## **LIVE**

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace?
  - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Obey the Word!

### Background

v. 19-21. James gives a brief exhortation about speech and anger. This is a traditional theme in Jewish wisdom literature (c.f. Proverbs 10:19; 11:12-13; 13:3; 15:1; 17:27-28).

v. 22-27 pick up from v18 the topic of God's Word. They have to shun the kind of behaviour associated with the old life and begin living by the standard of the word that saved them. Obedience to the word, and the actions that result, are what really counts.

Re-birth (v18) must issue in pure religion (v27) which in turn is the practical expression of re-birth.

### Word list

- 20 lit. '*man's anger does not 'work' the righteousness of God*' – work = reflect?
- 21 *rid means strip*      The word used for stripping off clothes (c.f. Acts 7:58)  
*humbly accept the word planted in you* = accept its precepts as binding
- 22 *listen*      Gk word = serious attention and study
- 26 *religious*      only time this adjective appears in NT
- 27 *look after*      lit. 'visit' – same word as (Luke 1:68)

### Bible Connections

- 18 '*re-birth*' This concept, if not the actual word, comes in every NT section:  
 Most familiar: John's Gospel 3:3-6; and in John's letter: 1 John 3:1,9; 4:4.  
 Letters    *Paul*:    Galatians 3:26, 4:6; 2 Cor 5:17; Death/resurrection:  
                          Romans 6:5-8; 8:10-17; Ephesians 2:1,4 Colossians 3:9  
                          *Peter*    1 Peter 1:23, 2:2.  
 Synoptic Gospels: dying to sin, then following Jesus e.g. Matt 16: 24,25.
- 21 *the word implanted in you*      see Jeremiah 31:33    cf Mark 4:3-20/22
- 22 *listening to the word & acting on it*      see Romans 2:13; 6:11-14; Luke 11:28
- 27 *look after orphans and widows*      see Psalm 68:5; Isaiah 1:16-17

# LOOK

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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Be merciful to all

### Background

James applies many of the key ideas from 1:19-27 to a specific situation: discrimination against poor people within the Christian community. Consistently Christian *conduct* comes only from a consistently Christian *heart* and *mind*.

The strongly marked socio-economic class distinctions here correspond closely to what we know of conditions in first century Palestine: a small group of wealthy landowners and merchants accumulated more and more power, while large numbers were forced from their land and grew even poorer.

Most of James' readers were probably poor agricultural labourers. They were also suffering religious persecution. The irony is they were showing deference to the rich who were the very ones exploiting them and taking them to court.

### Word list

1	<i>favouritism</i>	Literally, 'receiving the face', <i>ie</i> making judgments based on outward matters like social status
	<i>Glory</i>	Literally 'as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, (the Lord) of Glory'
8	<i>if</i>	better translated 'however'
	<i>royal law</i>	Jesus' example & teaching as well as OT (Lev 19:18)

### Bible Connections

1	<i>God does not show favouritism</i>	<i>see</i> Deuteronomy 10:17-18; Leviticus 19:15 <i>c.f. also</i> Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:11,25
6	<i>exploiting the poor</i>	<i>cf</i> Amos 4:1; Ezekiel 22:7
7	<i>rich opposing the Gospel</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 13:50; 16:19; 19:23-41
8	<i>love your neighbour as yourself</i>	<i>see</i> Leviticus 19:18
13	<i>showing mercy</i>	<i>see</i> Zechariah 7:9-10; Romans 2:5-13; Matthew 6:15; 18:23ff

# LOOK

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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.



## Study 4

## James 2:14-26

### Note – real faith works!

#### Background

Paul famously preached that ‘justification’ (sinners being put right with God) was by ‘faith alone’, not by us doing the ‘works of the Law’ (Galatians 2:16 etc). However James points out that while faith is the *root* of salvation, ‘works’ are the *fruit* of it.

When God made a covenant with Abraham, Genesis 15:6 tells us ‘Abraham believed the Lord, and He credited it to him as righteousness.’ (Quoted by Paul in Romans 4:3 and Galatians 3:6.) James points out how Abraham, some years after that, was willing to offer his son Isaac on the altar. in total obedience to God (Genesis 22:1-18). Faith must show its fruit; works are the necessary, inevitable *product* of genuine saving faith. ‘

He gives a further example by referring to Rahab. By faith, this prostitute believed God was ‘the one God’ who had given the land to the Jews. This led to her action in helping the spies when they came to check out the land.

#### Word list

- |        |                             |   |
|--------|-----------------------------|---|
| 14     | <i>save</i>                 | the final deliverance from sin, death, judgement on the last day (c.f. 1:21; 4:12; 5:20)  |
|        | <i>deeds</i>                | anything done in obedience to or in service of God (and others)   |
| 15     | <i>without clothes/food</i> | In Jewish religion - Almsgiving central to practice<br>In Greek religion, the Stoics believed – happy is the serene man, detached with no pity for the poor’. |
| 20     | <i>useless</i>              | Gk <i>agros</i> barren (c.f. idle workers – Matthew 20:3,6)   |
| 21, 25 | <i>righteous</i>            | ‘declare to be right before God’, (e.g. Genesis 15:6) a law court term, when the judge pronounces a verdict, ‘Innocent’.                                      |
| 22     | <i>made complete</i>        | Gk verb means ‘to perfect’ or ‘bring to maturity’.  |
| 24     | <i>faith alone</i>          | the dead, fruitless faith of v18<br>Gk <i>mokon</i> lit. means only (c.f. 1:22)   |

#### Bible Connections

- |       |                                      |                                  |
|-------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 21-23 | <i>Abraham and Isaac</i>             | see Genesis 22:1-18              |
| 23    | <i>Abraham called ‘God’s friend’</i> | see 2 Chron 20:7; Isaiah 41:8    |
| 25    | <i>Rahab</i>                         | see Joshua 2:9-15; Hebrews 11:31 |

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  - b) His grace?
  - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## ‘Watch your mouth!’

### Background

Some commentators think 3:1 – 4:12 is aimed mainly at teachers in the Church, but it has lessons for all of us. James uses graphic images which other authors of his day also employed, to get his message across. In the tinder-dry wood and scrub of Palestine, a forest fire was almost immediately out of control.

The problem of uncontrolled speech is a frequent theme in Proverbs and other OT and Jewish wisdom literature. James also utilises other illustrations widely popular among moralists, both Greeks and Greek-speaking Jews

### Word list

1	<i>Teacher</i>	Took place of Jewish Rabbi – a revered position (Rabbi means ‘my great one)
2	<i>perfect</i> <i>the whole body</i>	<i>gk Telios</i> = end - i.e. complete <i>gk ‘olon to soma’</i> (2b,6b)
6	<i>world of evil</i>  Hell	<i>ie</i> meaning ‘opposition to God and his kingdom in this world’. <i>gk gehenna</i> valley south of Jerusalem where refuse / dead animals were burned,
11	<i>salt</i>	Greek word is ‘bitter’ (same word in v14)

### Bible Connections

1	<i>judged more strictly</i> <i>danger of false teachers</i>	<i>see</i> Luke 12:48; Mark 12:40 <i>see</i> 1 Tim 1:6,7; 2 Tim 4:3 c.f. Mt 23:1ff
6	<i>sins of the tongue</i> <i>‘world’ as opposition to God</i> <i>destructive effect of loose words</i>	<i>see</i> Romans 3:13-14; Matt 15:11, 18-19 <i>see</i> John 15:18-19; 17:6-18 <i>see</i> Proverbs 16:27; 26:21; Is 30:27

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  - b) His grace?
  - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Embrace Godly Wisdom

### Background

The wrong kind of wisdom is characterised by envy, selfishness and disorder (v14-16) whereas the right kind is, above all, ‘peace-loving’ (v17).

The Greeks considered humility to be a vice or weakness.

James seems to use the term ‘wisdom’ in 13-17 almost as equivalent to Paul’s use of the name, ‘Holy Spirit’. The fruit of wisdom in vv17 and 18 has echoes of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22ff.

### Word list

13	<i>humility</i>	<i>lit ‘meekness’</i> (c.f. Matthew 5:5)
14	<i>selfish ambition</i>	a single Greek word. In Aristotle it refers to the narrow partisan zeal of factional, greedy politicians
16	<i>disorder</i>	a restless, unsettled state
17	<i>pure</i>	moral blamelessness
	<i>submissive</i>	<i>i.e.</i> open to reason – not argumentative?
18	<i>harvest of righteousness</i>	the harvest which consists of righteousness

### Bible Connections

13	<i>humility</i>	Matthew 11:29,5:5
15	<i>true wisdom comes from God</i>	<i>see</i> Proverbs 2:6
17	<i>wisdom that comes from heaven</i>	<i>cf</i> Galatians 5:22-23
18	<i>peacemakers</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 5:9

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

# LEARN

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- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Study 7

## James 4:1-12

### Don't judge others (and take God's place!)

#### Background

James is speaking very directly to the church here, using 2<sup>nd</sup> person instead of 3<sup>rd</sup> person as he looks at wrong attitudes and actions in the church fellowship which are leading to conflict. The conflicts could be verbal, physical or both. He is dealing with believers who have at one time been in fellowship with God and who by their worldliness have since drifted away from him.

Their prayers were not answered because they were asking from wrong motives *c.f.* Matthew 7:7; 6:9-10

The OT uses the metaphor of Marriage to show the relationship between God (the husband) and his people, the church (the wife). When they are unfaithful to him it is like 'adultery'. James uses this image to name the people's 'friendship with the world' as 'spiritual adultery' and urges them to repent.

#### Word list

2 Greek has no punctuation. Better: 'You want ..... don't get it; (so) you kill. You covet but can't have what you want; (so) you quarrel & fight.

- |    |                                     |   |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|
| 4  | <i>desires</i>                      | sinful, self-indulgent pleasures  |
|    | <i>adulterous</i>                   | metaphorical: In OT people described as being unfaithful to God (e.g. Hosea 1:2)                  |
|    | <i>world</i>                        | <i>ie</i> culture, structures and procedures organised without reference to God                   |
| 7  | <i>devil</i>                        | Satan, the tempter (Matt 4:3; 1 Thess 3:5)  |
| 8  | <i>wash your hands, you sinners</i> | Ritual prior to worship in OT (Exodus 30:19-21. Became a symbol for moral purity (Isaiah 1:16-17) |
|    | <i>double-minded</i>                | one who has divided motives   |
| 11 | <i>the law</i>                      | the OT law <i>e.g.</i> <i>Leviticus 19:16</i>   |

#### Bible Connections

- |          |  |  |
|----------|--|--|
| 4        | <i>desires</i>                                       | <i>see</i> Luke 8:14; Titus 3:3; 2 Peter 2:13                  |
| 5        | <i>God's jealousy</i>                                | <i>see</i> Exodus 20:5, 34:14; Zechariah 8:2                   |
| 6-10     | <i>humble submission</i>                             | <i>c.f.</i> 1 Peter 5:5-9                                      |
| 6        | <i>God opposes the proud . . .</i>                   | <i>see</i> Proverbs 3:34                                       |
| 7        | <i>Come near to God and he will come near to you</i> | <i>c.f.</i> Exodus 3:1-6; 2 Chronicles 26:16-20 Heb 4:16; 7:19 |
| 11b, 12c | Don't judge  | Matthew 7:1-5  |
| 12       | Only God has authority to judge                      | <i>see</i> John 5:22-23, 30.                                   |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

# LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

## **LISTEN**

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
- 2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

## **LIVE**

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace?
  - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Study 8

## James 4:13-5:6

### Repent of your pride and greed

#### Background

James tackles the arrogant pride of some much-travelled business people. The first century AD was a period of great commercial activity, involving especially the Hellenistic cities of Palestine. Many Jews were active in these businesses. James wants the church members to appreciate sincerely God's control of affairs and his specific will for them.

In first century Palestine before AD70, land was increasingly held by a small group of very wealthy landowners. Smallholders were assimilated into these estates and these farmers were forced to earn their living by hiring themselves out to their rich landlords *cf* Jesus' parable in Matt 20:1-16. Paying workers by the day was an OT command.: Deut. 24:14-15; Leviticus 19:13; Malachi 3:5

In 5:1-6, James condemns the wealthy landowners who oppressed their workers and the poor. Their inclusion here does not necessarily imply they are part of the Christian church; James warns all who behave like this, judgment is coming to them.

#### Word list

4:13	<i>listen, you who say</i>	the language conveys a rather brusque tone
14	<i>mist</i>	or 'a puff of smoke'
5: 3	<i>eat your flesh like fire</i>	an image of God's judgment
4	<i>Lord almighty</i>	lit. 'Lord of Hosts' i.e. head of the army
6	<i>condemned</i>	a judicial term used in courts
	<i>innocent men ..not opposing</i>	lit. 'the righteous man; he does not resist you.'

#### Bible Connections

4:14	<i>the short duration of life</i>	see Proverbs 27:1; Job 7:7,9,16; Psalm 39:5-6; Luke 12:16-20
4:16	<i>arrogant self-sufficiency</i>	see John 12:16; Romans 1:30; 2 Tim 3:4
4:18	<i>not doing the good one ought</i>	see Luke 19:11-27; Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 12:47
5:4	<i>unpaid wages 'cry out against you'</i>	Leviticus 19:13b; Deuteronomy 24:15; Malachi 3:5

# LOOK

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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

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## Save and heal the “wanderer”

### Background

The subject of this final section is judgement (5:7,9,11,12,15,16,17,18, 19,20)  
The early church, like Jesus, knew neither the day nor the hour when He would return (Mark 13:32). James urges them to be patient, just as a Palestinian farmer waits for autumn rains in Oct-Nov before sowing, then on the spring rains in March-April for the swelling and ripening of the crop, to give the best yield. James thus urges patience – the judge is standing at the door’ (9)

James uses the example of OT prophets who persevered in the face of opposition or suffering. Job complained, but he never gave up his trust or disobeyed God. *c.f.* Hebrews 11.

The next section (13-17) is about prayer for the sick and it seems to guarantee healing for all in all circumstances. Such an answer to prayer is not our general experience. Perhaps James is addressing such sickness as in (1 Corinthians 11:30). ‘Many are sick and some have fallen asleep’. Repentance and confession of sin, James promises, would bring God’s healing and forgiveness. He sums up by encouraging the believers to save the wanderers.

### Word list

7	<i>coming</i>	Gk <i>Parousia</i> became a technical term in early church for the expected return of Jesus in glory to judge the wicked and rescue the saints
8	<i>stand firm</i>	<i>literally</i> ‘establish your hearts’
11	<i>blessed</i>	the objective, unalterable approval and reward of God
12	<i>swear</i>	using God’s name to guarantee what we say is true.
	<i>condemnation</i>	= judgement (same root as judge in 5:9)
13	<i>suffering</i>	General term – all kinds of trials cf (2Tim 2:9; 4:5)
	<i>Cheerful</i>	not dependent on outer circumstances (Acts 27:22,25)
14	<i>elders</i>	<i>presbuteroi</i> , Jewish leadership e.g. (Acts 6:12) copied by the church e.g. (Acts 11:30; 14:22; 20:17) tasked to be ‘overseers’, <i>episcopoi</i> , often translated ‘bishops’ in English e.g. Acts 20:28)
	<i>anoint with oil</i>	a symbolic action <i>see also</i> Mark 6:13
15	<i>prayer</i>	Gk word implies a strong, fervent wish or petition

### Bible Connections

7	<i>endure patiently</i>	<i>see</i> Psalm 37
	<i>the Lord’s coming</i>	<i>see</i> Matt 2:37,39; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; 1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:3; 4:15; 5:23



- 10 *the Lord's compassion and mercy* see Psalm 103:8; 111:4
- 12 *do not swear* see Matthew 5:34-37
- 13 *pray on all occasions* see Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17
- 14 *in the Lord's name* see John 14:14; 15:16 16:23; Acts 3:6,16; 4:7,10
- 15 *sin and sickness* see Mark 2:3-12; 1 Corinthians 11:27-30
- Healing not inevitable* see 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- 17 *Elijah prayed...* 1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-46
- 3 1/2 years – judgment* Daniel 7:25; Revelation 11:12; 12:

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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

# Sharing the Word

## Use

*'Hearing the Word'* can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

## Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers. \*

## Format

- a. LOOK - Any questions? (If answer is known or not!)  
Relevant cross references in rest of the Bible?
- b. LEARN - Answers to questions?
- c. LISTEN - Key verse and Main Point?
- d. LIVE - What does it show about God /His grace/ Jesus?  
What should I do

**n.b.** Leave plenty of time for the LIVE section!

By also eating together and a time of prayer, you will have shared something of the life of the early church! (Acts 2:42-47)

## Remember!

As we gather round God's Word -

- a) Listen to the views of others.
- b) Make room for the novice. (They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'.)
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others, especially 'seekers', in your time together.

\* The **process** is explained and practiced in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**

<https://hearingtheword.org.uk>



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