

# JAMES

A FAITH THAT WORKS

## Life Group Material



Bracken Ridge  
BAPTIST CHURCH

A photograph of Francis Chan, a man with a goatee and a shaved head, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He is leaning on a stone wall, looking out over a body of water towards a hazy, distant shoreline. The background is a soft-focus view of the ocean and a distant city skyline under a clear sky.

THE BOOK OF  
**JAMES**

FRANCIS CHAN

True faith produces fruit. A faith without action and without life change is ultimately a dead faith. The book of James speaks to the realities of a living faith in Jesus—the kind of roll-up-your-sleeves and get-your-hands-dirty discipleship that is borne out of an authentic relationship with the risen Lord. James writes to believers who know suffering, who've faced trials, and who ultimately desire a deep relationship with God.

Francis Chan unpacks the dense truth contained in the book of James in front of the iconic backdrop of San Francisco, the city where he lives and ministers. Through 12 sessions, Francis works through James verse-by-verse, challenging followers of Christ to move beyond a private, intellectual knowledge of God and His Word, to a vibrant faith that impacts every square inch of life.

# Accessing The Material

On the following pages you will find all of the information needed to go through the James Life Group Material. There are corresponding videos that can be accessed through our "RightNow Media" account with the church. If you don't have an account, simply go to [rightnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/BrackenRidgeBaptistChurch](https://rightnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/BrackenRidgeBaptistChurch). After creating an account simply search "The Book Of James" to access the 12 weeks or click [HERE](#) if viewing on your computer.

**rightnow** MEDIA

If you are unable for some reason to access the material through these different means, please simply email [office@brbc.org.au](mailto:office@brbc.org.au) or call 07 3261 5045.

*Bracken Ridge*  
BAPTIST CHURCH



# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## HANDOUT

### Session 1: James 1:1-12

#### ■ DISCUSS

According to verse 1, who was the author of this letter?

Who was James? How does he describe himself?

Why do you think James didn't introduce himself as the brother of Jesus? Wouldn't it help to say, "I know what I'm talking about, because I knew Jesus like a brother—in fact, I am His brother"?

According to verse 1, who are the recipients of this letter?

What does that mean? Why does James say it that way?

According to James 1:2 and the following verses, how should we react when times get tough?

Why? What is the end result of this "testing"?

Do you remember what Francis Chan said about the word "testing" in the video? What word pictures did he paint for us?

Do you think people expect God to make them happy? Is that a wrong idea?

If you made this the “goal of your life,” to grow in holiness even if it meant suffering, how would that change your life? What decisions would you make differently? How would you have to adjust your priorities?

Is that a realistic idea?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Conversation:** Some of us complain a lot. What if we followed James and started considering our troubles “pure joy”? Who could you contact this week—by email, phone, text, or in person—and instead of complaining, tell them about the way God is helping you grow?

**Journaling:** Write about your struggles. Don't hold back. Complain all you want. But then go back to your journal the next day and jot some notes in the margins about how God might be making you “mature and complete.”

**Memorization:** Learn James 1:2-3, and maybe verse 4. This will be a powerful support to you in your toughest times.

**Prayer:** Consider others you know who are going through difficulties. Ask God to help them grow.

**Influence:** Have you seen spiritual growth in someone else who has gone through trials? Tell them so.



THE BOOK OF **JAMES**

## HANDOUT

### Session 2: James 1:13-18

#### ■ DISCUSS

Earlier in the chapter, we learned that God uses trials to help us grow. But here James is talking about temptation. What's the difference?

Why is it important that we NOT blame our temptation on God?

According to Francis Chan, how is temptation like fishing?

Verses 14-15 describe something we might call the "life cycle of desire." What are the stages?

Does "evil desire" always bring forth "death"? How does this happen? What examples could you give?

In light of this, what's the best way to deal with our "evil desires"?

Why do you think James suddenly starts talking about "every good and perfect gift" in verse 17, after talking about evil desires? Is he just changing the subject (which he does sometimes), or is there a connection?

Why does he call God "the Father of lights"? What does that have to do with giving gifts?

How has God “brought us forth by the word of truth”?

What does he mean by “firstfruits of his creatures”?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Memorization:** Learn 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 4:15–16; Matthew 26:41; Psalm 51:10; and/or another verse that applies to a particular temptation you struggle with.

**Journaling:** Write about your temptations and how you respond, but also about the joys you experience when you resist temptation. How does your relationship with God grow and soar when you trust Him?

**Prayer:** Think about others you know who are being tempted. Pray that God will strengthen them. But don't let these be proud prayers—“watch yourself, or you also may be tempted” (Galatians 6:1). Include The Lord's Prayer in this devotional time, with special focus on “Lead us not into temptation.”

**Accountability:** Look for others you can share your struggles with. Can you arrange to meet with them every week or two, and let them know how you're doing? Fighting temptation can be a lonely business, but it doesn't have to be. When you know there's someone else holding you accountable, it might give you additional strength.

**Joining or Volunteering:** Our culture is full of temptations, and there are many whose lives have been ravaged by greed, lust, pride, or addictions of various sorts. There are also ministries that help those strugglers. Is there one you could connect with—as a volunteer, donor, or fellow struggler?



# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## HANDOUT

### Session 3: James 1:19-27

#### ■ DISCUSS

James tells us to be “quick to hear, slow to speak.” Have you had situations where you did the opposite—slow to hear, quick to speak? What’s the problem with that?

What does James say about anger?

Is there such a thing as “righteous indignation”? Do you think that sometimes God wants us to get angry about certain things? Then what do you do with verse 20?

What “word” is he talking about in verse 21? How is it “implanted” in us? (Is this the same as the “word of truth” in verse 18, through which we were “brought forth”? What’s the connection?)

Moving on to James 1:22, how do we “deceive ourselves” by just listening to God’s Word?

What is that mirror thing all about (in James 1:23-24)?



Do you think it's really "worthless" to hear God's Word without doing it? Why or why not?

In verse 25, what does James call God's law?

In what way is the law "a law of liberty"? Wouldn't you think it does the opposite?

Verses 26-27 focus on "religion." How would you define "religion"?

Do you think of religion as a good thing or not? Do you think your neighbors think of religion as a good thing?

With that in mind, do you think James is using the term "religion" in a positive way? Why or why not?

In verses 26-27, how does James define "religion"?

There are three specific actions he includes in his definition. What are they?

Why do you think he mentions these three? Aren't there other good deeds he could name?

## LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Memorization:** Learn James 1:22. Perhaps you could write it out on a card, which you put (appropriately) on your mirror.

**Conversation:** Do you need to develop the ability to be “quick to hear, slow to speak”? Is there a particular person in your life with whom you should do more listening? Work on this. You might even think of some questions to ask in your next conversation. Focus on them, not on your own responses.

**Journaling:** If you have a Bible study journal, add this component. If not, try journaling this week. Take the next six pages and put four headings on each page. Read. Think. Pray. Do! Then select Scriptures to read each day. As you do, record your thoughts on the text, write out key words of a prayer, and then—because of James—figure out something God would like you to *do* in response to that text. Oh, yeah—and then do it.

**Prayer:** Pray specifically about two things this week. (1) Your anger. (Even if you're not hot-tempered, do you “stuff” your anger and let it turn into bitterness?) (2) Soul pollution. Ask God to show you ways you might be getting “polluted” by the world.

**“Widows and Orphans.”** In many parts of Scripture—and here in James—we are urged to care for the neediest members of society. In your area, who are these people, and how can you help? It's possible they are, literally, widows and orphans, having suffered the loss of a family member. But also consider the homeless, the hospitalized, retirees, special-needs children and adults, the unemployed, immigrants, prisoners, etc. See if your church has a ministry you could support and become involved with, but also consider parachurch ministries and other charities.





# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## HANDOUT

### Session 4: James 2:1-13

#### ■ DISCUSS

Okay, let's be honest. Suppose the scene described in verses 2-3 were to happen this week in our church. What do you think would happen? How would we treat the two people differently?

In James 2:5-7, what does it say about the poor and the rich?

How does this connect with the previous point about favoritism?

Do you think James is promoting a "reverse favoritism," in which we welcome and honor the poor more than the rich?

What is the "royal law" James mentions in verse 8?

How does showing favoritism break that law?

According to verses 10-12, how would James respond to someone who said, "I've kept seven of the Ten Commandments. That's a passing grade, right?"

In James 2:12, James speaks again of the "law of liberty" (see 1:25). But his previous comments seem to be more restrictive, forcing us to keep every point in the law. How does the law give us freedom?

Two key words appear in verse 13. Let's define them. What is judgment? What is mercy?

How does the idea of mercy bring us back to the matter of showing favoritism?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

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**Memorization:** Learn the Beatitudes. Matthew 5:3-12 or Luke 6:20-26. In a succinct way, these describe the reordering of the world from God's perspective.

**Seek Counsel:** If you have been working hard to keep God's rules, and you're troubled by this assertion that breaking even one command makes you a lawbreaker, talk with a pastor or teacher about this. Ask how to unpack the idea of God's "mercy."

**Evaluation:** If you are in a position of authority in the church, take this opportunity to evaluate the church's response to visitors—not just the stated policies, but the actual behaviors. Is favoritism shown? If so, what can you do about it?

**Serving:** Can you get involved in a ministry to the poor and homeless in your community? Many such ministries need volunteers and financial support. If you can't find one to connect with, perhaps you could start one.

**Spiritual-Financial Audit:** This might be a good time to talk with your spouse and family about the financial decisions you make. How do your spiritual principles come into play? This is more than just a review of your fiscal security, but a chance to ask, "Where does our security really come from?" How can you as a family keep from loving, serving, or trusting in money, while still being good stewards?

**Prayer:** Consider offering a prayer of confession, individually or with others. Ask for forgiveness if you have shown favoritism to the rich, disregarded the poor, or worshiped money.



# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## HANDOUT

### Session 5: James 2:14-26

#### ■ DISCUSS

In verses 15-16, James gives us a YouTube video, sort of. It would be a clever comedy sketch if it weren't so sad. How does it go?

What's the answer to the question in verse 16? What good is it to offer good wishes but no practical help?

In verse 18, we see two kinds of faith. How are they described?

So then, verse 19 is referring to the "without works" kind of faith. What does it say about that kind of faith?

Why do you think James chooses the oneness of God as the example of basic faith, and not, say, the atoning death of Jesus?

In James 2:20-24, there's reference to Abraham as proof of the point. What's the argument here? How does Abraham prove that "faith without works is useless"?

How did these actions demonstrate Abraham's faith?

James quotes a verse from Genesis (15:6). What does that say about Abraham's faith? What does it say about his works?

How did Abraham's actions in Genesis 22 "fulfill" the statement of Genesis 15:6?

Do you think it's significant that the faith of Genesis 15 came several chapters before the works of Genesis 22? Does faith generally come first?

Take a look at verse 25. Why would James go on to talk about Rahab?

What do you know about Rahab? What was her occupation?

How did she get herself mentioned in the Bible?

Isn't it a mistake for James to mention a prostitute as an example of good works? Why would he do this?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Evaluation:** Talk with God about your own faith. Do you have “faith with works” or “faith without works”? Ask him to give you the power you need to put your faith into action.

**Conversation:** Talk with at least one other close Christian friend about this question: Is my faith more on the inside or the outside? Both are good. Both are important. But if you just feel your faith and don't show it, you're out of balance. (It's also possible to tilt the other way, doing stuff for God, but not taking time for personal growth.)

**Research:** James is very specific about the needs we should be responding to—the needs of widows and orphans, as well as those who need food or clothing. Where do these needs exist in your region? And what are the best ways to help such people? Join with some others in a research project, and share your findings with this group, or your whole church.

**Serving:** Can you put yourself on a regular schedule of volunteering with some ministry or charity? Tutoring each week? Staffing a soup kitchen each month? Doing a work day once a quarter? Don't just think about doing these things. Plan something and do it.

**Donation:** Some ministries are desperate for funds. Challenge your church leaders to support worthy helping ministries, and lead by example by giving your money to support them as well.





A background image of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California, with the bridge's red towers and suspension cables visible against a hazy sky.

# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## HANDOUT

### Session 6: James 3:1-12

#### ■ DISCUSS

If you were publishing this passage as an article or a blog post, what title would you give it?

Why do you think James wrote this? What problem was occurring that he was trying to correct?

Who is being “called out” by James in verse 1? Why do you think teachers will be judged with greater strictness?

What do you think verse 2 has to do with verse 1? Is it explaining the behavior of errant teachers, excusing them, or just generally instructing us?

We see the word body at the end of verse 2. That word can actually mean several different things in the New Testament. What do you think it means here?

How does mastery of one’s speech keep the whole body in check?

Have you ever seen a church dispute settled by a leader who spoke wisely, clearly, and kindly? How did that happen?

How is the tongue like a bit in a horse's mouth?

How is it like the rudder of a ship?

How is it like a fire?

Do you think these comparisons make more sense regarding individual behavior or regarding leadership of a church? Or perhaps both?

Do you think it's really impossible to "tame the tongue," as it says in verse 8?

How would a person do this? If you tried to tame your speaking habits, how would you go about it?

How would you describe the situation in verses 9-12?

Who is James talking about? What can we guess about these people?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Memorization:** Learn James 3:9-10. This isn't your normal type of memory verse, but it might prove helpful in real-life situations.

**Stop-Phrase:** When you find yourself speaking badly about someone, stop—in mid-sentence if you need to. Find a phrase to run through your mind in those cases. Maybe it's James 3:9-10. Maybe it's just "This should not be." Or maybe it's a more positive statement like "Bless the Lord, O my soul" or the prayer from Psalm 19:14.

**Encouragement:** Think of three people you can encourage this week, and do so. Be as specific as possible. Can you bolster their confidence or their faith?

**Thanks:** Who has encouraged you in the past? Who has spoken words into your life that truly helped you? Can you find them and thank them for that?

**Media Fast:** Many of us learn unkind habits of communication from talk radio, cable news, or online videos. If this is a problem for you, engage in a "fast," abstaining from those media sources for a period of time—perhaps the next seven days. Then re-evaluate.





# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## HANDOUT

### Session 7: James 3:13-18

#### ■ DISCUSS

Verse 13 starts off with a question, so let's answer it. Who is the wisest person you know, or have known?

Why do you say that? How did they show their wisdom?

We started off today by talking about our best subjects in school. Were these wise people in your life also the smartest people you've known? Or is wisdom something different from intelligence?

What do verses 13-15 tell us about what wisdom is and isn't?

Verse 13 talks about a "good conduct"? How would you define that? What kind of "good conduct" does a wise person exhibit?

Why is meekness part of true wisdom?

Have you known people who thought they were wise but really weren't? Were they meek? Did they show humility?

In these passages, what is the relationship between wisdom and boasting?

In James 3:16-17 we see descriptions of the “fruits” of true wisdom and false wisdom. What’s the difference? How can we tell them apart?

What does it mean for wisdom to be “pure”?

How can wisdom be “open to reason”?

What do you think verse 18 means?

What can you do to promote peace that yields “a harvest of righteousness”?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Prayer:** James 1:5 invites us to ask God for wisdom. As Francis Chan suggested in the video, “Say, ‘God, I’ve been pursuing success, I’ve been pursuing riches, I’ve been pursuing knowledge but I see in Scripture now wisdom is what you value and it should be what I value...Give me the wisdom I need to navigate through this life in a way that honors you.’”

**Memorization:** Learn the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:3-10. Or at least create some mnemonic way to remember the eight qualities that Jesus describes there.

**Study:** Do a computer (or concordance) word search through the Bible for “wisdom” and/or “wise.” Pick ten verses from different books (not all from Proverbs!) and study them.

**Honor:** Do something to honor a person whose wisdom you have been blessed by. If the person is still living, thank them by telling them what they have taught you. If they have passed, then thank God for them, and find some way to commemorate their effect on your life.

**Evaluation:** Do this with a kind, humble heart. Name the 5 to 8 opinion leaders in your life—people in church, school, work, the media, etc.—whose ideas you regularly pay attention to. Based on the teaching in James 3:13-18, do you feel these people are speaking God's wisdom into your life? This is not an invitation to pride, criticism, or a divisive spirit on your part—just a way to check your regular input with the descriptions of heavenly wisdom we learned today.





# HANDOUT

## Session 8: James 4:1-12

### ■ DISCUSS

Before we dig into the text, let's talk about that video. Why do you think they shot this part in the prison at Alcatraz?

Did it add a particular meaning or feeling to the things that Francis Chan was saying?

According to verse 1, where do fights and quarrels come from?

How do you feel about the word "murder" in verse 2? Does that surprise you? Do you think it belongs there? Were these people really killers?

In verses 2-4 there are three words that are also found in the Ten Commandments. Can you find them?

Do you think this is intentional? Why would James want to tell his readers how they were breaking the Ten Commandments?

What do verses 2-3 tell us about the spiritual life of James's audience?

When they did ask God for things, what do you think they were asking for?

Is verse 4 saying that we shouldn't be friends with non-Christians? What is it saying?

So just when we're lined up for a smackdown from our holy God, what do we get in verse 6?

What is our best response to this? How can we access God's grace?

How can we "cleanse our hands" and "purify our hearts"?

Why should we turn "joy to gloom"? Is it wrong to be joyful?

How will God "exalt" us?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Humble Prayer:** In biblical times they wore rough sackcloth and sprinkled ashes on themselves to come humbly before God. What could you do to show God (and remind yourself of) your humility? Kneel? Wear a dirty shirt? Put soil on your face? The specifics don't matter as much as your attitude. Take a good long time to listen to God. Ask about the things He cares about. Ask what He wants for you. Confess your sins and receive His forgiveness. Ask again for wisdom.

**Memorization:** Learn James 4:7-8.

**Peacemaking:** Are there "fights and quarrels" in your life? If you're not seeing eye to eye with someone, do what you can to set that relationship right.

**Service:** Find a humble way to serve your church or community. Clean up, fix up, help those who routinely get neglected. This is not about you getting props for a good deed, but about showing the love of God to others.



The background of the page features a photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California. The bridge's red-orange towers and suspension cables are visible against a hazy sky. The bridge spans across the water, with the city skyline in the distance.

# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## HANDOUT

### Session 9: James 4:13–17

#### ■ DISCUSS

What attitude about our plans is James targeting here?

James talks about “arrogant schemes”? How would you define arrogance?

Do you think it is arrogant to declare your plans without first actually saying the words, “If the Lord wills?”

What value do we get from reminding ourselves that our plans ultimately depend on God? Does that change what we do, or how we do it?

Is James saying we shouldn’t make plans for the future? What’s the point of making long-range plans if you don’t know what tomorrow will bring?

The example James uses specifically refers to “business.” Isn’t it essential for businesses to do planning? How could a businessperson run a business according to this teaching from James?

How does it make you feel to be compared to “a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes”? Does it make you feel insignificant, or does it encourage you to live in the now, or something else?

Why do you think James uses that image?

Verse 17 raises some questions. First, what does it mean? How would you put that in your own words?

Now what is it doing here? Does it go with the previous section about making plans? Or should it be put with the next chapter about rich people?

How would the original readers of this epistle feel about what James says in verse 17?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Prayer:** What plans do you have for your life, your family, your home, your business, your church? Talk with God about these, and then listen. What does He think about all this? If your plans involve others, get them in on the praying, too.

**Chart:** Look back through your life and choose 1 to 3 plans that you made long enough ago to see them develop. Then trace the development of those plans. Did things turn out as you wanted or expected? How did you interact with God through all of that? Did He lead in a certain way and then change directions? Map this process out as creatively as you can, and then examine that “map” of your life. What can you learn from that?

**Seek Counsel:** As you consider plans for the future, find a wise Christian friend to consult with. Pray with them and ask their advice on determining the direction where God might be leading you.

**Dare:** Is there something God has been nudging you to do for Him that you've been resisting? Maybe you're worried about what people will think, or you might consider the action dangerous in some way. Keep tuning in to God's direction here. Get appropriate advice from others who are close to God, but then dare to do it—in the spirit of James 4:17.



THE BOOK OF **JAMES**

## HANDOUT

### Session 10: James 5:1-6

#### ■ DISCUSS

How would you describe the tone of this passage?

Who is James addressing in this section?

What is he predicting for them?

Why will this happen?

Do you think this is written to all “rich” people ever, to rich people in that time and place, or just to the rich people who were guilty of exploitation?

In James 5:1, what’s the first thing James wants the “rich” people to do?

How do you think this compares with their current attitude? (Do they spend a lot of time “weeping and howling”?)

Why would this be important? What is there to weep about?



How can we use the resources we have, such as they are, to help the poor?

What can we do to make sure that poor workers are not exploited, that they get a fair wage for their work?

Where are we storing our treasure? How can we break free from the idolatry of money and all the things it buys? How can we seek first God's kingdom?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Review:** Think back through the group discussions today. Were there any ideas that you could try out in the coming weeks?

**Read:** Isaiah 58. This chapter bears a lot of similarities to the book of James. People were religious, proud of their frequent fasting. But God challenges them to a new kind of devotion—caring for the needy, treating workers fairly, etc. Then that will open up a whole new kind of relationship with God.

**Prayer of Confession and Commitment:** Talk with God honestly and humbly about the role of money and possessions in your life.

**Research:** Find out more about exploitation in our world today. Share your findings with other believers. Pray together about what you could do to change things.

**Budget:** Examine your household budget. How do your expenditures reflect your spiritual priorities? What might need to change?



# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## HANDOUT

### Session 11: James 5:7-12

#### ■ DISCUSS

James is talking a lot about patience (using the word four times in four verses). According to verse 7, what did people need to be patient about?

What analogy does James use there in verse 7?

Have you ever planted a vegetable garden? How long does it seem to take from when you first plant the seeds to when you get to bring in the first ripe vegetable and cook it up?

How does this experience compare to waiting for Jesus' return?

James says in verse 11 that those who persevere through suffering are "blessed." What does he mean by that?

How does James 1:2-4 fill out your idea of the blessedness of suffering?

Have you ever heard suffering referred to as "the human condition?" What does that mean?

Is it true? Is suffering part of what it means to be human?

What other types of suffering have you seen or even experienced?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Gut-Level Prayer:** Sometimes when you're suffering, praying can be difficult—especially if you're trying to mind your manners with God and pray correctly. Remember that prayer is open and honest communication with God. Take Job's example and let God know just how miserable you are, just how angry, sad, scared, or confused you may be. Tell Him exactly how you feel. You aren't fooling Him by trying to keep a secret from Him.

**Listening:** Find out someone else's story. People become resilient through perseverance. When someone is going through a terrible time of suffering, it may seem like it's never going to end and hopelessness takes over. Even Job asked God to crush him and cut off his life so that his pain and misery would end. But Job persevered, and so have many, many people. Go to someone in your family, someone in your church, or someone else you know who has come through suffering. Ask to hear that person's story.

**Sit with the suffering:** It's good to pray for those who are suffering, and you should pray for them. But, sometimes they need someone just to be there with them, to comfort them and let them talk and hold their hand. You don't have to have answers, especially to the question, "Why is this happening?" You can say, "I don't know, but I'm here for you."

**Research and support:** In various parts of the world, Christians are suffering for their faith. Research their struggles. Pray for them. Connect with an organization that helps them.

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# THE BOOK OF JAMES

## HANDOUT

### Session 12: James 5:13–20

#### ■ DISCUSS

How would you define prayer? What is it?

James 5:13–14 seems to give us a menu: For different situations, here's what to do. Let's parse that out. What situations are mentioned? What course of action is recommended for each one?

Let's say that all three courses of action are some form of prayer. How would these types of prayer differ from one another?

Why is it important to get the church leaders involved in prayer for a sick person?

Is there more value in praying with other believers than in praying by yourself?

Is verse 15 telling us that every physical illness has a spiritual cause? What's the connection between sickness and sin?

What do you say to God when you're sick? Is this a time when you ignore God, or pay more attention to Him?

Do you think verse 15 guarantees healing if the people praying are faithful enough? Have you found this to be the case? Is every sick person healed when they're properly prayed for?

The end of verse 16 has a sentence that many people know and often quote. “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” What do you think that means?

So let’s ask the natural question: Who is righteous? Are we righteous? How do we become righteous? What distinguishes the righteous from the unrighteous?

Why do you think “confessing your sins to each other” is so important for healing and answered prayers?

As you look at the last two verses of James, how do they connect to the rest of this chapter? Can you make any sense of it?

If we’re right about the readers being like Pharisees—and take a glance at 4:11 to support that notion—how would they normally treat someone who “wanders from the truth”?

## ■ LIVE IT OUT

*The book of James emphasizes the active side of our faith, so let's consider several ways we might put its teaching into practice.*

**Prayer Journal:** Begin keeping a prayer journal, in which you record the things you pray for. Plan to check back periodically to see how God is changing the situation, and how He's changing you.

**Group Prayer:** If you don't already do this, connect with other believers for group prayer. Talk with a few friends about getting together on a regular basis to pray for the needs of your church and community.

**Care for the Sick:** Do you know anyone who's sick? How can you help them? Are there practical matters—errands to run—you could attend to? How could you encourage them? And don't neglect prayer—for and with the sick person.

**Study Elijah:** The character of Elijah is fascinating. Pick the story up in 1 Kings 17, and follow him until he gets swept up to heaven in 2 Kings 2. Do a name search to find other Bible passages that mention Elijah. Consider how his "passions" made him such an effective pray-er.

**Connect with Wanderer:** Do you know anyone who is wandering from the faith? What can you do to reach out to this person? Pray a lot before you do anything. Listen for God's direction. And remember all of James's cautions about the tongue. Don't spew harsh judgment, but express your love and concern.



# *Bracken Ridge*

BAPTIST CHURCH

