

Friends Bible Study: June 2015

All verses in New Living Translation unless noted. Jill's commentary in blue.

For the next few months over summer, we will be discussing the book of James. It's a reminder of how to live what we believe, a "how-to" book on Christian life.

James 1:2-4 ² Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. *This doesn't mean we need to pretend to be happy or joyful in trouble, but try to stay positive, understanding God is with us and aware of our trials. When things cause our faith to be tested, we do grow deeper in our faith if we call upon Him to see us through the trial. This not only will help us but others as well in subsequent situations. Trust and weather the storms of life clinging to and growing in Him. Seek Him First...*

James 1:5-8 ⁵ If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. ⁶ But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do. *Seek God and His wisdom, not His approval on our plan or choice. When seeking, trust only in Him, otherwise we will forever be/feel unsettled and torn between ourselves, this world and His will for us.*

James 1:12-17 ¹² God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. ¹⁴ Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. ¹⁵ These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death. *Don't cave to temptation, it's not God. Push out the negative, sinful thoughts. Call upon Him instead to help, then choose to obey only Him.*

¹⁶ So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. *God is omnipresent and never changes, we can trust in Him, His good and perfect will for us, for it will never change according to anything of this world. His plan is always good for us. (Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.")*

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James 1: 19 19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. *When we listen first and are slow to respond, it gives us the time to say or act according to God's way and not our first instinct which may be more of this world. This can be so difficult in the midst of an emotional or unsettling situation, but when we act in this manner, we will never regret our words or actions.*

James 1: 22 22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. *Just listen and do what God word's guides and instructs us to do, it will always be the best way. Sometimes, we think we know better, but God is all knowing, all powerful, trust in Him.*

James 1:26 26 If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. *Control our tongue! Goes along with quick to listen, slow to speak. Words can harm and once said are hard to take back. Think before we speak, we need to ask ourselves if it needs to be said, is it helpful, kind or necessary. Difficult in the heat of the moment, but in the long run is always best.*

James 2: 1-6a, 8-9, 12-13 My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?

2 For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. 3 If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor"—well, 4 doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?

5 Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? 6 But you dishonor the poor!

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8 Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 9 But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law.

(Royal law reference John 15:12 12 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. and

Matthew 22:37-40 37 Jesus replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.")

12 So whatever you say or whatever you do, remember that you will be judged by the law that sets you free. 13 There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you.

Do not judge others, love them. Think of and treat others as you would want others to think of and treat you, even when difficult. When we walk in God's ways, we can live our lives without regret, knowing we live what we believe, trusting in God to lead us.

Study of James continues next month...