

Family Bible Study Series

Dear Family,

As you know, Satan has a strong foothold on our society. He is attacking from all angles in all types of ways. His arsenal is heavily equipped with alcohol, drugs, violence, TV, negative peer pressure, complacency, busy-ness and many other tools he has at his disposal.

The only way we can truly overcome Satan and the arsenal that he uses is faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) Romans 10:17 states it like this, "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God." If we want our family to withstand the pressures of the world, we must be in the Word.

Unfortunately, many families are too busy and have decided to put spiritual development low on the priority list. We spend quality time in activities such as work, sports, school, and recreation, but have little or no time to spend developing our relationship with God. Some families have left it to the church to provide their only spiritual food on Sundays and Wednesdays. Because of that, many of us are spiritually malnourished. We need to be in God's word more! We need to teach our children the importance of Bible study!

That is the reason we have put together the "Family Bible Study Series." These lessons are designed to be very simple, basic and applicable to the entire family. They are written so that someone unfamiliar with the Bible could use these outlines. They can also be used as a starting point for a family that may be older. Just take these lessons and add more depth to them. The most important thing is for us to begin to open the Word of God as a family. This is where we can develop a spiritual life that can withstand the storms of Satan! How is your family spiritually?

You can NEVER start too young or too old!

May God bless your efforts to develop a strong God-centered home.

Tony Hall
Youth & Family Minister

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Keys to Having a Good Home Bible Study

- ?? Have a family meeting and discuss what night and time of the week would be best to have the study.
- ?? Stick to the time that is agreed upon and start and finish on time!
- ?? Make a decision that this will be a family priority.
- ?? Start with a prayer.
- ?? Give each family member time to discuss what has happened during their day.
- ?? Do not allow the discussion time to become a place for family gripes and arguments.
- ?? Give each family member an opportunity to share how he or she was able to work on last week's lesson.
- ?? Always remember what the purpose of this study is...
 - To develop a closer relationship with God.
 - To develop a closer relationship with each other.
 - To unite as a Godly family.
- ?? Take time to work on your family project. (*See back page for a list of suggested projects.*)
- ?? End with a prayer.

Profiting From Trials

Week # 1

OBJECTIVE: To understand how to profit from trials and temptations.

Feasting on the Word:

James 1:2-18; Phil. 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 6:8-11; & 6:17-19; Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 4:17

Family Discussion:

What does James say our attitude should be when we fall into various trials and temptations? Is this the way we naturally want to react?

What is being tested when we go through trials? What does this testing produce? How does God promise to provide for us when patience has been perfected? (James 1:3-4)

What are we to ask for in faith? How would doubting show we did not have faith? What does James 1:6 say we are like if we doubt God's promises? What will we receive when we doubt? How does that compare to the one who endures temptation? (James 1:12) What is endurance and how does patience help one to endure?

"The pursuits of man" can cause us to be tempted to focus on ourselves rather than God. See 1 Tim. 6:8-11, 1 Tim. 6:17-19, & Phil. 4:11-13, then discuss James 1:9-10.

What verses indicate that our temptations are only temporary?

Jesus told His disciples to expect tribulations in John 14:27 and John 16:33. Why did He say Christians should still have peace? Read about the peace that passes understanding mentioned in Phil. 4:4-8.

Does God tempt anyone to do evil? How would this be inconsistent with the character of God? (James 1:16-18)

Explain how a temptation finally becomes sin and what the result of sin is. Who is responsible for allowing it to grow into something that is condemned by God? (James 1:13-15)

Challenge:

When trials come, remember to count it as joy. God can use them for our good. (Rom. 8:28 & 2 Cor. 4:17) By trusting in Jesus, we can have peace!

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Doing Is More Than Hearing Week #2

OBJECTIVE: To read and discuss what it means to be doers of the Word, not hearers only.

Feasting on the Word:

James 1: 21-27

Family Discussion:

What does verse 21 say that the Word of God can do for you? As we receive and accept the Word, what are we commanded to rid ourselves of? Explain what that means.

In verse 22, we are challenged to not only *hear* the Word, but what else? Explain the warning in that verse, about “deceiving yourselves.”

What “word picture” does James use to explain being doers of the Word, not hearers only? (vs. 23-24)

Verse 25 gets to the point of this lesson. Read and discuss its meaning. How can you apply that to your own life?

Verse 26 shows us one way to apply the command to be a doer of the Word. What is it? Why do you think that NOT doing this can make your religion worthless, as the verse says?

Verse 27 shows us two more ways to apply the command to be a doer of the Word. What are they?

Think of the people who came into contact with Jesus while he lived on earth. Some of them were hearers only. Who were the doers? What was the end result of each of the two types? So, what can we conclude from that?

Challenge:

What can your family do this week to fulfill the commandment to look after orphans and widows in their distress? Visit a widow? Take her a meal or cookies or flowers? Donate items to an orphan’s home? Write to an orphan’s home to “adopt” a pen pal? What else can you think of? Remember: Be *doers*!

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

The Pitfalls of Personal Favoritism

Week # 3

OBJECTIVE: To read and discuss what God says about showing favoritism

Feasting on the Word:

James 2:1-13

Family Discussion:

Verse 1 says, "Don't show favoritism." Some versions call it "partiality." Discuss what that word means.

Verses 2-4 give us an example of how someone might show favoritism. Give some modern day examples of how people show favoritism to the rich, and not to the poor. What does verse 4 say that people are who show favoritism?

How does verse 5 say that a poor person can be rich? Verse 6 says that showing favoritism dishonors (insults) the poor. Put yourself in the place of the poor person in the story of verses 2-4. How would you feel?

In the rest of verse 6 and also verse 7, what does James point out to his readers? Does this mean that ALL rich people are bad?

What royal law does James quote in verse 8? What are you doing if you do NOT love your neighbor as yourself? (vs. 9)

Verses 10 and 11 explain that breaking only one law is the same as breaking the whole law. Read what the Old Law commanded in Leviticus 19:15! The New Law (of Jesus Christ) was demonstrated when Peter was sent to baptize Cornelius, a Gentile. Read Acts 10:34. Therefore, the Old Law and the New Law *both* teach that showing favoritism is wrong! Read the last sentence of James 2:13 to discover the *best* way to treat people.

Challenge:

How can this lesson also apply to racism, handicapped people, overweight people, etc.? Discuss some specific things that your family can do about it?

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

A Faith of Action Week #4

OBJECTIVE: To read and discuss the idea that faith without works is dead.

Feasting on the Word:

James 2:14-26

Family Discussion:

Verse 14 presents two very important questions. What are they?

What is the example of faith without works that James uses, in verses 15-16?

What value does faith have, *alone*, according to verse 17?

In verse 18, James anticipates that some may argue this point. (And they do to this day!) What challenge does James present to them?

Verse 19 drives home the point. Even demons believe, and shudder!

Are demons saved by their belief in God and Jesus? No! Think about that as you read Mark 1:21-27.

What word does James use to describe those who argue that faith alone is enough? (verse 20) Discuss the incredible faith of Abraham as he offered his son, Isaac, on the altar. (verses 21-23 and Genesis 22) Because of Abraham's faith and works, what was he called? (v. 23)

How does James restate the truth again in verse 24? Does this mean that faith is not important? Of course not! What does it mean?

Read the story of the woman named Rahab in Joshua, chapter 2. Because of her faith in God, and her actions that proved her faith, what happened to her when the walls of Jericho fell? (Joshua 6:20-25)

Now read what James says about Rahab in verse 25.

James uses a "word picture," in verse 26, to further prove the fact that faith without works is dead. What is it?

Challenge:

Look again at verses 15 and 16. This week, donate food or clothing to a needy family, or to an organization that helps the needy. Show your faith by what you do!

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

The Untamable Tongue

Week #5

OBJECTIVE: To read and discuss the idea of taming the tongue

Feasting on the Word:

James 3:1-12

Family Discussion:

James begins the discussion of taming the tongue with a warning in verse 1. What is the warning? Discuss what it means, in verse 2, that we all “stumble in many things.” How can we “stumble” in what we say?

James often uses word pictures to illustrate his point. What word picture does he use, in verse 3, to describe the power of the tongue?

What word picture does he use in verse 4?

Verse 5 teaches that even though the tongue is a little part of the body, it boasts great things. Then what word picture is used?

How can the tongue corrupt the whole body? Discuss verse 6.

Verses 7 and 8 explain that animals can be tamed. What cannot be tamed? It is “full of” what?

From verses 9 and 10, explain why it is wrong to use your tongue to bless God and curse men. (Read also 1 John 4:20-21.) In verses 11 and 12, James uses three more word pictures to illustrate this point. What are they?

Discuss some ways that your tongue can hurt others. How can it cause you to sin? What should you do when you have said something you shouldn't have said? Name some strategies you can use to keep your tongue from evil.

Challenge:

This week, use your tongue for good. Make a list of good things to say. Show appreciation to others. Say “please” and “thank you.” Encourage someone who is lonely or sick. Sing praises to God. Pray. What else can you add to the list? Post the list on the refrigerator as a reminder.

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Heavenly Wisdom Week # 6

OBJECTIVE: To be able to discern between heavenly wisdom and earthly, demonic wisdom.

Feasting on the Word:

James 3:13-18; James 1:5; Proverbs 4:5 & 7; 1 Corinthians 1:25; & 3:18-20; Titus 3:1-5

Family Discussion:

How does James link the concepts of understanding, good conduct, and meekness of wisdom? What do each of these terms mean? (James 3:13)

What conduct do verses 14-15 say are a result of earthly, sensual, or demonic wisdom? Do you see examples of this type of behavior being accepted in school, on TV, or in society in general? Does this make it acceptable to God?

How serious do you think the sins of envy, a self-seeking heart, boasting, and lying against the truth are? After reading verse 16, give some examples of what "every evil thing" might include.

By contrast, how is the wisdom of God characterized in verses 17-18? Use a dictionary or Bible concordance to look up each of these traits.

Look up Proverbs 9:10, Proverbs 4:5 & 7, and James 1:5. What is the beginning of wisdom? Does God want to help us be wise? How do we gain Godly wisdom?

In Titus 3:1-6, Paul compares man's life before and after receiving Christ. Is there a difference in knowing what the wisdom of God is and practicing it?

1 Corinthians 1:25 compares God's ways and man's ways. Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-20. How does God feel about the wisdom of this world?

Challenge:

Make a poster listing some of the scriptures in this lesson to help you and your family remember to put God's wisdom to work in your lives. Pray with meekness for one another and ask God to help you make understanding, good conduct, and meekness of wisdom a priority in your family.

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Whose Team Are You On? Week #7

OBJECTIVE: To discuss the dangers of chasing a selfish, worldly life.

Feasting on the Word:

James 4:1-6
I John 2:15-17

Family Discussion:

Where do wars and fights come from? (James 4:1)

Who does a selfish person want to take care of first?

In James 4:3, why did they not have what they wanted?

Who should we want a friendship with? (James 4:4)

When one chooses a friendship with the world, what does it do to their friendship with God? (James 4:4)

What do you feel when you think about being an enemy of God?

What does God tell us we need to resist in James 4:6?

Read Proverbs 11:2, 13:10, 16:18, 29:23. What dangers are there found in being prideful?

How do you feel about people who are “full of them selves?”

Who does God give grace to? (James 4:6)

Who should we be “full of?” (Galatians 2:20)

Challenge:

As we look at our family, do we find ourselves fighting and arguing? If so, what would be some ways that would lessen the fights and arguing? What kind of family would you have if each person worked to make the other person’s life better? How can we destroy selfishness and pride? (Luke 9:23, Romans 12:1-2) What are you willing to give up so that your family will have more peace?

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Humility Cures Worldiness Week # 8

OBJECTIVE: To discuss the cure for worldly problems.

Feasting on the Word:

James 4:7-10

Family Discussion:

Last week we looked at chasing selfish, worldly living. This week we will look at how to cure the problems that come with worldly living.

What does God tell us we need to do to cure worldly living? (vs. 7-8)

What does it mean to submit to God? (I John 2:17, Matthew 26:39,42)

Who does James tell us to resist? (vs. 7)

What will happen if we resist the devil and submit to God? (vs. 7)

What does James tell us we need to purify? (vs. 8)

Why is it important to keep our hearts clean?
(Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 15:16-20)

What should we do in the sight of the Lord? (vs. 10)

What does it mean to “humble ourselves”?

What will God do if we “humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord”? (vs. 10)

Can you truly say you have submitted your life to God’s will so that He can lift you up and provide you strength? (Philippians 4:13, Romans 8:31)

Challenge:

(You may want to sing the song, “Humble Yourselves.”) Should we submit our will to God? Make a list of ways in which we submit our will to God’s. Make a list of others that we need to submit our will to. Pray about having a spirit of humility.

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Careful Judgement Week # 9

OBJECTIVE: To discuss the dangers of judging others.

Feasting on the Word:

James 4:11-12

Matthew 7:1-6

Family Discussion:

How are we to speak of each other? (James 4:11)

If we talk evil against a brother, what are we also talking evil about? (James 4:11)

Who is the one Lawgiver? (James 4:12)

What power does the Lawgiver have? (James 4:12)

Looking at Matthew 7:1-2, what are the dangers of judging others?

What warning does Matthew give in chapter 7:3-4?

What should we first do with ourselves before we go and try to help others remove sin from their lives? (Matthew 7:4-5)

What should we do when we find someone in sin? (Galatians 6:1-2)

How should we help the person in sin? (Galatians 6:1-2)

So, what must we be careful of when having to make a judgment?

?? Remember that how we judge is how we will be judged. (Matthew 7:2)

?? Remember that we must first deal with our sin. (Matthew 7:3-5)

?? Remember we must help people in sin with gentleness. (Galatians 6:1)

?? Remember that God is the only true judge with the power to save and destroy. (James 4:12)

Challenge:

Have you ever been judged unfairly? How did that make you feel? What are some things that we can do to help insure that we will not judge people unfairly? Pray about having a humble heart so that we will not find ourselves looking down at others.

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Don't Bank on Tomorrow Week # 10

OBJECTIVE: To discuss the dangers of leaving God out of your plans.

Feasting on the Word:

James 4:13-17

Family Discussion:

What is the person doing in verse 13? (Making plans for his/her future)

Is it wrong to make plans for your future? (No)

Why should we be careful in making plans for our future? (We do not know what tomorrow holds.)

What does James compare life to in verse 14?

How long does steam from a tea or coffee pot last?

Are we promised tomorrow?

Who should be in our plans as we look to tomorrow? (vs. 15)

If we know to do good today and do not do it, what does James call that? (vs. 17)

Challenge:

As we review today, did you find yourself thinking about God and keeping Him in the things you planned? Did you consider His will as you made choices and plans for your future? Make a list some ways that will help you keep God in the planning of your time. Make a list of good things that you know you should do in service for the Lord. Pray for strength, courage and wisdom to fulfill those opportunities.

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Rich Oppressors Will Be Judged Week #11

OBJECTIVE: To read and discuss James' warning to those who oppress others.

Feasting on the Word:

James 5:1-6

Family Discussion:

To whom does James direct this section of Scripture? (vs. 1) Why does he tell them to weep and howl? What does James say about their riches, in verses 2 and 3?

What had these rich oppressors done wrong? (vs. 4) What does it mean that "the cries of the reaper have reached the ears of the Lord"?

These rich oppressors lived in luxury while the people who worked for them were not paid, and were mistreated. What does verse 5 say this is like? Explain.

Verse 6 tells of more sins of the oppressors. What are they?

You may be thinking, "This doesn't apply to me. I am not a rich person with unpaid workers." So why do you think the Lord included this warning in the book of James? How can this principal apply to each of us?

The main idea of this section of Scripture is "be fair to others." It is not a sin to be rich, but what is the danger of it? Consider this: Most people in poverty-stricken, third world countries think of EVERY American as rich. Compared to people who have very little food or clothes, or no home to live in...are you rich? What can you conclude?

Read Matthew 19:16-30 to find out what Jesus told a rich man to do.

Discuss these proverbs: Proverbs 22:2 & 16; Proverbs 28:6

Challenge:

How can each person in the family use their own money to honor God? Start a piggy bank fund to help someone in need.

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Patient And Persevering Week #12

OBJECTIVE: To read and discuss what James says about patience and perseverance.

Feasting on the Word:

James 5:7-12

Family Discussion:

What is the first thing James tells us to be patient for? (vs. 7) What word picture does James use to illustrate this? According to verse 8, how does that apply to us? Discuss what it means that “the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

What does it mean to “grumble” against one another? (vs. 9) Why should we NOT do this? Who is “the Judge” who is standing at the door? If we are patient with each other, it will keep us from grumbling!

Verse 10 speaks of prophets who were patient in suffering. For one example, read the story of Daniel and the lions’ den in Daniel 6:1-23.

Verse 11 says the prophets were counted as blessed because of their endurance.

Verse 11 also names another person who endured patiently during suffering. Who was it? Tell the story or read from the book named after him, chapters 1, 2, and 42.

So, James is telling us to be patient about the Lord’s coming, be patient with each other, and be patient during suffering. How can you train yourself to be patient in each of those circumstances?

Verse 12 is an important commandment to us. Read and discuss its meaning. What is the warning at the end of verse 12?

Challenge:

We are to be patient for the Lord’s coming. Have you thought about the fact that TODAY may be the day? Do you keep that in mind every day? Since we don’t know when it will happen, what should we be doing to get ready? Do you need to make changes in your life?

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Meeting Specific Needs Week # 13

OBJECTIVE: To understand how we are to take care of each other's needs.

Feasting on the Word:

James 5:13-20; Eph. 5:19-20; Rom.12:9-18; Mark 11:24; Matt. 21:22; Col. 4:12; 1 Pet. 4:7-8; Luke 15:4-7; Rom. 5:7; & Eph. 1:7

Family Discussion:

If someone is suffering, what should he do? What if he is cheerful? Does this mean that we are to praise God in all situations? Read Ephesians 5:19-20

How are we meeting the needs of others when we behave as a Christian ought? Discuss Romans 12:9-18.

What responsibility do the elders have in caring for the sick?

What is the prayer of faith that is referred to in James 5:15? How did Jesus say we should pray in Mark 11:24 and Matthew 21:22?

How do we care for one another when we confess our sins and pray for each other? In Colossians 4:12 Paul gives an example of a Christian who prayed for others.

What does fervent mean in James 5:16 and 1 Peter 4:7-8? Compare these verses.

How does James use the story of Elijah as an example of a righteous man's prayer "availing much"? Review the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 17 & 18.

Is it our responsibility to help to go after someone who has gone astray from God's ways? (verses 19-20) What does Jesus say about a lost sheep in Luke 15:4-7? Who are the sheep in this story? Who is the Shepherd?

How are the sinner's soul saved and his sins covered when he turns from the error of his way? Look at James 5:20 and Luke 15:7. What is the only thing that can cover our sin? (Romans 5:7 & Eph.1:7)

Challenge:

As a family, make a list of people to pray for and to serve. Make it a habit to serve your family and the family of God!

Family Project: Take time to work on your family project. (Refer to list.)

Suggestions for Family Projects

?? Memorize the books of the New Testament.

?? Memorize the books of the Old Testament.

?? Develop an outreach of service that you and your family can do.

- Write cards to the missionaries.
- Write cards to the shut-ins, widows or widowers.
- Write notes of appreciation to your Bible class teachers.
- Mow someone's yard.
- Plant some flowers for someone.
- Put together a care package for someone in need.
- Spend a day working at the Barely Used Resale Shop in Tyler. (See Tony for more information.)
- Visit the nursing home.
- Sponsor an orphan in our outreach in China. (See Greg Taylor on how to reach Ron Brown, the missionary for China.)

?? Memorize I Corinthians 13.

?? Memorize the 12 Apostles.

?? Memorize the 23rd Psalm.

?? Memorize the 12 sons of Jacob.

?? Memorize the verses that teach us the plan of salvation.

As you can see there are unlimited opportunities to develop your family. Take time to come up with some of your own ideas to put Christianity to work in your family! I know God will bless you!