

SKY Correspondence Course

Lesson 6

Be a Doer of the Word

Lesson Text: James 1:1–6, 19–27

It is believed that the book of James was written by Jesus' half brother, James (Matthew 13:55; Galatians 1:19). The book was probably written around A.D. 49 prior to the Jerusalem Council in A.D. 50. The book was originally written to Jewish Christians that resided in Gentile communities. James was a respected leader in Jerusalem and played a key role in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). James was the one who argued for the acceptance of the Gentiles (Acts 15:13–21). Tradition describes James as a "just" man which means he was a man of integrity. Another tradition claims that James had "camel knees." This was because he spent long hours on his knees in prayer. James, as the other brothers of Christ, did not become a believer until after Jesus' resurrection (John 7:5). The theme of the book of James is "faith." The faith that James describes is a practical faith. James is more concerned with the Christian practicing his faith rather than just talking about his faith. Just believing the Word of God is not enough; it must be lived as well.

Have you ever heard the saying, "Talk is cheap"? What does that mean? Commercial advertisements make great claims about your teeth being whiter, your clothes being cleaner, and your hair being shiny. Do you believe the advertisers? How about politicians? During an election year, politicians make grandiose claims and promises. As consumers and voters, we look to their actions after everyone is finished talking. Does the product really do what it says it will do and did the politician keep his promise?

A Salutation

Read James 1:1—The letter opens in a traditional way. James could have introduced himself by stating his status in the church and that

he was the brother of Jesus Christ. He chose to do neither. He was modest in his approach. It could be that he used this modest approach because everyone already knew who he was and therefore knew he had the authority to write them a letter of this type. The letter was sent to the twelve tribes which were scattered abroad. These were Jewish Christians who were scattered due to persecution.

Rejoice in Your Trials

Read James 1:2—The word temptation does not mean enticement to do evil. It means trials and testing. God does not tempt anyone. Read James 1:13. James is sure we all will face trials because he uses the word when, not if. James then encourages us to have an attitude of joy so that we may triumph over the trial. A trial is neither a punishment nor a curse. Christ did not promise the Christian a life with any problems or difficulties. We all have them. It is what we do when faced with these difficulties that Christ is interested in. Christ wants you to develop character and an attitude that allows you to triumph over every trial or test.

A Reason to Rejoice

Read James 1:3–4—How would you know the depth of your character if you were not put to the test. Can you be kind and loving to others when they are being mean to you? It is easy to act loving when all is going well. When a problem arises, we should rejoice that we have a character-building opportunity. James is encouraging us to "persevere" through our difficulties, which means to continue a course of action in spite of the difficulty. "Slow and steady wins the race"—remember that familiar moral from Aesop's fable of the tortoise and the hare. Ask God to give you strength and help to endure and solve your problems. Don't whine and complain about your struggles.

Ask God for Wisdom

Read James 1:5—The natural thing to do, in any trial, is to complain about it. It could be that the wisdom James is talking about is the kind that finds joy in trials. When faced with a problem, ask for God's wisdom to see the lesson that is in the trial. Ask to be shown how to respond to the trial, and understand that many times it is our sinning that brings us the test to begin with. The wisdom to cope with a trial is a gift from God. He will give it freely and without upbraiding or scolding, for past sins.

Ask in Faith

Read James 1:6—There is a condition to receiving this wisdom. You cannot waver, and you must have faith. You cannot one minute be full of hope and the next wallow in despair. If you ask for wisdom, trust that God will give it. Do not vacillate between worldly values and what God commands. Read Hebrews 11:6.

A Christian Should Listen

Read James 1:19,20—Do you listen when others talk? James is exhorting you to put value in what others say. Don't jump to conclusions quickly. Pay attention to what is being said. Proverbs 13:3 says, "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction." Surely you have heard the saying, "There are always two sides to every story." Becoming angry because someone hurt your feelings, or because you did not win an argument, is misplaced anger. This sort of anger is wrong because it is selfish and harmful. There are times when anger is OK. When Jesus was angry, He handled the situation by solving a problem. Rather than being angry for the sake of being angry, find a constructive solution to the problem. Do not attack others verbally or physically.

Read James 1:21—Lay aside the things that make you unclean. Lay aside the attitudes and actions that keep you from listening. Not only get rid of all that is wrong in your life, but be willing to receive God's truth. Remove it from the outside as well as from the inside. Be glad for the salvation message you have received. Hold on to that message and make it a part of your life. Paul said it best: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

A Christian Should Be a Doer

Read James 1:22—Just attending Sabbath school and

church is not enough. We are to put into practice what we hear. By doing this, we are actively obeying God. Have your behaviors and attitudes changed because of what you learn in church? Don't allow yourself to think that going to church each Sabbath is enough. You must be a doer every day of your life

Read James 1:23,24—When you get up in the morning and look into the mirror, what do you see? Your hair is a mess, your teeth need brushing, and your face needs to be washed. The mirror shows exactly what you look like. If you leave the mirror without cleaning up and forget what you look like and believe that your hair is combed, teeth brushed, and face washed, you've done nothing but deceive yourself. The point is, if all you do is listen and not act, you are like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and then forgets what he sees.

Read James 1:25—God's perfect law provides freedom, not restraint. Just as you look into a mirror to see your face, we are to take a good close look at God's Word. If we do what God commands, He will bless us.

Read James 1:26—Being a true Christian does not merely mean we keep religious observances. Christian faith is shown in our character. It is the little things we say; it is what we do to help and show concern for those in need, and keeping clear from sin. Words said without thought are revealing. Words can hurt, and while you can apologize for such words, they do tend to linger on. Don't create problems or bring hurt upon others with thoughtless, uncaring, casual words.

Pure Religion

Read James 1:27—What is "pure religion"? It is to "visit the fatherless and widows." Our religion is defined by how we apply what we believe in practical situations. When we give with no thought of receiving, we show what true service is. To keep ourselves "unspotted from the world" while we give means to commit ourselves to Christ's ethical and moral system, not the world's. The world's value system is power, money, and pleasure. Christ's value system is giving and serving.

A verse worthy to remember:

**"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only,
deceiving yourselves"**

(James 1:22)

SKY

Lesson 6

Correspondence Course

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Questions and Answers

1. The Christians spoken to in this letter were scattered because...
 - A. they were loved.
 - B. they were persecuted.
 - C. they wanted to take control of more land and spread the gospel.
2. The author of the book of James was related to
 - A. Paul.
 - B. John the Baptist.
 - C. Jesus Christ.
3. The theme of the book of James is
 - A. faith.
 - B. love.
 - C. pure religion.
4. True or False—All your problems are solved when you become a Christian. _____
5. True or False—Jesus promised you an easy life when you become a Christian. _____
6. In James 2:1 the use of the word “temptation” means
 - A. to entice.
 - B. to repel.
 - C. trial and testing.
7. Does God “tempt” you?_____ Support your answer with the scripture from the book of James.

8. Why should you rejoice even in a trial?

9. The book of James tells us that trials and testing can bring you

- A. a bad attitude.
- B. failure.
- C. patience.

10. What can we do when we encounter testing and trial?

- A. Complain and feel punished.
- B. Ask God for wisdom and patience.
- C. Get mad and get even.

11. What kind of wisdom is James telling us to ask for?

12. List everything in James 1 (from the lesson) that we should do.

13. Should a Christian seek persecution? Explain your answer.

14. Is James encouraging us to listen more or talk more? _____

Where in the book of James is the answer? _____

What is a supporting scripture in the Old Testament? _____.

15. Is a Christian identified only by his/her actions at church? _____ Why?

16. Explain in your own words the meaning of James 1:23.

17. Pure religion is...

- A. bathing before you go to church.
- B. giving and serving those in need.
- C. holding on to the world's value system.

Answers

Lesson 6- Be a Doer of the Word

1. B
2. C
3. A
4. F
5. F
6. C
7. No
8. Trials show a person how much he needs God. It strengthens your faith. Good can come out of trials.
9. C
10. B
11. He is telling us to ask for Godly wisdom. With Godly wisdom you will learn the lesson from your trial.
12. Rejoice in your trials, our religion is not just what we say but what we do, control your tongue, don't become angry, study God's word closely and follow it.
13. No, you should stand strong in your faith. If persecution comes your way don't give in to the worldly ways, but have faith. We are blessed when we are persecuted for righteousness sake Matthew 5:9-12.
14. Listen
James 1:19
Proverbs 13:3
15. No. Your actions should be Christ-like all week long. Walking daily as a Christian is an example of actively obeying God.
16. Don't fool yourself that you are a good Christian if you never do good works.
17. B