

## For the Family

### Read James 1:1:

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:  
Greetings*

**Explain** that we are going to be reading from the book of *James*, written by a man named James, who was the brother of Jesus.

James didn't believe that Jesus was the Son of God while Jesus was alive. When Jesus first started preaching and healing people, Jesus' family wanted him to stop. They said that Jesus was "out of his mind" (Mark 3:21).

But after Jesus rose from the dead and James saw him, he became a believer. In fact, James became a main leader in the church in Jerusalem, and wrote the book of James.

Even though James was the brother of Jesus and an important leader in the church, he opens his letter by calling himself a "servant." He learned that from Jesus:

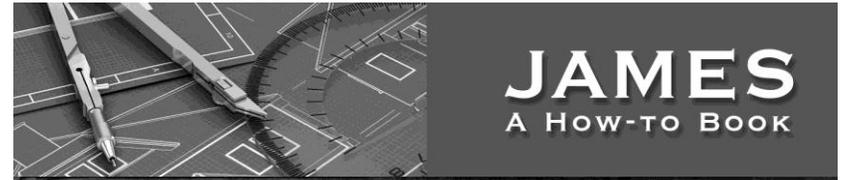
*Matthew 20:26-28 -- ... But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man (Jesus) came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many.*

Jesus is the Son of God, and yet he says that he came to serve. If we want to be like Jesus, we will learn to be a servant.

**Talk together** about what it means to be a servant. Think about some practical ways you can serve each other in your family:

Instead of waiting to be told to do our chores, we can look for things that need done, and do them. We can ask, "What can I do to help?" Think together of other ways we can be servants.

**Pray together** that God will help you learn how to be a servant, like James and Jesus. Ask him to help you see opportunities to serve others.



## James A "How To" Manual for Life

### ***This Week: James 1:1***

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:  
Greetings.*

### **Welcome to James**

The book of James is usually categorized as a letter. It begins with a salutation, and speaks to a particular group of people about a specific set of issues. The format, however, more resembles wisdom literature, such as Proverbs or Ecclesiastes.

The hallmark of wisdom is the *proverb*, and James is dominated by the use of proverbs. A proverb is a concise, memorable statement of truth, often with practical application to real life. The book also features many examples of *direct command*. There are over 50 imperatives in the book's 108 verses.

So be prepared to be encouraged and challenged on a regular basis as we unpack together the wisdom of James.

### **This Week:**

We will get to know both James the man and James the book a little bit this week, as we kickoff our new series.

### **Open**

1. What's the best advice you've ever received?  
Who gave it to you?  
Why did you listen?  
Did you heed the advice? Why or why not?

## James the Brother of Jesus

• James did not believe in Jesus as the Son of God while Jesus was involved in his earthly ministry.

Read Mark 3:20-21; 31-35

1. Why do you think Jesus' family was concerned about him?
2. What do you think they thought about him?  
What might they have said about him when he wasn't around?
3. How does Jesus use this situation to define what it means to have a family relationship with him?

### Reflect

1. Is doing God's will an action or a belief?
  2. What does it say about a kingdom that the king describes the people of the kingdom as his family relations?
- James went from a skeptic to a believer when he met the risen Jesus (see 1 Corinthians 15:7).
1. What do you think it was like when James saw the risen Lord?
  2. What do you think it will be like for you when you see Jesus face to face? (See 1 Corinthians 13:12)

• James became a leader in the church in Jerusalem. Acts 15 records a conference the apostles had in order to decide what to do with Gentiles who were becoming Christians. Did they need to become Jews first, and then Christians, or could they be accepted as Christians immediately?

James gave the final speech at that conference.  
Read Acts 15:13-21

1. What do you learn about James from this speech?

## James a Servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ

1. Why do you think James calls himself a servant?
2. Does that take away from his authority as a leader?

### Reflect

Would you consider yourself a servant of God and Jesus?

If so, how is it evident in your life?

What could you do to be a better servant?

### Let's Read the Book

You can read the book of James in about 12 minutes. Have a strong reader read the book aloud to the group, or have everyone read it silently to themselves.

What are your first impressions of the book?

Did you notice any repeated words, phrases, or ideas?

What was the tone overall?

Did anything particularly stand out to you?

### Reflect

What are your expectations for this series?

What do you expect to be challenged by the most?

### Take-aways

Share with the group your take-away from your time together.

### Next Steps:

- I will commit to reading the book of James in its entirety.
- I will make hearing this sermon series a priority.
- I long to be known as "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1).
- I pledge to live out my Christianity this week by \_\_\_\_\_

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### Memory Verse – James 1:1

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