

J A M E S

AN INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

by Deb Sink

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Robertson McQuilkin, and his late wife, Muriel. It is as this book was finished that I realize the profound effect this couple and their work have had upon my life.

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I thank God who has tenderly tried, molded and allowed me to be involved in His Kingdom's work.

I thank my completer and beloved husband, Ed, who stimulates my thoughts, challenges and encourages me in all that I do for Christ.

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PREFACE

In this study I have joined together two basic emphases of Bible study: (1) learning the skills and (2) practically applying the skills in a study of a book of the Bible (James). Inductive Bible study is a wonderful method to use in devotional time to hear God speak through His Word. The goal of this study is to help women learn Bible study skills that can be used later with or without prepared study questions. Such skills equip us to see the context clearly as we read passages and they can be used in preparing lessons for Sunday School, circle meeting and Bible messages.

This study evolved from a weekly study with working women which was designed to teach how to do an exciting inductive study and how to put learning skills and scriptural principles into practice. As one woman said, "This study helps women to move from a listening and 'fill in the blank' approach to a participatory and personal system of study." As we progress into deeper study, we will know the texts (memorized by virtue of time spent in study), and meditate on the spiritual principals we are putting together as a result of study.

James was chosen because of its intense practicality. We all wrestle with trials in our lives—how should we respond to them? Our tongue can often be our weakest area— can it be controlled? Worldliness affects us all in one way or another—what is it really and how should we deal with it? These and other issues will be studied as we work through the book of James.

I am encouraged by what God has taught me in this study. I will reap the benefits for eternity to come, I hope you will use this book as best fits your needs. My desire is to make available that combination of learning Bible study skills and working through a Bible text to see applications for the contemporary woman.

PLAN OF STUDY

A. Design: Twelve Lessons For use in:

1. Midweek Bible studies
2. Sunday school classes
3. Monthly circles
4. Individual study

Text: ESV text of James is included for freedom to mark observations.

B. Format: Home study questions and/or discussion

- A. A lesson is spent in each of the steps of Bible study: observation, interpretation, and correlation. Application is threaded throughout each lesson.
- B. Each lesson requires 60-90 minutes of preparation.
- C. Each lesson focuses on the epistle of James.
- D. Discussion questions are provided for the leader or as thought questions for individual study.
- E. The leader may decide to discuss selected questions or all of them in the meeting.
- F. Lesson one includes only discussion questions because books will not have been distributed.

C. Fruit

As you commit yourself to study, you will learn real Bible study skills, you will see what God has to say in the book of James, and you will be encouraged by your changing perspectives and lifestyle. You will be touched by the lives and thoughts of the other ladies in your group.

CONTENTS

Preface	i
Plan of Study	ii
Introduction to Inductive Bible Study	iv
Guidelines For Observation Skills	v
1. The Tried & Mature Woman	1
2. The Tempted Woman	17
3. The Religious Woman	23
4. Am I Partial?	31
5. Can I Judge?	39
6. What Use Is My Faith?	45
7. You Can Teach	53
8. That Tongue Has A Use!	61
9. Wisdom Makes A Difference	69
10. How to Handle Wars Within	77
11. How to Recognize Worldliness	85
12. Put It All Together	91

INTRODUCTION TO INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Learning good Bible study skills takes time and energy but everything in life that is worthwhile takes work. If you have not studied in many years, you will begin to renew good study habits. In this course on James, we will begin to use four steps of inductive Bible study; observation, interpretation, application and correlation.

The observation skills (what does it say?) will be most difficult since you will do the work. A description of observation skills is given on page 8. Each time you begin an observation worksheet, simply return to page 8, go down the list of instructions and questions and mark the worksheet, and write your answers in the margins as indicated. The more time you spend in observing the text and answering the questions, the more meaningful the passage will become. Remember, you are learning skills, and skills are developed with practice. Do not become frustrated if this does not come easily at first. The bibliography lists other resources that might help you learn inductive skills.

Interpretation (what does it mean?) questions are answered after your observations are made. You can go into much greater detail in your personal study than we have here. This study is designed for women to spend about 90 minutes in preparation of each lesson seeing what the Scripture means and how it can be applied to our lives today. Application questions (how does it apply?) are woven throughout the study and discussion questions.

Correlation is seeing how the Scriptures fit together. You will be asked to look up other Scripture passages to see how they relate or fit together with the topic under study. This enables us to see more of the "whole counsel of God." Remember, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Persevere and you will reap the benefits.

"But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing" (James 1:25).

GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATION SKILLS

While this study is designed to meet various needs, the more time you spend in observing the text and answering questions, the more meaningful the passage will become. Remember, you are learning skills, and skills are developed with practice.

1. Mark key words. These are descriptive words and synonyms that play a vital part in conveying what the author wants to say. These are usually repeated three or more times. You can mark them with colored pencils or crayons for easy visibility.
2. Mark with a symbol or color (in right hand margin):
 - 1) contrasting words and phrases: but-and.
 - 2) words of comparison: like-as-like unto, alike, or e.g., James 1:6.
 - 3) terms of conclusion: e.g., wherefore-therefore-finally, e.g., James 4:17.
 - 4) words indicating time: e.g., then-after-this until-when, e.g., James 5:7.
3. Look for lists: write them in left hand margin.
 - 1) Simple lists: e.g., James 3:17. Using your key words, list everything the text says about that word.
 - 2) Descriptive lists: e.g., James 5:1-6.
 - 3) Topical lists: Summary of any material which relates to one specific topic: e.g. How to handle trials - James 1.
 - 4) Analytical lists: Pick up themes within the text. For example: progression of thought or events; attitudes or behaviors of individuals; experiences or characteristics of people. What kinds of women are described in James 1? Tried, wavering, etc.
4. Ask these questions regarding each of the key words: (Write your answers at the bottom or on the back of the sheet.)
 - 1) Who is speaking? To whom? Regarding whom?
 - 2) What is he speaking about? What are the main events? What are the major doctrines? What do I learn about Christ? What do I learn about the godly or ungodly person? What kind of passage is this? What will happen if I follow this person's example? What will happen if I obey Christ's command? What if I ignore what I'm learning?
 - 3) When did something occur? When was it said written?
 - 4) Where? Are any locations mentioned? Was it mentioned in the Old Testament? Where?
 - 5) How can I do it? Did he do it? Ex: How can I handle trials? James 1. How was it done? How will it happen? How was it illustrated?
 - 6) Why is this included? Why is it important? Why did it happen? Why did certain people respond as they did?

THE TRIED AND MATURE WOMAN

The Epistle of James was most probably written by James, the half brother of Jesus, about 62 AD, to the dispersed Jewish believers. What person would be better able to teach us principles of family living, such as: enduring trials, handling preferential treatment of one individual over another, fighting in the family, holding our tongues, dealing with sickness or comforting widows, than a member of our Lord's earthly family? The five chapters of James are full of practical wisdom. A thorough study of James can make changes in our lives and relationships,

In studying chapter one it will be helpful to ask yourself what experience you have had that still causes you pain. Could it be rejection by a husband? A rebellious teenager? A handicapped child? A difficult supervisor? Perhaps a diagnosis of serious illness, financial decline, or a painful ministry? We question God: "Why did this happen? What am I to do or think? How can I go through this?" A myriad of such thoughts may go through our minds during trials.

Good inductive Bible study using: observation skills (what does it say?); interpretation questions (what does this mean?); application insights (what should I do?); and correlation helps (how does this fit with the rest of Scripture?) will provide some of the answers. Even if these, or other issues we will study are not what you are dealing with now, the answers to these questions will provide a solid foundation of truth for the future.

Just as honing an axe takes practice, work and patience, so sharpening skills for Bible study will require practice, work and patience. If possible, block out 30 minutes a day to study and pray. Perhaps early in the morning, after the children are in school, at nap time, or instead of T.V. in the evening. As a mother of four children, I have found early afternoon most effective. The morning pressure is gone, I need to sit down but I'm mentally fresh, and the children are either napping or old enough to be in school, playing outside or occupied in their room. Surely God would prefer that we have interrupted time than no time at all. If the day falls apart, soup can satisfy as much as a formal dinner if we maintain priorities in other areas. We have been created to "... glorify God and enjoy Him forever." If I get nothing else *accomplished* in a day but a short time with Him, I have done that for which I was made. This must be our highest priority.

Time spent in God's Word, prayer and meditation are components of a devotional or quiet time. This study is provided to give some depth to your quiet time. Coming together with other women will provide insight and fellowship as you share thoughts and answers to the questions.

This first lesson may seem difficult; observation skills are difficult. Once attained, however, these skills add much to times of study. Go over the instructions on page 8 in class. Work on the assignment more at home and make note of questions to ask at the next meeting. You will discover that identifying key words will help in deciding the subject and intent of the passage. If you mark key words with colored pencils you will have a visual picture of the flow of the passage. Key words are useful in making lists; they can be described, summarized or analyzed.

The difference between contrasting words and words of comparison is not always clear. *Like* or *as* are different from *but*. The important skill is learning to discover if God is saying something is or **is not** like something else. We need to understand what Scripture tells us to be.

Terms of conclusion often help us see why the writer has said what he has just said or what we are to do. Such terms indicate the completion of a statement and should be noted carefully. Marking words which indicate time helps us see the progression of events or steps of change; or they may answer the question, "How long, oh Lord?"

Lists may be your most helpful tool. Sermons or messages are often taken from these. How I wish I'd heard long ago James' list of *God's purposes for trials* or *How to handle trials*! Simple lists can be numbered in the text: 1, 2, 3, etc.... These might be commands, promises, or lists of characteristics. (For example: the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.) Descriptive or topical lists summarize the characteristics of a person, a concept, or a key word. It is not necessary to be able to distinguish between descriptive and topical lists, but it is important to see what the author is saying about the subject. When I have finished the lists in a chapter, I read it again and ask myself, "What have I not seen?" I look for a flow of events, of attitudes, a progression of subjects or key words, or a list of experiences or characteristics of people. I try to see the big picture of the text.

The questions of journalism (who, what, when, where, why and how) can be asked of the text as a whole, or of each key word or each subject. The answer may be broad or specific. The idea is simply to use skills of observation to see what the text is saying.

An observation worksheet can be done quickly; however, the more time you spend looking, the more you see. Spend some time on your worksheet each day, and try to see something you did not notice before. God's Word is absolute and inexhaustible. Applications you found five years ago may not be as helpful as ones you are currently finding, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul of spirit, of joints and of marrow; and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

There are treasures ahead in this study of James. I hope you are able to take some nuggets in your pocket and use them in living out the abundant life of Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: OVERVIEW AND JAMES 1:1-12

Because you did not have an opportunity to do home study questions for this lesson, in your meeting read James 1:1-12, then discuss the following questions. Allow plenty of time to learn the Bible study skill of observation by doing an observation worksheet, (following the guidelines for an observation worksheet provided on page 8). This skill takes practice; working together will help you learn what there is to see in the Scriptures. This is simply to help you see what the chapter says before we try to understand what it means.

1. Since God uses trials to produce a woman who is perfect and complete, describe what that woman would be like. What qualities would she have?
How would trials help to develop these specific qualities?
2. If you were beginning to doubt God during a time of trial, what questions would you ask Him?
3. Summarize what James 1:2 says about how to handle trials.
4. What is the goal of trials (James 1:4)?
5. Allowing plenty of time, do an observation worksheet for James 1 following the guidelines and the instructions on page 8.

Following the guidelines for observation skills, mark the following copy of James 1.

- A. Examples of lists from James 1 might include:
- a. The type of women described;
 - b. What the doubter is like;
 - c. How wisdom is given;
 - d. What perseverance produces;
 - e. What you learn regarding temptation;
 - f. What the religious woman is like.

JAMES 1

¹James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:

Greetings.

²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

¹²Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of

firstfruits of his creation.

¹⁹Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires. ²¹Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

²²But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

²⁶If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

THE TEMPTED WOMAN

Trials, pain, suffering... injustice... whatever we call it, we all face situations, people or events that can take us to the depth of emotions. We see in James 1, God's long-range goal for trials; "That you may be perfect and entire lacking nothing." The word translated *perfect* in this passage is the Greek word, *teleios*, meaning mature, complete, possessing as much of the character of God as possible. It is not intended to suggest sinlessness. I John 1 tells us that is not possible, but complete maturity unto Christlikeness is another matter. When we can understand the glorious goal, the trial we are experiencing can be endured. A financial crisis, a health catastrophe, a child that was not born *normal*, a difficult marriage, or a short changed career are trials that God will use to make us mature and complete as we trust in Him. "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance, and let endurance have its perfect work that you may be perfect and entire lacking nothing."

God wants to produce people that reflect His character; people able to demonstrate His glory and grace. What is more appealing than a person who is always loving, always kind, always patient, not angry or bitter, one who is content and peaceful, who has a deep concern for others, one who exudes a joyful spirit and is truly good, not malicious and who can be counted faithful? A person like this is no Pollyanna, but one with whom you are secure and important. This person's wisdom is peace loving, impartial and sincere with motives which are pure and self control which is evident. This is true godliness. As long as we are comfortable and everything seems to be going well, we will change very slowly, if at all. It is through the pain of trial that our true self is revealed. We can choose to draw near to God and allow His grace to change us into His likeness or we can reject Him and remain in our old nature. Trials move us out of our comfortable satisfaction into a life that is prepared for the Kingdom of God.

Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether the crisis we are in is a trial, test, temptation or consequence of sin. In the long run, it doesn't really matter. What is important is our response. I am amazed at the response of Job when he lost his camels, cattle, sheep servants and all his children. "Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong (Job 1:20-22).

Then Job was afflicted with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. His wife could tolerate it no more and told him to "curse God and die!" Job replied, "But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips (Job 2:10).

As we understand the character of God, who He is and what He is about, we will be able to respond biblically. Our first response to trial or pain is rarely worship. It is difficult to respond as James instructs: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you fall into various trials...." Joy is not dependent on circumstances, it is not the feeling we have when we receive a special gift or even watch a beloved child playing in the warm sun. Rather it is that deep contentment and peace, that gladness in which God is the object of joy. Faith and its subsequent joy do not come from ourselves; they come from the grace of God. It is He to Whom we go for joy when trials come upon us.

I remember once when I was in the midst of deep waters, I heard Joni Eareckson Tada say on her radio program that when we feel we are suffering, we compare ourselves with others. Those *others* that we choose are usually in less difficulty than we are. Rarely do we seriously

compare our pain with that of someone in much deeper pain. How true! The early loss of a father, the chronic disease diagnosed in my husband, the thwarted career, the lean financial years, the *dragons* in a ministry pale in comparison to the trials and pain of the people of God throughout the centuries. Although God has a wonderful plan for our lives, He never says in His Word that we will not struggle or suffer or experience pain. He did, Christians throughout the centuries have and we will. But God promises grace for it all.

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him” (James 1:5). What a promise! Wisdom for response, wisdom in understanding possible causes, wisdom in perceiving the next step, wisdom for how to endure the present moment, wisdom for answers to some of our questions is promised and given generously.

Is there comfort? What can help us in the midst of trial? It is knowing the character of God, His qualities and attributes. Larry Crabb, a Christian psychologist, once stated that God is not predictable. How I argued that in my mind! God is consistent to Himself, God is faithful, God makes promises and keeps them, and God is knowable. After a sudden shift in knowing God's direction for our lives, I was beseeching God for wisdom. I did not see how this change was consistent with His character. I realized that God is not a puppeteer dangling us in strings to do as He would have us do, but God is so immense He is not comprehensible. He is not predictable, because we cannot fully know Him. He is too big for that. However, God is infinitely good and He deeply loves me and you. While I may not understand, I can rest in His

“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen (1 Peter 5:10-11)

The homework for this lesson introduces the method of interpretation — that is, understanding what the Scriptures mean.

1. As you study these verses, what questions come to mind? Try to answer them as you meditate. Compare Scripture with Scripture. Use a concordance, cross-references, different translations, and a Bible dictionary but don't use commentaries as yet. Stay within the Bible, i.e. the whole counsel of God.

Review your who, what, when, where, why and how questions and answers from lesson one.

Understand the words in the normal, historical, grammatical sense. Look for the primary meaning in the context of the passage as a whole.

2. What figures of speech do you see in James 1?
What do they mean?
3. Define temptation.
Define trials.
4. In James 1:2-12 do temptations (trials or testing) seem good or bad? Why?
5. Do you think the tempting in James 1:13-14 comes from God? Explain.
6. Do you think the temptations in James 1:2 come from God? Explain.
7. Is there a difference between the temptations in James 1:2-12 and that mentioned in James

1:13-14? If so, what?

8. What do the following Scriptures say about trials and

Luke 22:28-32

Luke 4:13

Luke 8:13

I Corinthians 10:13

I Peter 1:6

Matthew 4:1

I Thessalonians 3:1-7

John 6:4-11

Genesis 22:1

9. In the verses you've looked at, is tempting used in a good sense, a bad sense, or both?

Who does the tempting?

Does God ever tempt? If so, when? How?

Does it matter?

What does James 1 say is important?

10. What have you learned about God's purpose for trials?

11. Don't get frustrated. When we meet again we'll put our understanding together and see how temptation follows a pattern and how to determine victory in life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are provided to enhance discussion during your meeting. You do not need to answer these at home. Read them carefully, thinking of possible answers to share in your next meeting. These questions should help you apply what the Scriptures say and mean. The home study questions and all the discussion questions cannot be covered in one session. Your leader will decide which questions you have time to discuss.

1. Summarize what you have learned about the difference
2. When temptations come our way, we have a choice. What is the choice?
3. What is the relationship between emotions, desires, and reason during temptation?
4. What do these Scriptures say about the condition of our thinking when temptations arise?

Jeremiah 17:9-10;

Ephesians 4:22;

Titus 3:3

5. What are some of the base line commitments we need to make spiritually in order to overcome temptation when it arises?

Example: A commitment to the Word of God, a commitment to be all God wants us to be despite the “cost,” etc.

6. Do you see a pattern of temptation in verses 14-15?

- 1) There is the bait, this is implied. It is usually external and becomes the object of our interest.
- 2) The desire (lust). This rests in our hearts.
- 3) The allurements—carried away and enticed suggests persuasion. It is allurements that attracts the desire to the bait. The fulfillment of this is sin. This is where our deceived thinking affects us. Consider the temptation, determine what is your incorrect thinking.
- 4) The result is death—at the least a death existence like that experienced by the unbeliever.”

Swindoll¹

7. According to the following verses, how is temptation overcome?

Romans 6:11

Galatians 5:16-18

Romans 12:1

I John 2:15-17

Philippians 4:8

Ephesians 6:10-18

8. Consider one temptation in your life.

What is the bait?

What is the inner desire?

What is the enticement to yield?

What will you do to be victorious?

¹ Swindoll, Charles R., *James*, p. 17.

THE RELIGIOUS WOMAN

Why are there trials? Why do we have to have them? In many ways these questions are like the one, "Why did God create roaches?" We may understand fully only when we get to Heaven and ask Him.

I remember when I was coordinating a women's retreat and discussing possible topics with the speaker. She mentioned that she would like to do one session on "pain" and asked if that would be applicable to many of the women. As I considered the list of registrations; I realized that every single lady had recently experienced trial and pain. Their situations included the loss of a parent or child, substance abuse, financial devastation, a difficult or crumbling marriage, an unsaved husband, loss of sight or hearing and other health difficulties.

Definitions from Colin Brown's *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* and *Vine's Expository Dictionary* can help us understand what James means (interpretation) as he tells us about trials. The word *trial* (*periasmois*) means test, to put to the proof; here it means tests of many kinds, variegated or many colored. In Luke 22:31, just after the last supper, Jesus tells Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." We see in this passage that God does not test people who are not His own. When I sift flour, I separate the good from the lumpy. Satan wanted to believe that Peter was all lumps and would not be counted with the good. But! Note the contrast, Jesus had prayed for him that his faith would not fail during trial. Jesus knew that because of His prayers Peter would turn back and after that strengthen others. God desires to prove the same faith in us.

The word *endure* has a wonderful meaning. It refers not only to tenacity or stick-to-it-iveness or passive enduring, but to a firm stance with feet soundly planted facing the oncoming storm. So often we want to run from the storm, much less face it head on!

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (James 1:2-8).

What is wisdom? James defines it in chapter 3:13-18. Wisdom is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. Wisdom is understanding the nature and purpose of trials and knowing how to meet them victoriously. God wants us to ask for wisdom in faith, confident that He will give what is requested and expecting Him to do so. He has promised this and we can expect wisdom if we fulfill one requirement. We must not be double-minded. That person is literally "two-faced," looking at God with one face and the world with the other. Instability marks all that she does in her personal business, her social and spiritual life. Her indecisiveness negates any effectiveness.

The concept of making Christ preeminent in our lives begins in this passage and threads itself throughout the rest of James. He makes us examine the impact of God's Word in our lives. Our conduct toward the poor and wealthy demonstrates which way we face. The bridling of our tongue can occur only as we firmly face Him. Worldliness, wealth, patience and prayer are all

affected by our choice to be single-minded toward God or with one face toward Him and one toward the world. Which will you be? Single-minded for Him with all the attendant blessings or double-minded, unstable in all your ways? We are all one or the other.

James also deals with the issue of temptation. In James 1:13-14, he tells us clearly that God does not tempt, instead he says that our own lust is the beginning of temptation. The Greek word for *temptation* (*peirago*) tends to be negative. It means a temptation to evil, to entice one to fall. Temptation is always present in life. The question is not *if* temptation arises but *when* temptation arises, how will we respond? Temptation means to entice to do wrong by a promise of pleasure or gain. Temptation is not sin, but our response to it is strictly a matter of personal responsibility. For sin to occur there is a joining of inner desire with the outer bait.

In lesson two, you saw the pattern of temptation. Let's examine how this works. I saw a Queen Ann wingback chair and decided I wanted it. It was the bait, the external object of my interest. I desired to own it, right in my living room. The allurements that attracted my desire to the bait was that it was on sale, 50% off. That fact was persuasion. James 1:16 says, "Do not be deceived, my beloved...." Temptation flourishes on inconsistent thinking. I tried to convince myself it was needed for ministry! To relate to the folks we have in our home I needed that style, besides we can always use another chair! While there is nothing wrong with owning a Queen Ann wingback chair, at that point in our finances there was no cash to pay for it. Based on our understanding of biblical stewardship, it is not God's best to go into debt for depreciating items. I needed correct thinking to handle that temptation.

How can we be victorious? We must examine our deceived thinking and correct it. We must live the truth. The Bible is our source for counsel. James 1:17 encourages us to dwell on the good. God has provided good and perfect gifts. God has provided that the normal Christian life be victorious. Romans 6:1 asks: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! Paul continues on to tell us that the old nature is crucified with Christ. He is dead. Our part according to Romans 6:11 is to "reckon (count on, walk on the fact) yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." God has done His part; we must now believe it to be true by abiding in Him moment by moment. Just as the garden cannot grow without the work of God, neither can it produce without the work of the farmer. God works in us "to will and to do by His good pleasure" but we must yield our thoughts, desires and actions to Him.

HOME STUDY ASSIGNMENT: JAMES 1:19-27

INTERPRETATION

In this lesson, we are learning what James 1:19-27 means. Notice many of these questions begin with who, what, when, where or how. Write the answers to these home study questions in preparation for your next meeting.

1. How do we receive the Word?

How is this different from merely hearing the Word? What kind of attitude is necessary for us to receive the Word?

2. Define humility.
3. How can this attitude of meekness be a dynamic force rather than a passive one?
4. What are the three figures used to describe the Word of God (vs. 21, 24, 25)?

5. Read James 1:21-27. List each thing that you, as a child of God, are to do. Write them in the first person singular.

For example: "I am to put aside all filthiness."

6. Fill in the following chart giving the meaning in your own words:

James 1:19-27²

Verse	Phrase	Meaning
19	Quick to hear	
19	Slow to speak	
19	Slow to anger	
21	Filthiness	
21	Remains of wickedness	
21	Humility	
21	The Word implanted	
22	Prove yourselves	
22	Doers	
22	Hearers	
22	Delude themselves	
25	Perfect law	
25	Law of liberty	
26	Bridle his tongue	
27	Visit orphans & widows	
27	Keep oneself unstained	

7. According to James 1:21, you and I are to put aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness in our lives. Have you ever done that? Or are there things in your life that do not meet God's standards of purity? What are they? Spend 15-30 minutes alone praying for God to show you what sin prevents you from being all He wants you to be. Confess it and tell Him you now put *this* aside. How can we be doers of the Word if we can't receive it because of sin? We will NOT share this assignment in class. We need to be clean vessels (peanut butter jars!?) for His use.

² *Ibid.*, p. 26.