

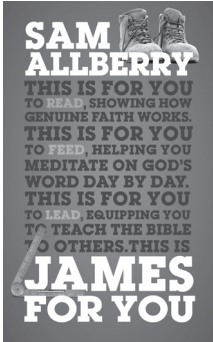
Sam Allberry

# James

*Genuine Faith*



✔ **6-Session Bible Study**



## James For You

These studies are adapted from *James For You*. If you are reading *James For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *James For You*:

Study 1 > Ch 1-2

Study 2 > Ch 3-4

Study 3 > Ch 5

Study 4 > Ch 6

Study 5 > Ch 7

Study 6 > Ch 8-10

Find out more about *James For You* at:

[www.thegoodbook.com/for-you](http://www.thegoodbook.com/for-you)

James: Genuine Faith

A Good Book Guide

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# Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God’s word as “a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we’ve discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They’re perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let’s take a look at what is included in each session.

**Talkabout:** Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

**Investigate:** These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

**Apply:** These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

**Explore More:** These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

**Getting Personal:** These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

**Pray:** Here, you’re invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you’ve seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven’t got time to do the whole thing in one go.

In the back of the book, you’ll find a **Leader’s Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God’s light-giving word.

# Why Study James?

What should it look like to be a Christian?

How can I be sure my faith is not just theoretical?

What difference should trusting Jesus make to my everyday life?

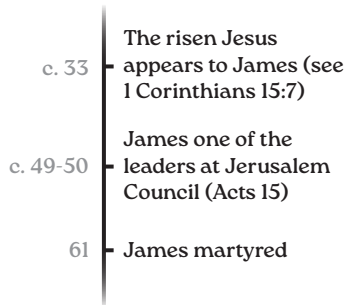
These questions lie at the heart of the letter of James. James is writing to Christians (like us) who are in danger of making Christianity just a matter of hot air—something we claim to have while actually just living the sort of lives we would have been living if we'd never heard of Jesus. James is wanting Christians to pause and check: what is genuine faith, and does my life show evidence of it?

After all, real faith in Jesus is not seen in what we claim, but in how we live. It shows itself in all kinds of real-life ways. James knows what life is like, and so this book is all about showing us what difference real faith makes in the real world. We see how Christians are to respond to suffering and trials, injustice and illness, conflict with others and temptation within. James shows us how to think about everything from poverty and wealth to planning and prayer. He shows us what our hearts and tongues are really like. But more than that, he shows us what our great God is like, and how all we do flows from who he is.

These six studies will help you see the beauty and practicality of genuine Christianity. James' letter is full of vivid imagery and punchy language. He does not beat around the bush. In style as well as content, this is down-to-earth Christianity.



## James before 61 AD



# 1

## Joy in Trials

James 1:1-18

### Talkabout

1. What do you see as the relationship between joy and suffering? Why?

- How do wealth and poverty usually influence our joy? Why?

### Investigate

 Read James 1:1-12

#### DICTIONARY

**Twelve tribes** (v 1): a term describing the people of God.

**Trials** (v 2): testing periods of life—persecution, suffering, ill-health, and so on.

**Perseverance** (v 4): an ability to keep going.

**Humiliation** (v 10): a process or event that causes someone to think less highly of themselves.

**Blessed** (v 12): enjoying the satisfaction and security of living the way we were designed to, under God's rule.

2. How does James' description of himself and of his readers make reading this letter exciting?
  
3. What kind of person does James want his readers to be, does verse 12 suggest?
  
4. What is the main way that we can be or become this type of person (v 2)?
  - How is this view different from how we tend to view suffering?
  
  - What reasons does James give for viewing suffering in this way (v 3-4)?
  
5. What should we do if we struggle to have the "wisdom" to look at our trials in this way (v 5)?
  - How will God respond (v 5)?



- What warning does James give in verses 6-8? How does “double-minded” (v 8) help us to understand what he means by “doubt” in verse 6?

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## Explore More | OPTIONAL

### Read Romans 5:1-8

We are justified through faith (that is, we are declared innocent by God because of Jesus’ life and death).

- What do we enjoy as a result of this (v 1-2)?
- What else do we do, and why (v 3-4)?
- How does Paul reassure us this isn’t just wishful thinking in...
  - v 5?
  - v 6-8?
- How do Paul’s words here reinforce and add to James’ message in James 1:1-8?

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## Apply

6. How should knowing what Christians will receive in the future (v 12) affect our view of suffering now? What stops us from viewing our lives like this?

7. What is attractive about being able to consider trials with “pure joy”?

- How is this a strong witness to those around us?

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## Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

Is there a trial in your life that you have not been considering as “pure joy”? What stops you thinking of it like that?

What would change in your life overall if you were able to see the trial in a joyful way? What might God be doing in you through that hardship that could begin to help you see it differently?

Would memorising James 1:12 help you to change your perspective?

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## Investigate

8. How should humble (poor) Christians view themselves (v 9-11)? And rich ones? How does the world view these two states differently?

- Why does the gospel encourage the poor, and humble the rich?

Trials around us can prompt all manner of temptations within us. Understanding temptation is therefore vital for ensuring that we respond in healthy ways to the difficult circumstances we often find ourselves in. We need to make sure we are not “deceived” (v 16).

 **Read James 1:13-18**

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**DICTIONARY**

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**Enticed** (v 14): attracted.

guarantees the rest of the harvest is

**Firstfruits** (v 18): the initial batch of  
a farmer's crop, which proves and

on its way.

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9. Where does temptation *not* come from? Where does it come from  
(v 13-14)?

- Where does temptation lead, if it is not resisted (v 15)?

10. Temptation does not come from God. What *does* come from him  
(v 17-18)?

## Apply

11. What are the particular temptations we might face when we feel we  
are...

- in a period of great trial?

- poor?

- rich?

12. What thought process have verses 13-18 taught us to go through, and encourage others to go through, when temptation comes?

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## Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

Do you need to change your view of relative wealth, and/or of relative poverty? How?

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## Pray

*Thank God for his character: the generous, unchanging Father of the heavenly lights.*

*Thank God for giving you birth through the word of truth, and for promising you a crown of life in eternity.*

*Share some trials that you are facing, and pray for each other, for wisdom to consider them “pure joy”. Then pray for anyone in your church who you know is facing a particularly difficult trial right now.*