



The Book of James: Living the Christian Life

The book of James only consists of five chapters. While the book may be short in chapters compared to other books of the Bible, the scriptures found in these five chapters are filled with challenging wisdom for the early Christians and today's disciples. James encourages that vital Christianity is about taking action in the life of faith and pursuing a life of holiness. James encourages Christians to not just practice faith and works, but to practice a faith that works. James' passionate words challenge us to consider how God is calling us to live the Christian life today.

Questions for Reflection:

- What is the word planted deep inside you and how can it save you?
- What does it mean to welcome the word?
- What are two good gifts God has given you this year?
- Why does James encourage everyone to be quick to listen and slow to speak?

Spiritual Practice: Bible Study

Throughout the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, we find encouragement to regularly study, meditate on, contemplate and memorize God's word. In Bible study, we come to know what the Bible says and discover how it intersects and applies to our lives today. Adele Calhoun writes in her book *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, "Studying the Scripture can equip, guide and reveal how to live in life-giving ways that deepen our friendship with God and others." Try the following suggestions as we explore the book of James during worship this month:

1. Look for a theme as you read:
 - a. Read a chapter of the Bible and give it a title.
 - b. In your own words write what the chapter is about.
2. Read a passage of Scripture and ask yourself three questions as you read:
 - a. What speaks to my heart? Draw a heart beside those words.
 - b. What new thought or idea comes to me? Draw a light bulb next to those words.
 - c. What does Scripture move me to do? Draw a hand beside the action you are feeling led to take.
3. Choose one or two questions and record your responses in a journal:
 - a. What stirs, touches, or inspires you as you read this passage?
 - b. What stands out for you in these passages? What "speaks" to you?
 - c. What reassurances, words of comfort, or hope do you find in this message?
 - d. What does this passage say about God?
 - e. What does this passage say about us?
 - f. What does this passage say about the relationship between God and human beings?
 - g. What does God want us to learn from this passage?
 - h. What stirs you as you read this passage?
 - i. How can we use this lesson in our daily lives? What practical steps will you take?
4. Use art supplies to illuminate your understanding of scripture. Read a passage of scripture then use art supplies to create a picture of what this passage reveals to you about your faith journey, God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit.
 - a. How do you see yourself in this picture?
 - b. What thoughts and feelings does this reflection stir in your heart?