
Forward

This book contains 5 lessons from the book of James. Your students will learn what character qualities they need to develop in order to become mature in their relationship with Christ. This series of five lessons covers each chapter of James with the goal of learning how we can become stronger in our faith. In lesson 1, “Strong and Wise,” there is an emphasis on trusting God’s plan, persevering through difficulties, and obeying the bible. Lesson 2, “Strong and Faithful,” students will learn that having a strong and mature relationship with Jesus requires deliberate actions that model one’s faith. They will be challenged to show others that they are true believers by the way they behave. In lesson 3, “Strong and Kind,” the students will learn that their words are very powerful! They will be challenged to stop and think about their words before they speak them. Lesson 4, “Strong and Humble,” teaches your students that humility is necessary in a strong believer’s life. Finally, lesson 5, “Strong and Patient,” your students will learn that growing stronger in our faith takes patience.

I have designed these lessons to enable you to teach the Bible expositively. The idea is to have the kids read the passages in their own Bibles and the teacher explain the scriptures and give good practical applications that are age-appropriate. My goal is to ensure that children learn that God's Word is exciting and meaningful and that teachers teach sound doctrine!

Even though I've scripted the lessons, I don't expect teachers to read my lesson materials verbatim to the children as they teach. My lessons are meant to provide the details you need to get background information and some suggestions for child-oriented personal application. Once you know and understand the Bible lessons for yourself, you'll be ready to teach your class.

The two-column layout of this book is designed so that you can copy and cut the pages in half to fit into your Bible. When the children observe that you are teaching right out of the Bible, rather than from a curriculum book, it validates God’s Word and gives your teaching more authority.

You will discover that there is not always a Craft or Game idea suggested in each lesson. When I've had a good idea that really seems to support the lesson objectives, I've included it. But I have another handbook called *Tips and Tricks — Making Children’s Bible Lessons Come to Life* that gives lots of suggestions for activities that will help reinforce your lesson and teach the memory verse. (This is available from my website:

<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com/>)

Use the Teaching Schedule to help you organize your teaching rotation.

I pray that you will use these lessons for God’s glory by teaching the Bible as an entire plan by a systematic and connected study of the Word.

Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)

Sheila Scroggins

Sheila has had over 35 years’ experience in teaching children and has several other lesson series available. You may contact her by eMail at: ccuv-ChildrensMinistry@usa.net for more information.

Table of Contents

Lesson 1: Strong and Wise (James 1) 1

Lesson 2: Strong and Faithful (James 2) 5

Lesson 3: Strong and Kind (James 3)..... 9

Lesson 4: Strong and Humble (James 4)..... 13

Lesson 5: Strong and Patient (James 5)..... 17

Teaching Schedule

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		Strong and Wise	If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (James 1:5 NLT)
		Strong and Faithful	What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? (James 2:14 NLT) —And— Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless? (James 2:20 NLT)
		Strong and Kind	Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. (James 1:19 NLT)
		Strong and Humble	If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 ESV)
		Strong and Patient	Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. (Ephesians 4:2 NLT)

Strong and Wise

(James 1)

Introduction

Ask: Do you want your faith in God to grow? To become a strong and wise believer, we must trust God's plan and follow His leading in our life, even if it doesn't make sense to us.

Today we begin a 5-week study in the book of James who, if we listen with our hearts to what he says, we will learn how to behave and grow as Christ-followers by trusting God.

Opening Prayer

Father, help us become stronger and wiser as Christians so that we may better serve You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (James 1:5 NLT)

Lesson

Let's open our bibles to the book of James.

James 1:1

This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the "twelve tribes"—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings!

There are five men by the name of James in the New Testament. So, we wonder which one wrote this book.

Ask: How does this writer describe himself? (A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.)

In fact, the James that wrote this book was none other than the half brother of Jesus. James was the son of Joseph and Mary and grew up in the same home with his older brother, Jesus, the Son of God.

Now James could have opened his letter by boasting that he was the brother of Jesus just to impress his readers, but he doesn't. Remarkably, he writes this letter later in his life and humbly calls himself "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Ask: Can you imagine what it might have been like for James to grow up with an older brother that never sinned?

Jesus never disobeyed his parents. Jesus always came when His mother called Him the first time. He always washed His hands properly before supper. He always did His chores quickly and with joy. He always obeyed. Then there was James, born with a sinful nature just like the rest of us, living in the shadow of a big brother who was God in the flesh. Being far from perfect, James, the younger brother, had a problem right from the start, didn't he?!

Ask: How do you think James felt when Jesus claimed to be the long-awaited fulfillment of God's promise to send the Messiah, the Savior of the world (Luke 4:16-21)?

John 7:5

For even his brothers didn't believe in him.

It seems that his whole family thought Jesus was crazy!

Mark 3:21

When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him away. "He's out of his mind," they said.

But James did not stay in his unbelief. After Jesus raised Himself from the dead, He visited his brother, James.

1 Corinthians 15:7

Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles.

Ask: What would you think if your brother was crucified (nailed to a cross), died and was buried, but then three days later, came back to life?

James was completely convinced at that point that Jesus really was Who He said he was—the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God.

After that James, became the leader of the Christian church and he wrote the very first book of the New Testament, the book we call, “James” which we are going to study together.

We will not be looking at each verse in the book of James. But we will look at each chapter to discover how we can become strong in our faith.

James 1:5-8

*If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (6) But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. (7) Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. (8) **Their loyalty is divided between God and the world**, and they are unstable in everything they do.*

Ask: What is the difference between *wisdom* and *knowledge*?

Knowledge is knowing about something, but *wisdom* is understanding how, why, when, and where to use that knowledge. You can be knowledgeable without being wise. For example, *knowledge* is knowing how to use a gun; *wisdom* is knowing when to use it and when to keep it in your holster.

Ask: How does James tell us to get wisdom? (By asking God for it!)

If we ask God for wisdom, then we need to believe He will give it to us! Part of becoming a strong and wise believer means trusting that we can rely on God to give us true wisdom.

Ask: How does James describe a person who doubts God? (See verse 8.)

Some bible translations read, “*he is a double-minded man*”. A “double-minded” person is confused! It’s like a dog with a head at either end of its body that is constantly trying to walk in two directions

at once. A double-minded person hasn’t made up their mind: “*Is God right or is the world right?*” A double-minded person is a doubter; he doesn’t have faith in God; he hears what God says, but doubts that it is true. For example, God says we are to forgive someone who is mean to us, but the world says, we are to get even; get back at them. If you can’t decide which is the right thing to do, then you are double minded! You are confused! You don’t truly trust God’s word.

God allows trials in our lives to draw us closer to Him and make us stronger and wiser as believers.

James 1:12

*God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the **crown of life** that God has promised to those who love him.*

Ask: How do you feel when someone is mean to you or calls you a bad name or is rude to you? Do you want to get back at them?

Trials and hard times come to everyone, so it’s important to know how God wants us to act during those difficult times. How you respond when someone is mean to you is super important because anyone else that’s watching you might be discouraged from trusting God. They might say to themselves, “*That kid says she’s a Christian, but look how out of control she is! What good would it do me to become a Christian?*”

It’s normal to get frustrated when you’re in a trial, but a strong and wise Christian remembers God promised to help us and give us peace even when we are in stressful situations.

Having patience shows others that we trust God. That’s why God allows us to go through trials!

Let’s back up and look at verse 2 through 4:

James 1:2-4

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. (3) For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. (4) So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

Having trials and hard times is actually really good for us. They make us strong and wise.

The next thing we want to look at is an *analogy*. [Teacher, write that word on the board.]

An *analogy* compares two things—one that is familiar to you and one that is new to you--so that you can better understand the new idea. I like to call them “word pictures” because they help us “see” things in our minds. An analogy usually uses the word “like” when it makes the comparison; i.e., *something is like another thing*. For example, when I said that a double-minded person is like a dog with a head at both ends. You pictured that in your mind, didn't you, and the idea of a double-minded person became clear. That's an analogy.

Let's read verses 22-25 and see if we get the analogy James gives us there:

James 1:22-25

*But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. (23) For **if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror.** (24) You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. (25) But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*

Ask: What two things did James compare? (James compared 'Listening to the word and not obeying it' to 'glancing at yourself in a mirror and forgetting what you look like'.)

Ask: Can you imagine looking at yourself in the mirror and discovering that you have spaghetti sauce on your face. Then, without

cleaning it off, you turn away from the mirror and forget all about it? Just leaving the food on your face would be silly, wouldn't it?

James is trying to tell us that if we hear God's word and don't do what He says, we are being very silly. It's like speeding past a warning sign and driving off a cliff.

The strong and wise believer will do what the bible says.

Ask: What does James say we will receive if we endure testing and temptation with patience? (Vs 12. The crown of life.)

What James is saying is that we will be richly rewarded if we handle trials and hardships the way God expects us to. If you really do love God, then show it by listening to God and doing what He tells us to do. That proves that you have faith and that you are a strong and wise follower of Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help us as we grow in faith. We trust that your word will make us stronger and wiser in our relationship with You. In Jesus' name. Amen

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Pop-The-Question —

Write the review questions on separate slips of paper and insert them into balloons. Blow them up. Let the children pop a balloon, one at a time, and answer the question. Small children may wish to have someone else pop their balloon for them.

Variations:

- Insert numbers that correspond to a list of questions instead of the questions.
- Put the game point values on slips of paper in the balloon. So, for every right answer they can pop a balloon and see what points their team gets.
- Each child gets a chance to throw a ball into a basketball hoop. For making a basket, the child gets to choose a balloon, pop it and try to answer the question. His team gets 50 points for every right answer.

Or, use the following questions in another game of discussion of your choice:

1. How does James describe himself in the opening of his letter? (A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.)
2. Why do you think James didn't believe in Jesus until after his resurrection? (Because they were siblings, it must have seemed strange to James that Jesus was the Son of God).
3. Can you imagine what it might have been like for James to grow up with an older brother that never sinned?
4. How do you think James felt when Jesus claimed to be the long-awaited fulfillment of God's promise to send the Messiah, the Savior of the world?
5. What would you think if your brother was crucified (nailed to a cross), died and was buried, but then three days later, came back to life?
6. What is the difference between *wisdom* and *knowledge*? (*Knowledge* is knowing about something, but *wisdom* is understanding how, why, when, and where to use that knowledge.)

7. How does James tell us to get wisdom? (By asking God for it!)
8. How does James describe a person who doubts God? (Verse 8 says he is a he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.)
9. Why is it important to respond to someone that is mean to you with patience and kindness? (You do not want to discourage anyone watching from trusting in God.)
10. What is an *analogy*? (An *analogy* compares two things—one that is familiar to you and one that is not--so that you can better understand the new idea.)
11. What analogy did James give us in verses 22-25 and what was he trying to tell us? (James compared '*Listening to the word and not obeying it*' to '*glancing at yourself in a mirror and forgetting what you look like*'. Don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says.)
12. What does James say we will receive if we endure testing and temptation with patience? (Vs 12. The crown of life.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Strong and Faithful

(James 2)

Introduction

Last week we started learning lessons from the book of James.

Ask: Who was this James that wrote this book of the Bible? (The half-brother of Jesus.)

James was writing to believers that needed encouragement. In our first lesson, James taught us that if we want to become strong in our faith, we must become **wise**. This week we will learn that James wants his readers to be **faithful**.

Let's brainstorm for a minute. [Teacher, write the student's answers on the board.]

Ask: What would you expect a **doctor** to do? What does a **teacher** do? What about a **fireman**?

Each of these jobs has certain skills or actions they must do.

The same is true for a Christian. Today we'll learn that if you are a Christian, then it is expected that you will demonstrate your faith by the choices you make in what you think, say, and do.

Opening Prayer

Father, show us how important it is for us to have Christ-like behavior. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? (James 2:14 NLT)

—And—

Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless? (James 2:20 NLT)

Lesson

If you are a Christian, then it is expected that you live a godly life. One thing we need to learn is how to deal with our sin.

James 2:8-11

*Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (9) But if you **favor** some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. (10) For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws. (11) For the same God who said, "You must not commit **adultery**," also said, "You must not **murder**." So if you murder someone but do not commit adultery, you have still broken the law.*

Ask: What sins does James address in this passage? (Favoritism, adultery, murder.) [Teacher, discuss these sins with your students.]

Each of these sins hurts other people.

Ask: What is "the royal law" that James mentions in verse 8? (The golden rule.) And, why is it good to obey this law?

He is reminding people that Jesus told us to "'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." (Mark 12:31).

God does not want us to hurt others, so if we want to become strong and faithful Christ-followers, we must ask God to show us our sin and help us to be aware of how our behavior affects others.

Sometimes our words or our actions can be very hurtful. But, instead of making excuses for our sin or saying that we aren't as bad as someone else, we must recognize our sin is first of all, an offense against our holy God. When we deliberately sin and don't confess and repent of it, it hurts God's heart.

We need to show others that we are true Christians by our loving actions. Our actions must match our beliefs.

James 2:14-17

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?

(15) Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, (16) and you say, “Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? (17) So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

Ask: Can you imagine telling a homeless person to “stay warm and eat well” without giving them clothes or food?

It’s like telling a sick friend to get better without praying for them.

Ask: What else can you do for a sick friend that would bring them comfort? [Allow answers.]

People should be able to tell if you are a Christ-follower by your actions; by the way you live your life; by your love for others.

James tells us that faith without good deeds isn’t real faith. How we behave, shows others that we love God.

James 2:20-23

*How foolish! Can’t you see that **faith without good deeds is useless?** (21) Don’t you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? (22) You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. (23) And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” He was even called the friend of God.*

Ask: What do you know about Abraham? [Allow discussion.]

God chose Abraham to leave his home in Ur and promised him three things: The Promised Land, a large family, and that the Messiah, the Savior of the world, would come through his family line.

Ask: What specific event in Abraham’s life did James use to show that Abraham’s actions matched his faith? (He offered his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God.)

Ask: What blessings did Abraham receive for being obedient?

Even though Abraham didn’t end up actually offering his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice, God was pleased that he was willing to be obedient and He called Abraham a righteous man and said he was His friend.

Sometimes acting on our faith can be scary, but the Lord will help us be faithful when we trust His plan and rely on His strength.

If we want to grow stronger in our faith, we must learn to recognize our sins and repent of them quickly. Then, we need to show others that we are true believers by the way we behave. We want others to know that we trust God even when we don’t understand his plan, just like Abraham did.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, show us every day how to act according to Your word. We want to be stronger in our faith and lead others to you. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

DISCUSSION

Acting on Faith

In the Bible there are many people who acted on their faith. We are going to talk about several examples and try to think of a similar way you can act on your faith.

1. **Abraham**, in obedience to God, willingly offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice.
 - a. I can give up something I love, like my favorite possession, if God asks me to.

2. Noah trusted that God would send a flood and spent many years building the ark.
 - a. When I hear my parents arguing, I can trust that God will help them to kiss and make up.
3. Esther boldly approached King Xerxes, at the treat of death, to save God's people.
 - a. When someone teases me or says bad things about me because they know I'm a Christian, I can trust that God will give me courage to stand strong for Him.
4. Daniel continued praying to God even though it was against the law and punishable by death.
 - a. Even if it is against the school rules to pray in class, I can pray silently to my God who always hears me.
5. Joseph (Jacob's son) continued telling others about God and making right decisions even though he was thrown into prison because of false accusations.
 - a. Even if I am wrongfully accused of something, I can choose to respond to those people with a Christ-like attitude.
6. Matthew gave up his greedy occupation as a tax collector after meeting Jesus and became one of His disciples.
 - a. I can stop sinning [arguing with my mother, being mean to my little sister, using bad language, disobeying my father...] because Jesus lives in my heart.

GAME CENTER

Dodge the Question

Divide the children into two groups. Have one group form a large circle and instruct the other group to stand inside the circle. Give the outside circle a nerf ball. Then tell the children inside the circle to dodge the ball. If a child is hit, he must answer one of the review questions and then join the other circle. Play continues in this manner. Groups exchange places when the last child has been hit; winners are those last to be hit.

Or, use the following questions in another game or discussion:

1. Who was this James that wrote this book of the Bible? (The half-brother of Jesus.)
2. Why is it important to show others that we are Christians by the way we act? (Maybe they will think we are not real Christians if we don't act like one. It also might discourage someone from wanting to be a Christian.)
3. What is "*the royal law*" that James mentions in verse 8? And, why is it good to obey this law? (The golden rule. We need to show others that we are true Christians by our loving actions.)
4. What actions can you take that will show others you are a true Christian? (See "Acting on Faith" exercise.)
5. What specific event in Abraham's life did James use to show that Abraham's actions matched his faith? (He offered his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God.)
6. When can it be scary to act on our faith? (It can be scary to stand strong in our faith when we are standing alone; when it seems like everybody around us is making fun of us. Also, when you feel that the Holy Spirit is prompting you to share your faith, it can be scary to leave your comfort zone.)

Strong and Kind

(James 3)

Introduction

Ask: Have you ever heard someone say the following: “*Why did you do that? You are so stupid!*” Maybe you’ve said it to one of your siblings? How about: “*Don’t tell me what to do! You aren’t my boss.*” People can say some very hurtful things, can’t they?

Our words are very powerful! They have the power to either draw people to God or to push them away from Him. We need to learn to stop and think about our words before we speak them.

We have been learning lessons from the book of James. In our first lesson, James taught us that if we want to become strong in our faith, we must become **wise**. In our second lesson, James taught us the importance of being **faithful**. Now James is going to teach us that to grow strong in our faith we must learn to **always speak kindly**.

In our lesson today, we will learn that our tongues are powerful weapons. We need to use our words wisely for telling the truth and lifting people up. Our words can either build up or break down our relationships with others.

Opening Prayer

Father, help us understand the power of our words and how we should represent You through the words we speak. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Memory Verse

Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. (James 1:19 NLT)

Lesson

Shuffled Words

[Teacher, before class cut out a sheet of letters for each team (see last page of this lesson), shuffle each stack, and place them in a plastic baggy. Divide the students into groups of 2 or 3 and give each team a baggie of cut out letters. Explain to the class that they will answer a series of questions by *silently* finding the right letters with their partner, spelling the answer then holding the letters up for you to check. Keep score for each team, 1 point for the team that gets the right answer first.]

Before we get started, we’re going to play a little game called “*Shuffled Words*” that will teach us to work together and carefully choose your words. I will ask you some questions and you will answer them by silently spelling the answer with the letters I have given you.

You must remain silent during the game. This will help you learn to think before you speak. Remember no talking! If you talk, I will take a point away. Ready?

1. What was the name of the garden where Adam and Eve lived? (Eden)
2. Who built the ark? (Noah)
3. Who was swallowed by a whale? (Jonah)
4. Who killed Goliath? (David)
5. What kind of animal threatened Daniel’s life? (lion)
6. Who was Jesus’ mother? (Mary)
7. Which sea was divided so Moses and the Hebrew people could run from Pharaoh? (Red)
8. Who is the enemy of God? (Satan)

Taking time to think before you speak, even when you think you know an answer, is important if you want to become strong and mature believers.

James tells us that our words affect our actions.

James 3:2

Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

Ask: What do you think this verse is telling us?

James is telling us that if we control our speech, we will be able to control our behavior.

Ask: Say your brother or sister came into your room and took your favorite toy (or book or game), and you cried out, “*Hey, I’m going to beat you up if you ever take my things again.*” What response would your sibling have? Would she say unkind back words to you? Would she cry or try to hit you? Would a big fight start?

Ask: What is a better way to react to this situation? What kind words could you use instead?

God wants us to build each other up, not tear each other down. We must take the time to choose kind words if we want to become strong believers.

James 3:7-8

People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, (8) but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison.

[Teacher, take a tube of toothpaste and squeeze some out on a paper plate.

Ask: Can you get the toothpaste back in the tube?

No! that is impossible, isn’t it? The same is true of our words. Once we speak something, we can’t just take it back. We must think before we speak, asking ourselves and God if what we are about to say is truthful, encouraging, and uplifting.

James goes on to talk about the tongue:

James 3:9-12

Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. (10) And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right! (11) Does a spring of water bubble out with both fresh water and bitter water? (12) Does a fig tree produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? No, and you can’t draw fresh water from a salty spring.

Ask: What would you think if you went to get a drink of water from the kitchen faucet and it was salty sea water? Or if you saw bananas growing on an apple tree? It just wouldn’t be right, would it?

James is telling us that kind words and unkind words should not be coming from the same person’s mouth. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then every thought, word, and action that you do should show others that He is your Lord and Savior. We can’t be acting like we love and worship God, and then turn around and badmouth our friend.

Strong believers make a point of encouraging other people with kind and helpful words. They aren’t insulting or rude or hurtful.

Ask: How would you describe a person who speaks kind words. What kind of character does a thoughtful person have? [Teacher, list the student’s descriptions on the board; such as, *patient, encouraging, wise, forgiving*, etc.]

Now let’s see how James describes a person who uses kind words:

James 3:17-18

*But the wisdom from above is first of all **pure**. It is also **peace loving, gentle** at all times, and **willing to yield** to others. It is **full of mercy** and the fruit of good deeds. It **shows no favoritism** and is always **sincere**. (18) And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.*

When we focus on showing these qualities, then it will be easier to speak kind words. However, you must make an effort to push

selfishness and pride from your hearts if you want to honor God through your speech.

Pray that the Lord would help you use words for lifting others up instead of bringing them down. Using kind words doesn't come naturally to us; it is something that we all need to practice. Thankfully, we have the Holy Spirit to teach us how to think before we speak. He wants us to encourage and lift up others.

So, to become a strong and mature Christ-follower, we will learn to use kind words.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, give us the desire to use our words to lift others up instead of bringing them down. We know that as we learn to do this, we will become strong believers and we'll lead others to You instead of pushing them away. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Marbles

Preparation: Create a 24" dartboard for a floor game with three circles. Note: it works best if you use fabric like felt so the marbles don't roll so fast. Make the bullseye an 8" circle and the secondary circle 16". Label the bullseye, "10 points", the middle circle "20 points", the outer circle "50 points", and label the area off the dartboard as "100 points."

Place some marbles in the center of the dartboard on the bullseye. Use another marble as the "shooter."

Play: After correctly answering a review question, the player uses his thumb to flick the "shooter" from the edge of the dartboard into the bullseye to scatter the marbles placed there.

After each turn, add up the points based on where the marbles have rolled. Then gather the marbles and return them to the bullseye for the next person to scatter.

Or, use the following questions in another game or discussion.

1. How can our words affect our actions? (They can either pull people towards God or push them away from Him.)
2. What does it mean in verse 2 where it says, "if we could control our tongues, we could also control ourselves in every other way"? (If we control our speech, we will be able to control our behavior.)
3. How can you learn to tame your tongue? (Ask the Holy Spirit to help you think before you speak and to choose uplifting words.)
4. Explain today's verse, "*You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry*" in your own words.
5. Why is it not right that "*blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth*" (vs 9)? (If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then every thought, word, and action that you do should show others that He is your Lord and Savior.)
6. What kind of character does a thoughtful person have? (A thoughtful person shows that he or she is *patient, encouraging, wise, forgiving*, etc. These are the fruit of the Spirit.)
7. Who helps us think before we speak and helps us choose kind word? (Holy Spirit. You must have placed your faith in Jesus.)
8. What are the three ways we become strong in our faith that we have learned from James so far? (Becoming wise, being faithful, and using kind speech.)

Letters for the "Shuffled Words" activity

E	D	E
N	O	A
H	J	D
V	I	L
M	R	Y
S	A	T

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Strong and Humble

(James 4)

Introduction

We have been learning lessons from the book of James. In our first lesson, James taught us that if we want to become strong in our faith, we must become **wise**. In our second lesson, James taught us the importance of being **faithful**. In our third lesson, James taught us that to grow strong in our faith we must learn to always **speak kindly**.

In this fourth lesson, James will teach that **humility** in our daily life is a necessary trait of a strong believer in Jesus Christ. We will see that just as Jesus humbly endured a horrifying death on the cross for our sakes, we must obey God, even when it means we must give up our own plans.

We will learn how to become stronger Christians through humility.

Opening Prayer

Father, we submit ourselves to You. Give us humble hearts so we may learn more about You so that we can reach others for Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9 ESV)

Lesson

Ask: What does the word *humble* mean? How would you describe a humble person? (Modest, simple, respectful, peaceful, patient, kind, faithful, gentle, self-control, not selfish.)

Ask: Why is being humble hard? (Because we sin and want to get our own way instead of making serving others.)

Pride is a sin and the opposite of humility.

James 4:1-3

*What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the **evil desires** at war within you? (2) You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are **jealous** of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. (3) And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.*

Ask: What does this verse say that causes fights among people? (Selfish desires; coveting things you don't have, jealousy of others.)

Ask: What should you do if you are jealous of what others have? (Be thankful for what you *do* have. Be glad for your friend to have such a desirable possession.)

James tells us three things we must do to become stronger Christians:

James 4:7-10

*So **humble yourselves before God**. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you. (8) **Come close to God**, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. (9) Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. (10) Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.*

Ask: What is the first thing James tells us we should do?

#1. The first thing James tells us to do is submit to God or “*humble yourselves before God*.”

Ask: What does that mean? (Yield to His authority and will, commit your life to Him and His control, and be willing to follow Him.)

#2. The second thing James tells us to do is “*Resist the devil*”.

Ask: How do you “resist the devil”? (Ignore him; don't fall for his tricks; don't allow Satan to entice you to sin.)

James says if you resist the devil, he will flee from you.

#3. The third thing James tells us to do is to come close to God, and God will come close to you.

Ask: How do you do that?

James tells us what we must do to come near to God. He says in verse 8, “*Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, ... (9) Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy.*”

Ask: What is James telling us here? What does it mean to wash your hands, purify your heart, and be sorrowful?

James is telling us we must come to Jesus in prayer and confess our sins so that we can be forgiven and cleansed. He wants us to be sincerely sorry for our sins because we have broken the heart of our holy and righteous God. And, He wants us to live a pure life—a life set apart for His work.

Ask: What is the result if we humble ourselves before the Lord? (He will lift us up in honor; He will restore us to our righteous standing before Him. [Review the Memory Verse for today.]

Humbling ourselves means to recognize that our worth comes from God alone, not from our own possessions or achievements. Submitting to God is necessary if we want to become strong and humble Christ-followers.

Humility requires selfless, sacrificial service, like Jesus, who even gave up his own life.

James 4:13-17

Look here, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit.” (14) How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog—it’s here a little while, then it’s gone. (15) What you ought to say is, “If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that.” (16) Otherwise, you are boasting about your own pretentious

plans, and all such boasting is evil. (17) Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

Ask: Were the people in these verses being humble or prideful? How do we know? (No! They were making their own plans.)

Our goal in life must be to surrender to God’s plans for our lives. He wants to make us strong and humble believers.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, give us the strength to humbly come to You and to surrender our lives into Your hands. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Ping Pong Ball Toss

Write point numbers in the cups of two egg cartons. Place the two cartons long sides together. Divide the children into two teams. Give a child from each team 3 tosses of the ball for every right answer. The team with the highest points gets two pieces of candy while the other team gets one piece.

Or, use the following questions in another game or discussion.

1. What does the word *humble* mean? How would you describe a humble person? (Modest, simple, respectful, peaceful, patient, kind, faithful, gentle, self-control, not selfish.)
2. Why is being humble hard? (Because we sin and want to get our own way instead of making serving others.)
3. What causes fights among people? (Selfish desires; coveting things you don’t have, jealousy of others.)

4. What should you do if you are jealous of what others have? (Be thankful for what you *do* have. Be glad for your friend to have such a desirable possession.)
5. What does it mean to humble ourselves before God? (To recognize that our worth comes from God alone, not from our own possessions or achievements.)
6. How do you “resist the devil”? (Ignore him; don’t fall for his tricks; don’t allow Satan to entice you to sin.)
7. What does James tell us to do to come close to God? (In verse 8-9 James tells us to come to Jesus with clean hands and a clean heart.)
8. What does it mean to wash your hands, purify your heart, and be sorrowful? (Confess your sins according to 1 John 1:9)
9. What is the result if we humble ourselves before the Lord? (He will restore our right standing before Him)
10. What should our goal in life be? (Our goals in life must be to surrender to God’s plans for our lives. He wants to make us strong and humble believers.)

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Strong and Patient

(James 5)

Introduction

We have been learning lessons from the book of James. In our first lesson, James taught us that if we want to become strong in our faith, we must become **wise**. In our second lesson, James taught us the importance of being **faithful**. In our third lesson, James taught us that to grow strong in our faith we must learn to always **speak kindly**. In the last lesson we learned that to become a stronger Christian, we must **humble** ourselves before God.

This week we will learn that growing stronger in our faith takes **patience**.

Opening Prayer

Father, help us learn to be patient as you reveal Your plan for our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.
(Ephesians 4:2 NLT)*

Lesson

Ask: Can you think of a time it was hard to be patient? What happened? [Teacher, encourage discussion.]

It can be so hard to be patient, but James tells us that trusting in the Lord's timing is part of every strong, maturing Christian's life.

James 5:7-9

*Dear brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the Lord's return. Consider the **farmers** who patiently wait for the rains in the fall and in the spring. They eagerly look for the valuable harvest to ripen. (8) You, too,*

*must be patient. Take courage, for the coming of the Lord is near. (9) **Don't grumble** about each other, brothers and sisters, **or you will be judged**. For look—the Judge is standing at the door!*

Having patience with God's plan is much better than grumbling. Look at what James said, "*Don't grumble...or you will be judged.*" When we complain about God's timing, it leads to His judgment.

James says, just like a farmer must wait for his crops to grow, we must wait on the Lord if we want to experience the blessings of His provision.

James 5:10-11

For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. (11) We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy.

Ask: Who is used as an example in this passage? (The prophets and Job)

A long time ago there lived a man named Job. He had a good relationship with God and he always did the right thing. He had seven sons and three daughters, whom he prayed for every day, and he owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 ox and 500 donkeys along with many servants.

Then one day the house fell down on them and they were all killed. All of his sons and daughters and his animals, and all of his servants died. On top of all that, he got some very painful sores all over his body.

Job had some pretty bad things to happen to him. How would you feel if those things happened to you? What would you do? Would you get angry at God? Would you blame God for all those bad things that happened to you?

Job's reaction was to fall to the ground and worshipped God. He said, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the name of the Lord be praised." In all this, Job did not sin by blaming God. He told his wife, "Sometimes we have good things in our life and sometimes we have bad things. We have to accept both."

So, Job waited patiently on the Lord, never knowing what was going to happen next.

Let's see what the results of Job's patience was:

Job 42:10-17

When Job prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes. In fact, the LORD gave him twice as much as before! (11) Then all his brothers, sisters, and former friends came and feasted with him in his home. And they consoled him and comforted him because of all the trials the LORD had brought against him. And each of them brought him a gift of money and a gold ring. (12) So the LORD blessed Job in the second half of his life even more than in the beginning. For now he had 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 teams of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. (13) He also gave Job seven more sons and three more daughters. (14) He named his first daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. (15) In all the land no women were as lovely as the daughters of Job. And their father put them into his will along with their brothers. (16) Job lived 140 years after that, living to see four generations of his children and grandchildren. (17) Then he died, an old man who had lived a long, full life.

A strong believer will not only be patient with God, but he will also be patient with others. When we are patient, it sets a great example for others and encourages them to continue trusting God in the midst of difficult times.

2 Peter 3:8-9

*But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. (9) The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, **he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.***

Here James is talking about patiently waiting for the return of Christ. Jesus told us before He ascended back into heaven that He will come again for us. There will be a day when He blows the last trumpet and calls us to come up to heaven to be with Him. We call that the rapture, or the snatching away. We don't know when the rapture is going to

be. But some day, if we are still alive on this earth, He will come for us. He made that promise over 2,000 years ago. We know He always keeps His promises, so we must continue to wait patiently for Him.

Ask: Why has He waited so long to call us up to heaven? (Because He doesn't want anyone to miss the chance to live for all eternity with Him in heaven. God is patiently waiting for everyone—every man, woman and child—to repent of their sins and be saved.)

Here's a lesson for all of us to learn from this: we should be patient with others because God is patient with us.

James 5:19-20

My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, (20) you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back from wandering will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

Here's what James is telling us in these verses: It's hard to be patient with others, but it is worth the struggle because helping others turn away from sin saves them from living for all eternity in hell.

Having patience is hard work, but it is always worth it! It makes us strong Christ-followers.

Ask: What are the other qualities that we need to be strong Christians, besides patience? (Wisdom, faithfulness, kindness, and humility.)

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, give us patience, wisdom, faithfulness, kindness and humble hearts. Help us become stronger believers as we trust Your unique plan for each of our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

GAME CENTER

Pass the Chicken (or another stuffed animal)

Sit with your students in a circle. One receives a question while a rubber chicken is passed around the circle. The student must answer the question correctly before the chicken comes back around to them.

Or, use the following questions in another game or discussion.

1. Can you think of a time it was hard to be patient? What happened?
2. What did James say might happen to us if we complain about God's plan or timing of His plan? (Vs 9 says we might be judged.)
3. What is it a farmer has to patiently wait for? (His crops to grow.)
4. Tell me about the prophet Job in your own words.
5. What was the result of Job's patience? (The LORD blessed Job in the second half of his life even more than in the beginning.)
6. How can our patience be a great example to others?
7. Why should we patiently await Jesus' return?
8. Why has Jesus waited so long to call us up to heaven? (Because He doesn't want anyone to miss the chance to live for all eternity with Him in heaven. God is patiently waiting for everyone—every man, woman and child—to repent of their sins and be saved.)

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