



# ***A Faith that Works***

**Christ Redeemer Church  
Sermon Series Study Guide Part 2  
Spring 2020**

Special thanks to Anna-Kaye Schulte for the sermon series artwork!

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## INTRODUCTION

*“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For 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. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 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 1:22-25 (ESV)

### **The Letter of James: An Introduction**

What is genuine Christianity? What are the marks of true faith and how can you tell when you’ve really got it?

Many Christians and non-Christians alike have become disillusioned with much of what they see in Christianity and the Church. James, the writer of the New Testament letter that bears his name, would suggest that the reason for this cynicism may be due an imitation faith. A “gospel” that looks like Jesus but doesn’t live and love like Jesus.

Genuine faith is not smug and self-confident, resting on its supposed successes. Rather, it is broken, believing and obedient. Genuine faith changes us because it recreates us by the power of God’s word. It produces in us a new life that works itself out in a new way of living.

Genuine faith in Christ is alive. It is a faith that works—a faith that works through trial and temptation; a faith that tames one’s tongue; a faith that shares one’s treasure; and a faith that bears the fruit of love, impartially. It is a faith that fulfills in us the law of God—to love God with all our being and love our neighbor as our self.

There is no doubt that James is one of the New Testament’s more pointed and challenging books. My prayer for us as a church is that the message of James would jar us from our lethargy and tacit unbelief, driving us to the joy of greater obedience to the “law of liberty.”

### **The Purpose of this Study Guide**

This study guide is intended to be a simple and basic way for us to engage in the sermon passages on a week by week basis. Our hope is to work together on our daily discipline of pursuing God in Scripture and prayer. The daily discipline that this study guide represents will be a tangible way to allow the “word of Christ [to] dwell among us richly” (Colossians 3:16), by enhancing our engagement with the sermon passages and directing us in shared prayer.

### **How to Use the Study Guide**

A word about how to use this study guide: The date at the top of each page notes the Sunday for the respective the week. The Scripture verse listed under each heading is a suggested memory verse for that week. Below that you will find a passage of Scripture, followed by “*Reflection Questions*.” In general, these readings will allow

you to reflect on the previous sermon or prepare you to hear the sermon for that upcoming week. We estimate that each day's "lesson" should require no more than 15 minutes.

In addition to the Scripture reading and prayer suggestions, there is also a suggested reading each week from the book *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn. The subjects of each chapter are not intended to directly correspond to the subject matter of each respective sermon passage. Rather, it is intended to be an engagement of similar subjects in the book of James, thus, giving a sort of "cross-pollination" effect to our study.

To be clear, this guide is not intended to be a "legalistic" requirement. Not at all! Rather, it is a way for us as a congregation to walk together as we explore God's Word. And to what end? Our prayer is that as we grow in our understanding and practice of daily prayer and meditation, we will grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and so grow in our love for Him and one another.

### **A Word about Walking with Christ**

Walking with Christ is a work that God is doing in you. This does not mean that we are not also required to do the work of walking with Him. Indeed, we are! We are to be "doers of the Word!" This will require us to be intentional—to strive and sacrifice to know Christ and to obey all that He has commanded! Nonetheless, our confidence is that it is not dependent upon the perfection of our striving, but on the perfection of our Savior. Our striving does not secure his saving power. Actually, it is the exact opposite. "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth" (1:18). And, as we receive this "implanted word," it has the power "to save our souls" (1:21). This is HIS promise!!! In light of this promise, we must make it our intention not be self-deceived. Rather, we must cling to his word and let it freely work in us obedience (James 1:25).

It is for this reason we are encouraging everyone at CRC to be in the word of God personally. That is the point of this guide.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of glory,

Don Willeman  
January 2020  
Hanover, NH

## WEEK OF MAY 3, 2020

### *Memory Verse:*

*“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”*

*~James 3:17 (ESV)*

### **MONDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 1:1-8

### **Reflection Questions:**

- Where do you struggle to trust in God? Do you waver over his character, his plans, your circumstances, or your relationship with him?
- What would it look like to trust God without wavering in those areas? Who could you talk and pray with about this?

### **Prayer Starters:**

- Gracious Father, show me where I am not trusting you and where I need to submit my desires and concerns to you.
- Lord, draw close to me and show me your good and holy character so that my trust might grow.

### **WEDNESDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** Colossians 2:1-3

### **Reflection Questions:**

- Who do you consider to be a wise person? How did they become wise? Where do you see a need to grow in wisdom?
- What do you think it means that the “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” are hidden in Christ?

**Prayer Starters:**

- Father, help me to grow in living my life wisely, to see things the way you see them and to honor you in everything I do.
- Lord, let me see the beauty of Christ, and make me more like the one who loved me in my sin and brokenness.

**FRIDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 9:10-12, 30:24-28

**Reflection Questions:**

- What is it about wisdom that lets these creatures live successfully?
- What do you consider to be a successful life? What needs to be true of your life to consider it successful?
- How does adopting an eternal perspective change your view of what success is?
- Think of an issue you are worried about, or an area you are struggling in. How does it change your perspective to know that God wants you to be happy?

**Prayer Starters:**

- Lord, teach me your wisdom, and thank you for eagerly and generously giving wisdom to all who ask for it!
- Lord, help me to see things from your perspective, and to live successfully according to your definition of success.

## **SATURDAY:**

### **Scripture Reading:** James 3:13-18

- How would you describe your basic posture towards other people?  
Towards God?
  
- How do other people describe that posture? Who could you ask about this?
  
- In the midst of the current pandemic, what are two or three of the things you want most?
  
- What would it look like to entrust God with these worries and desires?
  
- What would change by resolving to desire God above all of things?

### **Prayer Starters:**

- Lord, thank you for forgiving my sins, making peace between us, and teaching me your ways!
- Lord, make me humble and loving at heart, living at peace with those in my community, my family, and my church.

## WEEK OF MAY 10, 2020

### *Memory Verse:*

*"Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."*

*~James 4:8 (ESV)*

### *The Treasure Principle: Chapter 7*

#### **MONDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 4:1-5

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- What is the root of your conflicts with people around you? What role do your own desires play in those conflicts?
- What does James mean by "friendship with the world?" How does this make God jealous?

#### **Prayer Starters:**

- Heavenly Father, help me to see the desires, insecurities and fears that influence me, so that I might turn to you wholeheartedly.
- Lord, forgive me for letting my desires lead me away from you; teach me your ways.

#### **WEDNESDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 4:6-10

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- What is the greater grace that God gives? What does this grace show us about God?

- What does God want his grace to accomplish in you?
- Why does James want us to mourn and be unhappy? Where is this supposed to bring us?

**Prayer Starters:**

- Lord, I am truly sorry for my corrupt desires and my wicked deeds. Forgive me for the evil I have done and the good I have left undone; above all, forgive me for not drawing near to you.
- Heavenly Father, thank you for being patient with me, for cleansing me from my sins, for giving me your grace, and for drawing close to me!

**FRIDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 4:11-12

**Reflection Questions:**

- What is James prohibiting in this passage? Why does he forbid it?
- How has God judged you? How should that affect the way you relate to others?

**Prayer Starters:**

- God, I repent of my arrogance and my judgmental approach to the people around me. I rejoice that you are my gracious judge and Savior!
- Lord, help me to live in light of your grace and to embody the gracious character of my Savior, Jesus Christ.

## **SATURDAY:**

### **Prayer Starters:**

- Father, have mercy on your people and on our world; in the midst of this crisis, provide for the vulnerable and give wisdom to all who are in authority.
- Lord, bless your people with your presence; cause your Word to dwell richly among us even while we are apart from one another.

## WEEK OF MAY 24, 2020

### **Memory Verse:**

*Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."*

*~James 4:15 (ESV)*

### **The Treasure Principle: Treasure Principle Keys**

#### **MONDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 4:13-17

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- What is considered an arrogant attitude towards life? How often do you approach your life this way?
- What does James say is true of our lives? How should this affect our attitude towards life?

#### **Prayer Starters:**

- Ask God to teach you to "number your days" (Psalm 90:12) and live wisely and faithfully.
- Humble yourself before God, repenting of your proud perspective on your own life.

#### **WEDNESDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 12:16-21

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- How wise is the man in Luke 12? Do his actions make sense to you? Why or why not?
- How was he not "rich toward God?" What might the man have done differently?

**Prayer Starters:**

- Pray that God would make you generous, rich towards him and the people around you.
- Thank God for giving so generously to you in your daily provision and your relationship with him.

**FRIDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 5:1-6

**Reflection Questions:**

- What is the misery that is coming to the rich people? Why are they being judged?
- What does this kind of oppression by the rich look like in our time? Where are you tempted to exploit others?

**Prayer Starters:**

- Ask God to open your eyes to the injustices of our community, and the opportunities to care for those in need.
- Repent of your own tendency to exploit and manipulate others for your own interest.

**SATURDAY:****Prayer Starters:**

- Pray that God would meet with his people as we turn to him in worship.
- Pray that God would cause our community to become more like his kingdom, practicing justice and compassion.

## WEEK OF MAY 31, 2020

### *Memory Verse:*

*"Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains."*

*~James 5:7 (ESV)*

### *The Treasure Principle: My Giving Covenant*

#### **MONDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 5:7-9

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- What should we be patient about? What enables us to be patient?
- What does impatience about God's judgment look like? How does it affect our relationships with one another?

#### **Prayer Starters:**

- Ask God to show you where you may be harboring complaints or discontentment in your life.
- Thank God for his holiness and his promise to judge the evil in the world.

#### **WEDNESDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 5:10-11

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- What are some examples of perseverance you have seen in Scripture? What did this look like lived out?
- How were the people who persevered blessed? What blessing can you expect to receive from God?

**Prayer Starters:**

- Ask God for the strength, perspective, and faith to persevere and wait patiently.
- Thank God for his patience towards you, and for the grace that accepts your imperfect faith and patience!

**FRIDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 5:12

**Reflection Questions:**

- What are some of the reasons for swearing/making oaths/giving our word? What do we try to accomplish this way?
  
- Why does James encourage us not to swear in these ways? How does God see these oaths?

**Prayer Starters:**

- Pray that God would give you integrity, so that you might speak and act truly and honestly at all times.
- Pray for integrity in our public discourse, our personal relationships, and day to day business.

**SATURDAY:****Prayer Starters:**

- Pray that God would open our eyes to see the truth and move our hearts to love the truth.
- Pray that God would make us humble, patient, and able to persevere joyfully.

## WEEK OF JUNE 7, 2020

### *Memory Verse:*

*"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."*

*~James 5:16 (ESV)*

### *The Treasure Principle: My Giving Covenant*

#### **MONDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 5:13-16

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- How would you describe the various kinds of prayer discussed here?
- How can you incorporate prayer more into your life and into your relationships?

#### **Prayer Starters:**

- Bring your prayers, concerns, and joys before God, giving thanks through all of them for God's grace.
- Pray for the needs of the people around you - at home, at work, in the church, and in the community.

#### **WEDNESDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 5:17-18

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- Why did God hear Elijah's prayer? What did God accomplish through Elijah's prayers?

- How are you like and unlike Elijah? How does this encourage you in your prayers?

**Prayer Starters:**

- Pray for the coming of God's kingdom, that God would act in powerful ways for the sake of the gospel.
- Thank God for the privilege of being able to approach him in prayer, with the confidence that he hears you.

**FRIDAY:**

**Scripture Reading:** James 5:19-20

**Reflection Questions:**

- What is God's attitude towards us when we wander away from him? What does he want for us?
  
- How do you see those who wander away? How can you imitate God in your relationships with them?

**Prayer Starters:**

- Pray that God strengthen you in his truth and grace, so that you might believe with a whole heart.
- Pray for those who are doubting or wavering in their faith, and ask God how you can help and encourage them.

**SATURDAY:**

**Prayer Starters:**

- Ask God to cause us to grow in our devotion to him in prayer.
- Pray that God would open doors for the message of the gospel throughout our world.