

Simply JAMES

Where the Walk
Must Match the Talk



Bible Study Guide

simplifying life
re-prioritizing life
cultivating a deeper walk with God

All Bible verses are taken from the New Living Translation unless otherwise indicated.

The following people contributed to this study guide.

W. Milton Adams
Carolyn Byers
Cynthia Stigora
Darren Yates

You may copy this resource, or any part of it, to build up God's Kingdom.
Please include the following reference information:

More studies available at
www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com

the WORD among us
simply JAMES

Outline

[the WORD among us](#)
[How to use this leader's guide](#)

1. [Prized Possessions](#), 1:1-18
2. [Tidal Waves of Blessing](#), 1:19-27
3. [Mercy Me](#), 2:1-13
4. [Pudding Proof](#), 2:14-26
5. [Taming the Tongue](#), 3:1-12
6. [Godly Wisdom](#), 3:13-18
7. [Drawing Close to God](#), 4:1-10
8. [Three Warnings](#), 4:11 – 5:6
9. [Living While Waiting](#), 5:7-20

the WORD among us

“the WORD among us” series is different. These leader's guides capture real group life, a place where secular and unchurched people's lives are being changed.

People need the Everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ.

People also need safe and authentic friendship with Christians. Most unchurched people will not seek you or your group's friendship. You will have to intentionally seek their friendship.

May God bless you as you simplify and re-prioritize your life, creating time to "spend" with unchurched people.

how to use this leader's guide

This Leader's guide assumes you have:

1. Read through the www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com web page.
2. Completed the online Phase One and Phase Two Simple Church training.
3. Printed the business card for your group to use to invite people to come. These cards are found at: <http://www.simplechurchathome.com/Downloads.html>

title

[outline](#)

Bible story reference

Message of Hope: Have this idea crystal-clear in your mind. This is what you want people to remember for the rest of the week.

Leader's Tip: These tips show up here and there.

Planning Ahead: These include items coming in future weeks that you may need to plan for ahead of time.

Needed for Today: Additional items that you will need.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Before we introduce ourselves, let's remember:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people—new Christians, long-time Christians, and people who are thinking about becoming Christians. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Please be sensitive so that everyone has opportunity to share and contribute.
- Please turn cell phones off, or on “vibrate.”

Check-In:

Visit www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com for more study guides.

page 5

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Rotation Questions: Rotate through the following three questions: (Check-In is not used in Growth Groups)

Week 1: How are you simplifying your life?

Week 2: How are you re-prioritizing your life?

Week 3: What would it take to cultivate a deeper relationship with God?

Week 4: How are you simplifying your life?

Week 5: etc.

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments: *(This part is hard for church people. They will have to learn how to be comfortable with "quiet space." People will need time to think and need encouragement to share. Learn to let Jesus be the leader of your group and see how and where He leads. This time is often a mixture of sharing, singing, praying over prayer requests, reflection, praise, joy, and thankfulness to God. This is body-life.)*

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first) text*

page 2 of a typical leaders guide for a given week

Bridge: This is a short transition to lead the group from the Kick-Off Question to opening their Bibles.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: Bible story reference
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible during our discussion.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

Some helpful pointers

1. Remember, there are no "right answers" to relational Bible study questions.
2. You DO NOT have to "accomplish" all the the questions listed. Use them as a resource to enrich your discussion.
3. Spend a maximum of 50% of your Bible study time on Listening & Learning Questions.
4. Affirm each answer, no matter what is said, by saying something like, "Excellent, someone else;" "Thanks for sharing, someone else;" "Good, someone else;" "How about the rest of you, what do you think?"

5. Did you catch the common denominator, "someone else"? You are always affirming and always inviting others to give input.
6. If someone gets off-focus, I will say (after they have stopped talking), "Thanks. How about someone else?" then restate the question to refocus the discussion.

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

Some helpful pointers

1. Spend a minimum of 50% of your time on Heart Questions.
2. These questions are designed to invite people to share portions of their life story as it engages with the Bible study.
3. This is not a doctrinal study. This is not a life application study. It is a relational Bible study. There is a big difference.
4. At appropriate times, affirm confidentiality and offer reassurance that this is a safe place to share and grow spiritually.

Wrap Up:

1. Remember "this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here."
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
4. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

1. Keep it simple.
2. Taco Salad (Mexican Haystack).
3. Hostess (one of the CORE 4) provides the beans.
4. During lunch have Taco Salad sign-up sheet available.

prized possessions

[outline](#)

James 1:1-18

Message of Hope: God first chose you as His prized possession.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity so everyone can participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)*
What is one of your prized possessions?

Bridge: Today's story covers a lot of different things—like temptation, sin, faith, and endurance. This story ends by telling us that we are God's prized possessions. In other words, God chose us before we chose Him. That means God is on my side, so let's read this amazing story.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: James 1:1-18.

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. James refers to himself in verse one as a “slave of God.” Why do you think he chose this description, and what did this mean for his life?
2. What is endurance? Why is James saying it is important?
3. What kind of wisdom is James talking about? How is it different than worldly wisdom?
4. Read verses 6 - 8 again. How are people tempted in today's world to have “divided loyalty”?
5. Read verses 12-15 again. How does God give blessings to people in today's world?
6. What is the difference between temptation and sin? When does temptation become sin?
7. James does not define sin. How would you complete this sentence: “Sin is....”
8. Read verses 17-18 again. Some would say that sin originally comes from Satan. Why do you think this story does not mention Satan in these verses?
9. What is “His true word” that James talks about in verse 18?
10. What do you think it means to become “God's prized possession”?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What kind of troubles have come your way lately?
2. How has your faith been tested recently?
3. How have you seen God's blessing in your life, even though you did not deserve it?
4. Where have you recently seen temptation knocking on your door?
5. What ways have you found to make sure that temptations do not turn into acts of sin?
6. As we wrap up, what is a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear from this story?
7. Remember, **God first chose you as His prized possession.** How can this group pray for you for this next week?

Wrap Up:

1. Remember “this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here.”
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
4. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

tidal waves of blessings

[outline](#)

James 1:19-27

Message of Hope: Listening to and obeying God's word brings a tidal wave of blessings into your life.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give a opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)*
What is a meaningful blessing you have received?

Bridge: Today's story is about blessings. As we look closely at today's story, we will begin to understand that God showers blessings into our lives even though we may not deserve them. Today's story also teaches us how we can make it possible for God to shower a tidal wave of blessings into our lives. So, let's read the story.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: James 1:19-27.

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Why do you think James picks these three skills: 1) quick to listen, 2) slow to speak, and 3) slow to get angry, when there are many others he could have chosen?
2. In a practical way, how does a person actually get rid of the “filth and evil” in their lives?
3. What is “the word” James is talking about? How does a person accept the word of God into his life?
4. Is accepting God's word a one time deal, or can it happen many times?
5. James seems to suggest that “God's word” is already in our hearts, even though we may have never recognized it. How does this work?
6. Some would say that God has the “power to save your soul.” How is it that James says that *God's word* has the “power to save your soul”?
7. What is the purpose and meaning of the mirror example?
8. How can it be that obeying Gods law actually sets a person free?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Of the three skills James talked about in the beginning of this story, which one comes easier for you? Which one is harder? Why do you think so?
2. What are the different blessings you have seen in the lives of people who have obeyed God's word?
3. Even if you did not know you were obeying God's law, what is a blessing or two you have received from God?
4. In what ways do you see this world trying to corrupt you?
5. What could keep you from humbly accepting the word God has planted in your heart?
6. What are some blessings you think God would like to shower into your life?
7. As we wrap up, what is a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear from this story?
8. Remember, **both listening to and obeying God's word will bring a tidal wave of blessings into your life.** How can this group pray for you for this next week?

Wrap Up:

1. Remember “this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here.”
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
4. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

Visit www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com for more study guides.

page 11

mercy me

[outline](#)

James 2:1-13

Message of Hope: God is merciful to those who are merciful.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give a opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)*
Growing up did you think you were rich or poor?

Bridge: Today's story turns everything upside down. The world says, "Get lots of riches (money, houses, toys)." But, it might be a bit shocking to realize that what we think provides security in this life might actually be detrimental to one's eternal life in Heaven. How can this be? Let's read the story.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: James 2:1-13.

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Going back to verse 4, what are "motives"? What makes a motive evil or good?
2. What are some of the differences that James notes between the poor and rich people in this story?
3. James says that the richer a person is, the harder it is for him to inherit the Kingdom of God. Why does it work this way?
4. How would people live differently if they really loved their neighbor as themselves?
5. The laws James quotes from in verse 11 are found in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:1-22. Notice how the first 4 commandments talk about our personal relationship with God, and the last 6 commandments talk about our relationships with each other.
 1. With which of these 10 commandments do you think people are most familiar?
 2. With which one are people least familiar?
 3. Which one of these 10 commandments is God using to call you closer to Him?
6. James says that God's law is the standard by which we are judged. It seems that God's law places limits on us, so how can James say that it "sets you free"?
7. If someone were to say to you, "I show lots of mercy to people, so God does not expect me to obey all of his 10 commandments." How would you respond?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. What are some common forms of discrimination that happen today?
2. In what ways are you most likely to discriminate against others?
3. In what ways do you see yourself as rich?
4. How could your "richness" in this world keep you from inheriting God's Kingdom (Heaven)?
5. As we wrap up, what is a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **God is merciful to those who are merciful**. How can this group pray for you for this next week?

Wrap Up:

1. Remember "this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here."
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
4. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

pudding proof

[outline](#)

James 2:14-26

Message of Hope: Faith and action strengthen each other.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give a opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)*
Are you more likely to act without thinking, or think without acting?

Bridge: Have you ever heard the phrase, “the proof is in the pudding”? Today's story is about the pudding.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: James 2:14-26.

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Why do you think James says that faith and works must go together?
2. How would you describe what faith is to a 5-year-old child?
3. What makes actions or works, *good* works?
4. How can good works become manipulative?
5. Does this story mean that a person who lives a life of kindness and compassion is “better” than a person who intellectually knows what the Bible teaches, but does not live a life of compassion?
6. Does faith start with a person's beliefs, or does faith start with their actions?
7. Read verses 19-20 again. What is the difference between “believing in God” and “believing God”?
8. Read verse 23-24. What is the difference between being made right with God and being shown right with God?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Who is someone you admire because their walk matches their talk?
2. When was a time when your faith was put to the test? What happened?
3. What is an area of your life where your faith needs action to make your faith real?
4. What is an area of your life where your actions need to have a stronger faith?
5. For those people who only see your actions, do those actions reflect your faith?
6. As we wrap up, what is a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear from this story?
7. Remember, **your faith and actions strengthen each other.** How can this group pray for you for this next week?

Wrap Up:

1. Remember “this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here.”
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
4. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

taming the tongue

[outline](#)

James 3:1-12

Message of Hope: Only God can tame your tongue.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give a opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)*
If you could choose any wild animal to tame, what would you choose?

Bridge: It is amazing how people are able to tame lions, elephants, and grizzly bears, but when it comes to taming something that is very small, everyone has failed. Now you may be wondering, What it is that nobody has ever been able to tame? That's what our story is about today. Let's read it!

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: James 3:1-12.

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. James, in verse one, seems to single out people who are teachers in the church. How does this apply to our house-church setting where one person may read the study questions, but where all of us teach each other and learn from each other?
2. How does this principle apply to parents and grandparents?
3. In verses 2-5 James compares the tongue to a bit in a horse's mouth, to a ship's rudder, and to a spark. What similarities and differences do you see in these examples?
4. Read verse 6 again. How does a person's tongue corrupt his entire body?
5. What does James mean when he says the tongue "is set on fire by hell itself."
6. If in verse 8 it says, "No one can tame the tongue." This seems pretty hopeless, so what is the use of trying if it is impossible?
7. What is James trying to say when he uses the fresh water and salt water example?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Describe what it felt like when you were cut down by someone's harsh words?
2. Is there ever a time for harsh words?
3. How does your tongue give you a window into your heart?
4. When you look into the window, what do you see?
5. When are you most tempted to cut loose with your tongue?
6. When was a time when you blew it and hurt someone with your words? How could you make it right?
7. As we wrap up, what is a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear from this story?
8. Remember, **only God can tame your tongue**. How can this group pray for you for this next week?

Wrap Up:

1. Remember "this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here."
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
4. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

Godly wisdom

[outline](#)

James 3:13-18

Message of Hope: Following God's ways will make you wise.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give a opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)*
What do you think makes a person wise?

Bridge: Often smart people are promoted in their work, make more money, and are considered, by worldly standards to be “wise.” But today's story will paint a different picture of wisdom. As we will discover, there is worldly wisdom and there is Godly wisdom, but the two are worlds apart. So, let's read our story and see if we can figure out the difference.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: James 3:13-18.

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Read verse 13 again. What does James mean when he says, “live an honorable life”?
2. Is there such a thing as “bad” good works? If so, how would you describe it?
3. James talks about “humility that comes from wisdom.” Is there another kind of humility? What might that humility (one that DOES NOT come from wisdom) look like?
4. In verse 14, what do you think James would say are the real motives behind boasting and lying?
5. Read verse 17-18 again. Only this once—in verse 18—does James use the word “always”. Why does he say that God's wisdom is “always sincere.” How does this relate to “joking”?
6. Read verse 18 again. How does a person go about planting seeds of peace?
7. What does it mean to “reap a harvest of righteousness”?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Which wisdom characteristic in verses 17-18 do you think is the most important? Why?
2. How would you describe Godly wisdom to a 5-year-old girl?
3. Which of the wisdom characteristics is easy for you, and which one is hard? Why?
4. Describe the environment you think might promote peace for this next week.
5. As we wrap up, what is a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear from this story?
6. Remember, **following God's ways will make you wise.** How can this group pray for you for this next week?

Wrap Up:

1. Remember “this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here.”
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
4. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

drawing close to God

outline

James 4:1-10

Message of Hope: Draw close to God and He promises to draw close to you. That is His promise!

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give a opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)*
What is something that pushes your buttons?

Bridge: Today's story tells us how to live, even when someone pushes our buttons. Our story talks about how to pick up and move forward when our buttons are pushed, even when you “lose it” and need a new start.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: James 4:1-10.

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. In verses 1-3 James alludes to some motives that cause problems. What are the motives you can identify in these three verses?
2. In real practical terms, how does friendship with the world make us an enemy of God?
3. So, do you think that falling-in and falling-out of favor with God depends on what you do moment by moment?

Leader's Tip: Help the group understand that the key question is: *Am I trending towards Heaven?* This means that our individual decisions contribute to the trend, so our small decisions are important; however, observing the general direction we are going can give us hope when we make mistakes.

4. Verse 5 says that God can place an envious spirit in us. How do you make sense of this?
5. What is the promise God gives in verses 6 & 7? How does that give someone hope?
6. When we sin, how do verses 8-10 teach us to make things right, then refocus?

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. The last part of verse 2 and all of verse 3 talks about selfish prayers. When do you tend to pray selfish prayers?
2. Let's be honest with ourselves when we ask the following question. How does Satan tempt us to become a friend of the world?
3. What are some of the more helpful ways you have discovered for resisting the Devil?
4. What is one way that you think Satan might plan to tempt you this next week? How can you plan now to resist him?
5. When you want to come close to God, what are some meaningful ways that you have discovered to move closer to Him?
6. Read verse 10 again. When you humbled yourself before God, how has He lifted you up in honor?
7. As we wrap up, what is a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear from this story?
8. Remember, **draw close to God and He promises to draw close to you. That's His promise!** How can this group pray for you for this next week?

Wrap Up:

1. Remember “this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here.”
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
4. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

three warnings

[outline](#)

James 4:11 – 5:6

Message of Hope: Warnings help protect us from what we cannot easily see.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give a opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)*
When was a time you received a warning from someone?

Bridge: When you are driving and see a warning sign, you know the sign is there to protect you from what you cannot easily see. Today's story talks about three warnings. It might be easy to become defensive as we read these three warnings, but remember, if our hearts are open, these warnings will help protect us. Let's read the story.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: James 4:11 – 5:6.
(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Read verses 11-12 again. How is speaking evil about someone the same as judging and criticizing them?
2. What law do you think James is talking about in verses 11-12?
Leader's Tip: We studied this a few weeks back. Read James 2:10-12. How does God's law set us free?
3. If we were to ask James, "Are you saying that obeying God's law saves us," how do you think he would answer that question?
4. How is "not judging" the same as—OR different than—"evaluating"?
5. In the last part of verse 11 James redirects our focus. On what are we to focus? Why do you think this is such hard work?
6. How can a person be humble and self-confident at the same time?
7. Read verse 17 again. Why do you think James adds this verse at the end of this second warning?
8. Read James 5:1-6 again. What do you think James would have written if he lived today?

Heart & Healing Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. The first warning is about judging and criticizing others. How are you tempted to judge and criticize others?
2. The second warning is about self-confidence. For you, when does humility become boasting?
3. The third warning is about luxury. How does this warning speak to your heart?
4. As we wrap up, what is a lesson, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear from this story?
5. Remember, **warnings help protect us from what we cannot easily see**. How can this group pray for you for this next week?

Wrap Up:

1. Remember "this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here."
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. When you talk with someone who needs hope and courage, tell them about this group and invite them to come with you next week.
4. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch

living while waiting

[outline](#)

James 5:7-20

Message of Hope: Jesus is coming soon. Let's be ready every day.

Needed for Today: small bottle of olive oil.

The Basic 8: Oatmeal Can, Connection Card envelopes, Post card invitation cards, Taco Salad sign up sheet, extra New Living Translation Bibles, Child Safety Poster (to post), Blessing List, and Link to online Simple Church Weekly Report Form (This is the Details Coordinator's responsibility).

Welcome: We focus on three things: connecting with God, connecting with each other, and serving our world. In other words, this group does not exist for us. Someone invited you, and now it is your turn to invite others.

Setting the Context:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of people. We are glad all of you are here.
- You will notice we do not use a bunch of fancy religious language.
- We do not try to impress people with how much Bible quoting we can do. We are common people.
- Encourage those who like to talk to give a opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What was a highlight of your week?
3. And...*[insert rotation question]*?

Children's Check-In: How did you help someone this week? (or they can answer the adult questions)

Children go to Adventurers

God Moments:

- Where did you see God at work this past week?
- How did you recognize and accept God's invitation to join Him in His work this past week?
- How did God use you to show up in someone's life this past week?
- Sing. Share meaningful Bible verses. Rejoice in God's goodness.
- Prayer comes naturally and spontaneously during this time.

Kick-off Question: *(short answers, go around the circle, a co-leader goes first)*

When was a time when you were excited about something, but had to patiently wait for it to arrive?

Bridge: Waiting is hard. And sometimes while we are waiting for something that we are really looking forward to, we do not know what to do with ourselves. Today's story is about how to live while we wait. For what are we waiting? Let's read the story.

Read the Bible Story from a modern translation: James 5:7-20.

(Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible.)

Listening & Learning Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Why do you think James starts this story, in verse 7, by encouraging us to wait patiently for the Lord's return?
2. What does "being judged" in verse 9 have to do with grumbling about each other? How are the two connected?
3. Read verse 12 again. What are some example of how people take an oath or swear by Heaven or earth? How does a simple "yes" or "no" protect us?
4. Read verses 14-15. Has anyone ever seen this done, or has personally experienced, an anointing like verses 14-15 talk about? What was it like?
5. In verse 16, why does James directly link together these three ideas: confessing our sins, praying for each other, and healing? Can healing happen without confessing our sins and praying for each other?
6. Read a verse from last week's story, James 4:12. Now read verse 19 again. If we are not to judge, how does verse 19 ever happen?
7. How do you think James would respond if we were to ask James, "How do we do verse 19 without being judgmental or arrogant?"

Heart & Healing Questions: *(50% of your study time)*

1. Has there ever been a time in your life when you wandered away and someone took the risk of talking with you? What was it like?
2. What is the hardest part for you about waiting for Jesus to come back?
3. When are you most likely to grumble about someone? How could you avoid this temptation?
4. What "oaths" (see verse 12) would you like to replace with a simple "yes," or "no thank you"?
5. Is there some healing you desire (physical, mental, or spiritual) that you would like to have our group pray for, along with anointing you with oil?
6. Is there some truth from which you have wandered that you would like an accountability partner to gently encourage you?

Leader's Tip: This kind of work should be gender specific. This avoids other potential temptations.

7. Remember, **Jesus is coming soon so let's be ready every day.** How can this group pray for you for this next week?
8. With what book of the Bible should we start next week? (Or give a couple options to choose from.)

Wrap Up:

1. Remember "this group does not exist for us. We are blessed by being part of this group, but it exists for those who are not yet here."
2. Put an Empty Chair in the middle of your prayer circle with a supply of invitation business cards on the chair for people to take and use.
3. Close by saying the Blessing List blessing together.

Lunch