

simply

JAMES

where the walk must match the talk

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.

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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

Simply JAMES

Updated September 19, 2020

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 [Simply Series](#) is a different kind of Bible study. It is not doctrine or life application. It is relational, which means there are no right or wrong answers to the questions in this facilitator's guide.

Relational Bible studies focus on building relationships with God and each other. They create a space for the WORD among us to wash over us, plant seeds in our lives, and change us by the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit.

Relational Bible studies give everyone, no matter what their perspective or depth of Bible knowledge, space to share and contribute to the dialogue as we journey together. They help us discover how our personal story intersects with the Bible story.

These guides are designed to facilitate real and authentic dialogue in such a way that secular and unchurched Truth seekers come away saying, "This is different! This is real."

People need the Everlasting Gospel. Simple Church is about creating a space for Truth seekers to journey together.

May God bless you as you simplify and re-prioritize your life, creating time to "spend" with Truth seekers from all walks of life.

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 Simple Church training.

Title

outline

Bible story reference will be listed here.

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.

Helpful Tip: These tips show up here and there.

The Basic 8: These are covered in the [free online training](#).

1. Collection Box (explained in PhaseONE training videos)
2. Connection Card Envelopes
3. Business Cards
4. Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet
5. A variety of extra Bible translations.
6. Child Safety Poster
7. Blessing Board
8. Email link to online Simple Church Weekly Summary Form (When officially launched this is emailed to your Details Coordinator every Sunday.)

Welcome: We are glad everyone is here. 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.

Before we introduce ourselves, let's remember:

- This is a safe place to grow spiritually.
- We are a wide diversity of Truth seekers. 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 everyone has an opportunity to share and contribute.
- Cell phones should be put on "vibrate," or turned off.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

Visit www.SimpleChurchAtHome.com more study guides.

Rotation Questions: Rotate through the following three questions:

Week 1: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 2: How would you like to re-prioritize your life?

Week 3: How would you like to cultivate a deeper relationship with God.

Week 4: How would you like to simplify your life?

Week 5: etc.

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

For example:

1. What was his (pointing to the person) high-light for the week?
2. What was her name (pointing to the person)?
3. How did she want to simplify her life?

At the end of the quiz ask the child who facilitated to choose another child to facilitate the quiz next week.

This is what page 2 of a typical leader's guide for a given week actually looks like.

Facilitator's Directions:

1. *Talk as little as possible, encourage others to share, and avoid a monologue.*
2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂ -----)
3. Keep this top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first)

Bridge: This transitions the group from the Kick-off Question into the Bible story.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: Bible story reference will be listed here. (Encourage people to stick to this story instead of jumping all over the Bible during our discussion.)

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

Some helpful pointers for digging questions:

- Remember: there are no "right answers" to relational Bible study questions. Help people contribute their perspective to the dialogue.

- You DO NOT have to "accomplish" all the questions listed. Use them as a resource from which to select during your discussion.
- Spend a maximum of 50% of your Bible study time on these questions.
- 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".
- Did you catch the common denominator, "someone else"? You are always affirming and always inviting others to give input.
- If someone gets off-focus, simply say (after they have stopped talking), "What was the question? Let's read it again."

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

Some helpful pointers:

- Spend a minimum of 50% of your time on these questions.
- These questions are designed to invite people to share portions of their life story as it interacts with the Bible study.
- At appropriate times affirm confidentiality and offer reassurance that this is a safe place to share and grow spiritually.

Group Prayer:

1. We are blessed by being a part of this group, yet it exists for those who are not yet here.
2. Put an [Empty Chair](#) in the middle of your prayer circle. Pray for the people who are not yet here.
3. Close by saying the [Blessing Board](#) blessing together.

At the end of prayer, ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate the questions for next week. Anyone can facilitate the questions. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Lunch:

1. Keep it simple. Keep it easily reproducible.
2. Hostess (one of the CORE4) provides the beans.
3. During lunch have the [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 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

- We come from a variety of backgrounds and seek to create a safe place for Truth seekers to grow spiritually.
- You will notice that we try to avoid fancy religious language. We are common people.
- Let's encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity for everyone to participate.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is one of your prized possessions?

Bridge: Today's story covers a lot of different things—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 two different translations: James 1:1-18

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

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What is endurance, and why is James saying it is important?
✂ -----
2. What kind of wisdom is James talking about, and how is it different than worldly wisdom?
✂ -----
3. Read verses 12-15 again. How does God give blessings to people in today's world?
✂ -----
4. In verse 18, what do you think it means to become God's "prized possession"?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, what kind of troubles have come your way lately, and how has your faith been tested?
✂ -----
- B. How have you seen God's blessing in your life even though you did not deserve it?
✂ -----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D. Remember: **God first chose you as His prized possession.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Tidal Waves of Blessing

outline

James 1:19-27

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

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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 two different translations: James 1:19-27

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

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What is "the word" James is talking about in verses 22-24? How does a person accept the word of God into his life?
✂ -----
2. 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?
✂ -----
3. In your opinion, what is the purpose and meaning of the mirror example?
✂ -----
4. How can it be that obeying God's law actually sets a person free?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. What are some blessings you have seen in the lives of people who have obeyed God's word?
✂ -----
- B. Even if you did not know you were obeying God's law, what is a blessing or two you have received from God?
✂ -----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D. 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 this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

Mercy Me

outline

James 2:1-13

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

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time you were discriminated against?

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 two different translations: James 2:1-13

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

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Going back to verse 4, what are "motives," and what makes a motive good or evil?
✂ -----
2. The laws James quotes in verse 11 are found in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:1-22. Let's read these. Notice how the first four commandments talk about our personal relationship with God, and the last six commandments talk about our relationships with each other. With which of these commandments do you think people are most familiar and least familiar?
✂ -----
3. 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"?
✂ -----
4. 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 ten commandments," how would you respond?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. What is a situation or circumstance where you can show mercy?
✂ -----
- B. Is God using one of the commandments we discussed to show you mercy and draw you closer to Him?
✂ -----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D. Remember: **God is merciful to those who are merciful.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch:

Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

Pudding Proof

outline

James 2:14-26

Message of Hope: Faith and action strengthen each other.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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 two different translations: James 2:14-26

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

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Why do you think James says that faith and works must go together?
✂ -----
2. Does faith start with a person's beliefs, or does faith start with their actions?
✂ -----
3. Read verses 19-20 again. What is the difference between believing in God and believing God?
✂ -----
4. Read verse 23-24. What is the difference between being made right with God and being shown right with God?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. Who is someone you admire because their walk matches their talk?
✂ -----
- B. When was a time your faith was put to the test, and what happened?
✂ -----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D. Remember: **Your faith and actions strengthen each other.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Taming the Tongue

outline

James 3:1-12

Message of Hope: Only God can tame your tongue.

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

If you could choose any wild animal to tame, which 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 much smaller, many fail. Now you may be wondering, *what is it that nobody has ever been able to tame?* Let's read our story, *Taming the Tongue*.

Read the Bible Story from two different translations: James 3:1-12

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

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. In verse 1, James seems to single out people who are teachers in the church. How does this apply to our house church setting where one person reads the study questions but all of us teach each other and learn from each other?
✂ -----
2. 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 of fire. What similarities and differences do you see in these examples?
✂ -----
3. Read verse 6 again. How does a person's tongue corrupt his entire body?
✂ -----
4. 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?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, describe what it felt like when you were cut down by someone's harsh words?
✂ -----
- B. When are you most tempted to cut loose with your tongue, and how have you experienced God taming your tongue in those moments?
✂ -----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D. Remember: **Only God can tame your tongue.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

Godly Wisdom

outline

James 3:13-18

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

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Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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 paints a different picture of wisdom. As we will discover, there is worldly wisdom, and there is Godly wisdom; 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 two different translations: James 3:13-18

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

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. Read verse 13 again. What does James mean when he says, “live an honorable life?”
✂ -----
2. James talks about “humility that comes from wisdom.” Is there another kind of humility, and what might that humility (one that DOES NOT come from wisdom) look like?
✂ -----
3. In verse 14, what do you think James would say are the real motives behind boasting and lying?
✂ -----
4. Read verse 18 again. How does a person go about planting seeds of peace, and what does it mean to “reap a harvest of righteousness?”
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. On a personal note, which of the wisdom characteristics is easier for you, and which is harder? Why?
✂ -----
- B. Describe the environment you think would promote peace for this next week.
✂ -----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D. Remember: **Following God's ways will make you wise.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.
- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.

Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.

Drawing Close to God

outline

James 4:1-10

Message of Hope: Draw close to God, and He will draw close to you. That's His promise!

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The Quiz: A child asks three questions. They randomly choose from the check-in questions people just answered. Ask everyone to raise their hands and the child picks someone to answer the questions.

At the end of the quiz ask the child who facilitated to choose another child to facilitate the quiz next week.

Facilitator's Directions:

1. Talk as little as possible, encourage others to share, and avoid a monologue.
2. Cut on the dotted lines. Distribute questions around the circle. (✂ -----)
3. Keep the top part and the bottom part (question D) of this page.
4. Reassure people they do not have to answer the questions, just read it for us.
5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

What is something that pushes your buttons?

Bridge: Today's story tells us how to live 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 two different translations: James 4:1-10

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

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. In real and practical terms, how does friendship with the world make us an enemy of God?
✂ -----
2. So, do you think that falling into 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.

✂ -----

3. What is the promise God gives in verses 6 and 7, and how does that give someone hope?
✂ -----
4. When we sin, how do verses 8-10 teach us to make things right, then refocus?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. Let's be honest with ourselves when we ask the following question: On a personal note, how does Satan tempt us to become a friend of the world?
✂ -----
- B. When you want to come close to God, what are some meaningful ways that you have discovered to move closer to Him?
✂ -----
- C. What is an invitation, a promise, a command, or a warning that you needed to hear today?
✂ -----
- D. Remember: **Draw close to God, and He will draw close to you. That's His promise!** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer:

- o Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

- Close by saying the **Blessing Board** blessing together.
- Lunch: Taco Salad sign-up sheet.**

Three Warnings

outline

James 4:11-5:6

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

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

Welcome: We are so glad that you are here today.

Setting the Context:

- We come from a variety of backgrounds and seek to create a safe place for Truth seekers to grow spiritually.
- You will notice that we try to avoid fancy religious language. We are common people.
- Let's encourage those who like to talk to give opportunity for everyone to participate.

Check-In:

1. What is your first name?
2. What is a high-light or a low-light (a headline) from your week?
3. [*Insert rotation question for the week.*]

At the end of check-in ask the person who facilitated to choose another adult to facilitate check-in next week. Anyone can facilitate check-in. It does not have to be a CORE leader.

Children's Check-In Questions: How did you help Mommy or Daddy this week? (Or they can answer the adult questions.)

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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

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 two different translations: James 4:11-5:6

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

✂ -----

Digging Questions: (50% of your study time)

1. What law do you think James is talking about in verses 11-12, and how does this protect us?

Leader's Tip: We studied this a few weeks back. Read James 2:10-12. How does God's law set us free?

✂ -----

2. 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?

✂ -----

3. How can a person be humble and self-confident at the same time?

✂ -----

4. Read James 5:1-6 again. How do you think James would have written this third warning if he lived today?

✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. The first warning is about judging and criticizing others. How are you tempted to judge and criticize others?

✂ -----

- B. The second warning is about self-confidence. For you, when does humility become boasting?

✂ -----

- C. The third warning is about luxury. How does this warning speak to your heart?

✂ -----

- D. Remember: **Warnings help protect us from what we cannot easily see.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch:

Put **Empty Chairs** in the middle of your circle. Pray for people who will be invited.

Living While Waiting

outline

James 5:7-20

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

The Basic 8 Simple Church Tools: Collection Box, Connection Card Envelopes, Business Cards, Taco Salad Sign-up Sheet, a variety of extra Bible translations, Child Safety Poster, Blessing Board, Summary Form (which is emailed to the Details Coordinator every Sunday).

Breakfast

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5. At the end, choose someone to facilitate the questions for next week.

Kick-off Question: (60 second answers, facilitator goes first, go around the circle)

When was a time 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 two different translations: James 5:7-20

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

✂ -----

Digging 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. Read verses 14-15. Has anyone ever seen or participated in an anointing like verses 14-15 talk about? What was it like?
✂ -----
3. 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?
✂ -----
4. Let's read a verse from last week's story: James 4:11-12. Now read 5:19 again. If we are not to judge others, how do we do what is described in verse 19 without being judgmental or arrogant?
✂ -----

Sharing Questions: (50% of your study time)

- A. What is the hardest part for you about waiting for Jesus to come back?
✂ -----
- B. 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?
✂ -----
- C. Is there some truth from which you have wandered that you would like an accountability partner to gently encourage you?
Note: This kind of work should be gender specific, which avoids other potential temptations.
✂ -----
- D. Remember: **Jesus is coming soon, so let's be ready every day.** How can this group pray for you this week?

Group Prayer & Lunch