

TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

LESSON 1: JAMES ON BUSINESS

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Joe is the production manager of the company and a good friend and right-hand man of the owner, Manny. In the last few months when Joe and Manny do their usual lunch and exchange notes on this week's sermon from church Manny has been very stressed about the current situation with his business. Joe has been able to meet every production demand from their biggest and oldest client every month and does an excellent job but now things have changed. Their client has undergone a major shift in leadership and while the production expectations remain the same the contracting and payments for services has really gone south. Now Manny has major issues with cash flow as there is not even enough in the bank account to make Friday payroll! He confides these things and more with his dear friend about their client that holds over 50% of their work. Now Joe is getting a little nervous as well and really doesn't know how to console Manny.

- Q.** What Godly advice would you give Joe to be able to console Manny?
- Q.** What do you think Joe could do to help in this situation?
- Q.** How much should Manny share with Joe?

JAMES 1:1-18

¹James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. ²Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

⁹Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. ¹⁰But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wildflower. ¹¹For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

¹²Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

¹³When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

¹⁶Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. ¹⁷Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

- Q.** If we are to find joy in our trials, how is joy different from happiness?
- Q.** James moves from teaching about trials, perseverance and prayer to a discussion about temptation. What is the connection there?
- Q.** What is *the crown of life* for those who stand the test and persevere under trial? Is it only a reward we receive in heaven, or is there also a reward here on earth?

James encourages believers to consider trials as opportunities for growth and endurance. He doesn't say it will be fun, but there's an eternal reward for those who persevere with unwavering faith. It's tempting, however, to try to get past the hardship by relying on our own resources apart from God. That, or we pray for help but don't really trust God to intervene. Both reveal a lack of faith.

God may allow trials for any number of reasons, but they should always remind us that we are not in control! He created us for relationship and wants us to seek Him, follow Him and depend on Him. The poor will generally understand dependence easier than the rich because they're unable to provide everything for themselves. With that same mind of trust and dependency, God wants us to seek Him for wisdom, trust His goodness, and wait on Him.

Which of those 3 is hardest for you? How can you turn that into a prayer?

WHO IS JAMES?

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! James 1:1 NLT

Most scholars believe James was written by Jesus brother James, who became the leader (bishop) of the church in Jerusalem. Matthew’s Gospel records - *He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, “Where does he get this wisdom and the power to do miracles?” Then they scoffed, “He’s just the carpenter’s son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?” And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. Then Jesus told them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family.” Matthew 13:54-57 NLT*

James was transformed after the resurrection. Can you relate to James with a transformed life?

LISTENING AND DOING

LESSON 2: JAMES ON BUSINESS

Think of an experience in your professional career where you attended an informative meeting or instructional training but with no tangible results. What kept you from applying what you learned? What do you think would have been the key to actually applying what you have learned?

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Kyle has a big problem with turnover at his insurance agency. Out of his 15 employees, 5 have left in the first quarter alone that he has had to replace. He has tried everything from pay raises to variable work schedules to increasing their 401k match. He really can't pay them more than he is, as his profit margins are already nonexistent since the Insurance companies he writes for will not increase their commissions. Kyle needs some quick advice before more employees leave looking for greener pastures.

- Q. How would you advise Kyle?
- Q. How is Kyle to know what motivates his employees?
- Q. How can Kyle retain his employees without paying them more?

JAMES 1:19-27

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it – not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

²⁶ Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

- Q.** Why do you think James emphasizes the importance of being “quick to listen” before “quick to speak” or “quick to become angry? How does this advice apply to our interactions with other?
- Q.** In verse 22, James urges believers to not only listen to the Word of God but also to do what it says. What are some challenges we face in applying the teachings of the Bible to our lives? How can we overcome these challenges?
- Q.** Verse 27 talks about “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless.” What do you think this pure and faultless religion looks like according to James? How does this compare with common perceptions of religious practice?

James 1:19-27 offers practical guidance for applying faith in the workplace. In our careers we ought to prioritize active listening, controlled speech, and patience. We should be working toward better communication and conflict resolution. We should act on instructions promptly, maintain integrity, and avoid moral compromise, staying above reproach in all interactions. Furthermore, we can demonstrate our faith through compassion, support for colleagues, and engagement in community efforts, contributing to a positive and impactful workplace culture. Overall, James emphasizes the integration of faith into everyday work life, promoting integrity, compassion, and righteous action in all professional endeavors.

Reflecting on your own experiences, what are some practical ways you can apply the principles of James 1:19-27 in your daily walk with God and in your relationships with others?

THE HAND ILLUSTRATION – GAINING A FIRM GRASP OF GOD’S WORD



Adapted from The Hand Illustration, The Navigators

DEALING WITH PEOPLE HONESTLY

LESSON 3: JAMES ON BUSINESS

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.

– JAMES 2:1

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

You have a deadline looming week and it is going to take all the focus and time management skills to meet it. That morning your boss stops by your cubical just to say “hi” and chat. You politely stop what you are doing and listen politely meanwhile thinking of all you must do. Later that afternoon a coworker stops in at your cubical to say hi and get caught up on what went on during the weekend. You can’t believe it. Don’t they know you are stressed and must get your work done? You pretend to listen but keep typing at the computer hoping they will get the hint and go away. They do and leave with hurt feelings.

Joe is a top producer and leader of a main division of your company. He is awesome in every way but one. He has a problem turning in his time sheets at all, much less on time. Every month, the Administrative Staff complains that they cannot run payroll and that they must constantly bend the rules for Joe. You always deflect their concerns citing his contribution to the company.

One of your new hires has this same problem. Policy states that if you do not turn in your time sheet, you don’t get paid and it could be grounds for dismissal. You have “the talk” with this new hire.

- Q. How should you have dealt with each person?
- Q. What is the motive to show favoritism in each case?
- Q. What are some other ways we can show favoritism at work that are subtle and appear harmless?
- Q. What are some ways we subconsciously show favoritism?
- Q. What work environment promotes favoritism?

JAMES 2:1-13

¹ *My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism.*

² *Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,”^[a] you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, “You shall not commit adultery,”^[b] also said, “You shall not murder.”^[c] If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

¹² Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, ¹³ because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

FAVORITISM FORBIDDEN

v. 1 Who must not show favoritism?

v. 2-4 What are the evil thoughts that we have and why are they evil?

What does this have to do with Justice?

v. 5-7 In what ways do the rich exploit?

Who are the poor in your world? At work?

In what subtle ways do we dishonor the poor?

v. 8-11 Why is discriminating evil?

Why is it important to understand and admit your sin nature?

v. 12-13 What law is he referring to?

How do you balance mercy and policy in the workplace?

FAITH & DEEDS

LESSON 4: JAMES ON BUSINESS

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

You have worked at your company for over 15 years, and with the same production team for over 5 years. You get along well with everyone on your team, which is why you love your job. They're like a family to you because of how everyone watches out for each other.

As a Christian, you are very involved at church and believe that everyone should know Jesus. One Sunday you are talking with your Sunday school leader and he asks whether your team members are Christians. Embarrassed, you reply that you don't even know for sure. You suspect that some of them might be. After all, they are good people.

- Q.** In this example, what is the disconnect between what we are commanded to do as Christians vs. what we believe?
- Q.** Is being a good person around your coworkers enough? What scriptures come to mind about what God expects of our behavior?

JAMES 2:14-26

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰ You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? ²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Discuss how our faith produces action and how opinions turn into beliefs that mature into convictions.

OPINIONS → BELIEFS → CONVICTIONS

- Q.** Contrast these and discuss the progression.
- Q.** At what point in this progression do our actions align with our beliefs?
- Q.** What are the characteristics of a Christian businessman who is convicted in their faith? Describe their behavior at work.

FAITH AND DEEDS

- v. 14-17** As a Christian businessman what can happen when our actions don't align with our beliefs?
Give some examples of what this would look like in your work place.

- v. 18-19** In your own words how would your co-workers describe your beliefs, convictions?
What are some examples of how you act differently at work from your pre-Christian friends?

- v. 20-24** How did Abraham show his convictions for his faith? Where did he fail?

- v. 25** What did Rahab do and why is that profound based on what she likely believed?

- v. 26** What are some questions we must ask ourselves to properly diagnose the health of our faith?
What are the implications of Jesus' commands in our lives if we truly believe? The Great Commission?
Explain one thing you would like to change in your behavior at work in light of this passage.

TAMING THE TONGUE

LESSON 5: JAMES ON BUSINESS

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Joe has been with the same company for 20 years as a Design Technician, has become an expert in his field, and gained much respect around the office as a top producer. Joe has ceilinged out in his career in the 100 - person, family-owned company but he still really enjoys his work, the respect and recognition he receives. A young, hot-shot engineer with only 5 years of experience is hired and is assigned to be Joe's supervisor! He is very green but driven and very bright. The company owners have even asked Joe to "show him the ropes" and technically mentor him. Joe feels threatened and even bitter because now he answers to a young engineer who knows nothing about the company and is still limited in his technical knowledge.

- Q.** How could the company leadership make this transition in a healthy way?
- Q.** What are some of the sinful thoughts and attitudes Joe might have toward this young engineer?
- Q.** How might Joe's attitudes and feelings come out in his words and actions as a teacher?
- Q.** What would you say to Joe to help him gain perspective moving forward?

JAMES 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ²We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

³*When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.*

⁵*Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.*

⁷*All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

TAMING THE TONGUE

- v. 1-3** Why should teachers be judged more strictly?
When should we speak as a teacher?
In what ways did the teachers of the law fall short in Jesus' eyes?
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- v. 4-6** In what ways do our words reveal our attitudes toward our co-workers and supervisors?
What other ways do we communicate our attitudes to others?
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- v. 7-8** How is it that we can control or tame all other creation but not control our own tongues?
What do you think is our real problem here?
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- v. 9-12** What do these verses say about the struggle going on within us?
What resources does God provide for us so we can keep a reign on our tongues?
Read John 7:38, Isa. 58:11. How is the Spirit-Filled Christian changed?

ATTITUDE CHECK

READ MATTHEW 23:13 -39

Seven Woes against teachers of the law and how they relate to the workplace.

The above passage can be summarized into seven judgments as spoken by Jesus Christ to the spiritual leadership of his time. The reasons for the seven woes pronounced by the Lord were as follows:

1. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; they were not even qualified by their character to enter and they wouldn't let others enter either (Matthew 23 VS 13)
2. Devouring widow's houses and making a show of their prayers (Matthew 23 VS 14)
3. They compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, they make him twofold more the child of hell than themselves (Matthew 23 VS 15)
4. The Scribes and Pharisees were blind guides, who wrongly taught the people that whosoever shall swear by the temple will not be bound by that vow/oath but that whosoever swears by the gold of the temple is bound and had a debt to pay (Matthew 23 VS 16)
5. The Scribes and Pharisees were very judicious in paying their tithes as instructed by the Lord in Malachi 3 VS 10, but they relegated the weightier matters of the law to the background (Matthew 23 VS 23)
6. Jesus pronounced a woe on the Scribes and Pharisees because they were more concerned about appearing righteous on the outside before men rather than observing genuine repentance from the heart (Matthew 23 vs 25-28)
7. Jesus rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees for making a show of building the tombs of the prophets and garnishing the sepulchers of the righteous (Matthew 23 vs 29-30)

GAINING THE WISDOM OF GOD

LESSON 6: JAMES ON BUSINESS

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

The pandemic is here! Fear and uncertainty is the rule of the day. No good news. People are dying right and left. Politics are polarized and shaky. There is no consistency or stability in government policy. Everything is offensive. People are hyper-sensitive to their rights and feelings. Seems that no matter what you say or do someone takes offense.

As a business leader you are trying to grow the company into another market in this ever-changing environment. There are some opportunities to do an acquisition and/or organic growth in this market through hiring a market leader in the area. What do you do?

1. Nothing – hold tight but risk existing market strength weakening and potential decline of business.
2. Do an acquisition as the price is falling but the market is also weakening.
3. Hire a market leader and capitalize for some time. No assurance that clients will even see him during this time of unrest.

- Q. What are the factors that make this decision risky?
- Q. What are our decision tendencies during stressful times?
- Q. What would you do?
- Q. What would the wisdom of the world say?
- Q. How do you think the wisdom that comes from heaven would change your decision process and overall strategy?

JAMES 3:13-18

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵ Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

- Q. What would the wisdom of the world say?
- Q. What is evidence of worldly wisdom and understanding?

- Q. Why are these two characteristics evident in a life that is controlled by worldly thinking? Gal 5:20
- Q. What evil practices are we capable of in the marketplace with selfish ambition and bitter envy controlling our heart and mind? v. 17-18
- Q. Contrast the difference between worldly wisdom and wisdom that comes from heaven? Give an example.
- Q. What is this wisdom that comes from Heaven?

1 CORINTHIANS 2:6-16

⁶ We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷ No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ However, as it is written:

*"What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived"—
the things God has prepared for those who love him—*

¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. ¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. ¹⁵ The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, ¹⁶ for,

*"Who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.*

- Q. What is the Gospel message?
- Q. Do you think that the Gospel message is wisdom for every decision we will ever make?
- Q. What does the Gospel message have to do with living out my faith in the marketplace?

List the key elements of the gospel message and explain how they pertain directly to the decisions we make each day. (partial list)

- We all sin and fall short of fellowship with God.
- We deserve death for our sin.
- God reveals our sin through His Law.
- All creation was made in and through Christ.
- Jesus gave up his throne.
- Jesus became fully a man.
- Jesus did not sin.
- Jesus was the second Adam.
- Jesus was the perfect sacrifice.
- Jesus died once for the sins of man.
- Jesus was completely obedient and submissive to the Father.
- Jesus came to serve not to be served.
- Jesus paid the price for my sin.
- Salvation is a free gift from God
- There is nothing I can do to earn my salvation.
- Salvation is only through belief in Jesus.
- We are viewed by God as justified and reconciled to Himself only by the blood of Christ.
- I have received eternal life with the Father because of His sacrifice.
- I have received a comforter who convicts me of my sin, transforms my heart and mind into the likeness of Christ.
- I will be compelled to live out my faith and serve those who Jesus serves because I am made to think and love as he did.
- I will live eternally with my Lord in heaven.
- He has prepared a place for me.

Q. How do each of these truths of the wisdom of God influence our daily interactions in the marketplace?

Q. What is the result of living in the wisdom of God?

Q. What is a harvest of righteousness? Isa. 32:17-20, Prov. 11:18, Hos 10:12, Phil. 1:9-11

SUBMISSION TO GOD

LESSON 7: JAMES ON BUSINESS

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

End of Year bonus time is here! As a manager in your company you have been given the responsibility of determining the bonuses that you and your team are to receive. The president of the company has given you an overall bonus amount to be distributed to you and your team at your discretion based on a number of performance factors both subjective and objective. There are a number of employees on your team who have been under-performing and you mark them down on the bonus they receive.

There are some stars that you mark up as well and they receive more bonus. As the boss you have had a tough year and mistakes were made by your team. More than once you had to spend some long hours and very tough meetings with clients to correct these mistakes. To compound your dilemma you have friends in other companies doing the same job and they seem to get all the perks and seem to have bonus money to spend on all the toys. This whole bonus process is very hard as you have left over money in the bonus pool because of the poor performance of some of the employees. Your inclination is to assign this left-over bonus money to yourself and increase your bonus as you feel that you earned it but you could divvy it up amongst your star performers. What should you do?

- Q. What battles would you have going on in your mind as you make this decision?
- Q. What factors should you be considering?
- Q. How do you keep your feelings out of the decision and remain objective?
- Q. What are some ways that you could gain the wisdom of God in this decision?

JAMES 4:1-12

¹ What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ² You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

- Q. What do you want to accomplish in your professional career? Why?
- Q. Is it wrong to have desires?
- Q. How do you know if you have worldly desires or Godly desires?
- Q. Why does God appear to not answer our prayers many times?
- Q. When will God always answer our prayers?

⁴ You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? ⁶ But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:

*“God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”*

- Q.** What is your biggest temptation at work?
- Q.** In what ways are you a friend of the world?
- Q.** How does friendship with the world equate to adultery?
- Q.** Why is humility directly connected with submission?

⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

- Q.** Satan is the prince of this world. What is our part in defeating him? What is God's part?
- Q.** Submit, Resist, come near, wash, purify, grieve, change, humble. What do all of these actions require from us?
- Q.** When you reflect on this passage how does it make you feel?
- Q.** Why is this so counter-intuitive that God will lift us up? How do we typically need to be lifted up?

¹¹ Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹² There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

- Q.** Why do we slander others at work? What is our motive?
- Q.** Why is the Law mentioned in the context of judging?
- Q.** Why is judging others sinful?
- Q.** What are the consequences of Judging others in the office that you have experienced?
- Q.** What does judging and slandering have to do with submission before God?

MAKING OUR PLANS

LESSON 8: JAMES ON BUSINESS

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Steve has worked in the company for 7 years. He has been a great employee and team member, an expert in his area and respected by his co-workers. Steve has long dreamed of being a manager of a team and thinks often of what life would be like if he were the boss and have the extra money and influence that goes with the title. Sometimes he talks about his dream to be a manager around the water cooler with other employees and expresses what he would do and how things would be different if he were the boss. Steve's chance has come and there is a management position open. Steve's interview goes well but the corporate leaders go with another candidate. Steve is devastated and is considering leaving the company to look for greener pastures.

- Q.** How would you counsel Steve moving forward?
- Q.** What would be a healthy and Godly way for Steve to view his future?

JAMES 4:13-17

¹³ Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

- Q.** On what basis do we make our own plans? Isa. 2:22-35, Prov 27:1-2, Luke 12:18-21
Past experiences, significance, control, comfort, security, balance, order, etc.
- Q.** Reflect on how the brevity of your life affect the decisions and priorities in your life – Psalm 39:5
- Q.** Why is boasting about our plans sin?

GUIDE TO MAKING BUSINESS PLANS

1. Submit our lives to Him completely.
2. Align our desires with His desires. Care about what He cares about. Cry, weep and long for that which is precious to Him.
3. Determine course of action bathed in prayer.

- Q. What does this submission look like practically in your busy life?
- Q. How do you think the time frame of this process works out?
- Q. What are the benefits of plans originated with this process?

King David could have expressed himself by his conquests, accomplishments, or acquisitions but this prayer is how he chooses to reflect on his life.

PSALM 103

¹ Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

² Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

³ who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

⁷ He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:

⁸ The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

⁹ He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever;

¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

¹³ As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;

¹⁴ for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

¹⁵ The life of mortals is like grass, they flourish like a flower of the field;

¹⁶ the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.

¹⁷ But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children—

¹⁸ with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.

¹⁹ The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.

²⁰ Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

²¹ Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

²² Praise the Lord, all his works everywhere in his dominion.

Praise the Lord, my soul.

- Q. What do you observe that is important to David?
- Q. What perspective does David have on his own life?
- Q. How does this prayer shape the significance of your plans?
- Q. How will you think differently about planning for tomorrow?

DEALING WITH WEALTH

LESSON 9: JAMES ON BUSINESS

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

As the president of a start-up software company for over two years, you are getting nervous. Business was going well in the beginning, but now the economy has turned and things look grim. Cash flow is tight and payroll is due next week for your 15 employees. The software developer you subcontract with is calling about unpaid invoices. Your investors are calling to see when they can expect to get earnings. You have a big project in the works, but it's not official yet and brings no guarantees of when it would generate revenue. There just isn't enough cash to go around.

- Q. Who do you pay first? Why?
- Q. How should you communicate with all the stakeholders and employees of your company?
- Q. What are some other ways we take advantage of people in the workplace?

JAMES 5:1-6

¹ Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you. ² Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. ³ Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. ⁴ Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. ⁵ You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. ⁶ You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

- Q. Who is James talking to? Who are the wealthy people to which he is referring?
- Q. Is it wrong to have wealth?
- Q. What is the difference between saving and hoarding?
- Q. What are motivators for hoarding?
- Q. What other resources do we hoard?
- Q. What does James mean by the "corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire"?
- Q. When does a healthy view of wealth and resources cross the line into sin?
- Q. What can a hoarding mentality lead to according to this passage?

PATIENCE IN SUFFERING

LESSON 10: JAMES ON BUSINESS

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

John was certain about accepting the offer last year to manage the new Denver office. He had processed and prayed extensively before deciding to move his wife and 3 kids across the country to start over in a new city. John was confident he had heard God say to *go*.

Now things look different. The excitement of building a new office has worn off and he now feels the responsibility to perform. The leads and talent in the local market are harder to come by than John thought. There is a lot of competition in the Denver area, and it seems as though everyone had the idea to start a new office at the same time. Meanwhile, the kids are not adjusting to their new school as well as they hoped and making new friends has proved difficult. Now John is second-guessing his decision to move. He is frustrated and scared of what will become of his family if this opportunity doesn't work out.

- Q. What would you advise John to do?
- Q. Is it okay for John to doubt? What is the root of this doubt?
- Q. How are we tempted to react when things don't work out like we planned?
- Q. How does knowing God's direction help in a time of stress?
- Q. What experience have you had that has given you healthy perspective when going through trials?

JAMES 5:7-12

⁷ *Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸ You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹ Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!*

¹⁰ *Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.*

¹² *Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned.*

- Q. What else does James say about trials?
- Q. Why is patience and perseverance an indicator of spiritual maturity?

- Q.** Why are we to be patient? For what? (See 1 Corinthians 1:4-9 and Galatians 6:9-10)
- Q.** In what ways are we tempted when we face trials at work?
- Q.** In what ways can blessing come through trials? (See Matthew 5:11-12)
- Q.** What is swearing an indication of in our lives?

1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-9

⁴ I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge— ⁶ God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. ⁷ Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸ He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

GALATIANS 6:9-10

⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

MATTHEW 5:11-12

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

PRAYER OF FAITH

LESSON 11: JAMES ON BUSINESS

CORPORATE SITUATION ROOM

Joe and his marketing team have been working on securing a large project for the company. The project is so large that they have teamed with three additional companies in order to accomplish all aspects of the project. Joe and his team are running point for the potential collaboration and are coordinating all the research and presentation materials for an upcoming pitch to the client. Joe is a Christian and tries to honor God in all that he does.

The interview is tomorrow, and Joe has assembled the team for a full day of dress rehearsal. The excitement level is high at the prospect of working together on such a big opportunity that could literally change the direction of their respective companies. As they wrap up for the day, Joe is thinking about how God has blessed him with this team and this opportunity. He feels like saying something or praying for the team, but he doesn't know if any of the team are even Christians or if he would offend anyone.

- Q.** What would be the appropriate thing for Joe to do?
- Q.** What business experiences have you had to pray in a professional setting?
- Q.** What thoughts or doubts do you think Joe was wrestling with?
- Q.** Describe a person you know that consistently honors God in the workplace. How are they known? How do you feel around them?

JAMES 5:13-20

¹³ Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the LORD. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the LORD will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. ¹⁷ Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. ¹⁹ My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, ²⁰ remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

- Q.** Describe a person you know that has the characteristics described here. What is their attitude about all things? How do others react to them?

- Q. What keeps you from having this kind of attitude and faith in your everyday life?
- Q. How would your life and those around you be different if you lived and prayed according to this passage?
- Q. How would you describe a righteous man?
- Q. Why do you think God honors the prayers of a righteous man?
- Q. What would your view of God be if you lived according to this passage?
- Q. What influence would you have at work if you were known to be a praying “man of faith”?
- Q. What is one small thing you could start today that would help your faith, attitude, and actions to be more aligned in the marketplace?