

The Epistle of James

14

Morning Devotions

Select a passage in God's Word. Talk with the Lord as you read the passage, then go back and find one or two verses which the Lord has impressed on your heart and meditate on them.

Morning Study

This morning we begin studying the book of **James**. Let's take a brief look at:

- The author of this letter
- The recipients of this letter
- The purpose of this letter

The writer identifies himself as James (**1:1**), and although there were a number of people called James in the Bible, the author is most likely James, the brother of Jesus. To acquaint yourself with the writer, take a look at the following passages:

Read Matthew 13:55

Read John 7:2-5

Read 1 Corinthians 15:7

Read Acts 15:12-21

Read Galatians 1:19; 2:9

The readers of James' epistle are described as "the twelve tribes scattered among the nations" (**1:1**). Although this could allegorically refer to Christians in general, the tone and terminology of the letter has a decidedly Jewish feel. There are also indications for an early dating of the letter – possibly before A.D. 50 – making it the one of the earliest of the New Testament writings.

Some have even suggested, quite plausibly, that James is writing to the early believers scattered from Jerusalem because of the persecution that followed Stephen's death (see **Acts 8:1; 11:9**). This would explain James' references to trials and persecution, and the authoritative tone of the letter. As the leader of the church in Jerusalem, this would have been a pastoral letter, written to instruct and encourage those who had been scattered in times of persecution.

Now make yourself comfortable and read through the entire letter of **James** in one sitting, taking note particularly of the practical instructions James gives.

Memory Verse

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:2-3

Here are a few suggestions that may help you to memorize your memory verse:

- ➡ Ask the Lord to help you remember his Word (see [John 14:26](#)).
- ➡ Use the version of the Bible you are most familiar with. What you normally read in your Bible is what you need to be memorizing.
- ➡ Don't just memorize the contents of the verse; memorize its "address" (the verse reference) as well. You can do this by following this pattern: Step 1: **reference**; Step 2: **verse content**; Step 3: **reference**. Then repeat steps 1-3. Note that you are quoting the reference twice as many times as you quote the actual verse content. This gives the verse a clear "reference tag."
- ➡ After you have read your memory verse out aloud several times, try going through your memory verse *without* reading your computer screen.
- ➡ Look up your memory verse in your Bible. Look at its immediate context and read the verses that come before and after your memory verse.
- ➡ Print out your memory verse or jot it down on a piece of paper. Take this paper with you when you go to work or do other daily activities. Meditate on the meaning of the verse throughout the day.
- ➡ During your noon appointment with the Lord, take out your memory verse and go over it again. Talk to the Lord about what this verse means to you personally.
- ➡ In the evening (at either your evening study or your evening devotions), see if you can quote your memory verse from memory. Then, without looking at the memory verse itself, see if you can find it in your Bible.
- ➡ The next day, before you begin committing a new verse to memory, rehearse your previous day's memory verse and see if you can remember it (without cheating!).
- ➡ Finally, at the end of the week (possibly on the Sunday), collect all your week's memory verses, rehearse them and see if you can recall them without reading them. Spend a little extra time on any verses you have difficulty recalling.
- ➡ Remember: Don't just memorize a verse. Put it into practice ([James 1:22](#)). It is not being able to quote a verse from memory that counts. It is His Word *abiding* in your heart that counts ([John 15:7](#)). When you actually apply a verse consistently to your daily life, that is when you *truly* know that verse!