



AM Bible Study, Wednesday, August 21, 2024
Lesson Title: Social Justice and Spiritual Bible Study on *James 1*
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Introduction

The book of James is a powerful text that addresses many social justice issues, such as economic inequality, favoritism, and the need for authentic faith demonstrated through action. *James 1* lays the foundation for understanding how true religion involves caring for those in need and addressing systemic injustices. This study will explore how James challenges us to live out our faith by advocating for social justice and embodying Christ-like compassion.

Lesson Objectives

1. Understand the social justice themes present in *James 1*.
2. Reflect on the relationship between faith, action, and justice.
3. Identify practical ways to address social injustices in your community.
4. Discuss the importance of caring for marginalized and oppressed individuals.

Theme 2: Temptation, Sin, and Justice (*James 1:13-18*)

Verses 13-15: The Origin of Temptation

James 1:13-15 (NIV):

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

Discussion Points:

Source of Temptation:

Q1: Where does temptation originate, according to James?

Q2: How does unchecked desire lead to sin and ultimately to death?

What Is Sin?

"Sin" is translated from the word *chata* (Hebrew: [חַטָּא](#)). Its most basic meaning is not religious. In the Old Testament (OT), sin is most basically a failure to fulfill a goal.

All sin boils down to is a failure to love God the most and to love our neighbor as ourselves Matthew 22:37-39 and John 9:1-5

Sin Is Deceptive

In the Bible, when people sin, they often either do not know it or they think they are somehow succeeding – like Pharaoh enslaving the Israelites or King Saul hunting David in the wilderness. This is significant because it portrays sin as deceptive. Sin is not just failing to do what is right. It is also about redefining what is right or wrong on our own terms over and against God's.

Social Justice Connection:

Reflection: How might selfish desires contribute to systemic injustices and social problems?

Application: Discuss ways to combat personal and societal temptations that lead to injustice, such as greed, prejudice, and corruption.

Key Point:

Understanding the root of temptation helps us address personal and societal sins that perpetuate injustice. Change begins with recognizing and resisting desires that harm others.



Source of Temptation: James clarifies that God does not tempt anyone. Temptation arises from human desires, leading to sin and spiritual death.

Cycle of Sin: Desire leads to sin, and unchecked sin results in death. Recognizing this process helps believers resist temptation.

Personal Responsibility: Understanding that temptation stems from within empowers believers to seek God's help in overcoming it.

*Verses 16-18: The Goodness of God**

"Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures."

Key Themes:

The Nature of God's Gifts:

Discuss how God is the source of all good and perfect gifts, emphasizing His consistency and unchanging nature.

Reflect on how recognizing God as the ultimate giver affects our attitude towards resources, wealth, and justice.

The Implications for Justice:

Consider how God's generosity serves as a model for how we should act towards others, especially the marginalized and vulnerable.

Discuss how the recognition of God's unchanging goodness should lead believers to reject injustice, exploitation, and inequality in society.

Being "First fruits" of God's Creation:

Explore what it means to be "a kind of first fruits" of God's creatures. Discuss how this identity calls Christians to reflect God's character, including His justice and mercy, in the world.

Link this concept to the idea of stewardship—being responsible for carrying out God's will on earth, particularly in caring for others and promoting justice.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does recognizing God as the source of all good things influence your view on social justice?
2. In what ways can acknowledging God's unchanging nature help us remain steadfast in the pursuit of justice?
3. What does it mean to you to be "first fruits" of God's creation, and how does this identity shape your actions towards others?

The Sin of Partiality

Key Text: James 2:1-13

- Explore the concept of partiality and how it contrasts with God's impartial love.
- Discuss historical and modern examples of partiality and discrimination in society and in the body of Christ.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does partiality manifest in our society and the church today?
2. Why does James consider showing favoritism a serious sin?
3. How does the "royal law" to love your neighbor as yourself (verse 8) challenge societal norms and Christian principals?

Application:

- Encourage participants to examine their own biases and discuss practical steps to combat favoritism in their daily lives and communities.